

Series: *In the Shadow of the Cross (an exposition of Isaiah 53)*¹

Main Idea: According to Isaiah 53:10-12, when we ponder the cross from God’s perspective, we see two outcomes.

- I. We see pain at the cross (10a).
 - A. The Lord crushed the Servant.
 - B. The Lord caused the Servant to suffer.
 - 1. He endured physical agony.
 - 2. He endured spiritual alienation.
- II. We see gain because of the cross (10b-12).
 - A. There is vindication (10b).
 - 1. The Servant will have a people.
 - 2. The Servant will have a future.
 - 3. The Servant will fulfill God’s plan.
 - B. There is justification (11).
 - 1. The Servant satisfied God’s justice.
 - 2. The Servant justified His people.
 - C. There is exaltation (12a).
 - 1. God will honor the Servant.
 - 2. The Servant will honor His people.
 - D. There is intercession (12b).
 - 1. We have a sin-bearer.
 - 2. We have an advocate.

The Bottom Line: There is both pain and gain at the cross.

- 1. Are you grateful for His pain?
- 2. Are you a participant in His gain?

Before sermon: Redeemed people...SING THE WORD (April Scripture – Hebrews 10:14 NIV 1984 “Because by one sacrifice, He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”)

I never met Elizabeth Clephane, but I sure have been affected by a song she wrote. Elizabeth was born in Scotland in 1830 and she wrote the song just a year before she died at the age of 39. Her friends called her Sunbeam, but what fueled her joy in life was a shadow.

Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand. The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land. I’m convinced that the experience of abiding in the shadow of the cross is the key to joyful life now and unending life to come. And I want each of us to experience it.

That’s the reason for the *Cross Shadow* gift every family is receiving. A team of about a dozen individuals participated in making about 200 of these tools. That’s the best way to think about this gift. It’s not a showpiece, but a *tool*, a place where you collect and review daily Bible verses and songs about the cross. I’ll be demonstrating throughout this message. I encourage you to put it in a prominent place, perhaps on your desk or kitchen table. Every day read a verse or song about the cross. Abiding in the shadow of the cross will change the way you do family that day, and your job, and your schoolwork. From this day forward be on the lookout for verses and songs that you can add to your Cross Shadow. *I take O cross thy shadow for my abiding place*, said Sunbeam. Make that your daily resolve. Give thanks to the Lord for His sacrifice and resolve to walk in the shadow of His cross as you do life every day.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the Isaiah 53 series in 2011.

I'm convinced that if we're going to appreciate Resurrection Sunday as we ought, we must ponder it from the shadow of the cross. We'll never understand the empty tomb until we grasp what happened previously to the One who was placed in that tomb.

This morning, we come to the final verses in our exposition of Isaiah 53. As I read our text, let's listen with this question in mind. Who causes His greatest pain?

Scripture reading: Isaiah 53:10-12

Who caused the greatest pain for Jesus on Good Friday? Was it Judas who betrayed Him, or His friends who forsook Him? Was it the mocking soldiers who ripped His flesh with their whips, or Pilate who failed to use his power to protect an innocent man? Who caused Jesus' greatest pain?

About twenty years ago I found an old hymn that provides the answer, and I've meditated on it regularly during my morning times in the shadow of the cross (I encourage you to do the same). Thomas Kelly wrote the words in 1804. Kelly, whose father was a judge, was born in Dublin, Ireland and studied for the Bar. But the Lord captured his soul, called him into the ministry, and Kelly began preaching in Ireland. He also began writing hymns and over the next fifty years published 765 hymns. Including this one that answers our question.²

*Stricken, smitten and afflicted,
See him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected!
Yes, my soul, 'tis he! 'tis he!
'Tis the long-expected prophet,
David's son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
'Tis a true and faithful word.*

*Tell me, ye who hear him groaning,
Was there ever grief like his?
Friends thru' fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting his distress:
Many hands were raised to wound him,
None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced him
Was the stroke that justice gave.³*

The source of His greatest pain? My friend, it wasn't what His friends did, or his foes. Kelly is right. *The deepest stroke that pierced him was **the stroke that justice gave**.* Justice? Justice administered a stroke and pierced Jesus? Yes. What is Kelly talking about? He's simply telling us in poetic form what Isaiah told us in prophetic form 2,700 years ago, when he said (and here's another verse to add to your Cross Shadow), "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way. And **the Lord** [that's justice] has laid **on Him** [that's Jesus] the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6)."

There's so much for us to see in Isaiah 53, and why we're devoting four messages to its study and barely scratching the surface. The passage begins in Isaiah 52:13 where we meet a person who is identified as "my servant." The nation Israel was supposed to be

² https://hymnary.org/text/stricken_smitten_and_afflicted_see_him_d

³ Trinity Hymnal, #192

God's servant in the world. God chose her for that task, but Israel failed. Israel did what we all do. She went her own way. She disobeyed her Master.

So, in the eighth century BC, God announced through Isaiah the prophet that He was going to take action in two ways. First, He was going to judge Israel. Second, He was going to send another servant whom He calls "My Servant." This Servant is going to solve, not only Israel's problem, but the *world's* problem, including you and me.

There are five sections in this prophecy about the coming Servant, recorded in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. In section one Isaiah predicted that the Servant will *reign*. In sections two, three, and four, he foretold that before the Servant reigns, He will *redeem*.

Then the final section, our text this morning, verses 10-12, Isaiah mixes the two elements. He describes both the redeeming and reigning activities of the Servant. But He does so from a different slant. In the previous verses Isaiah emphasized what the cross means *for us*. In the final section He highlights what the cross means *for God*.

Did you ever think about what the cross meant for God? What was God's assessment when the Servant died? Perhaps no passage in the Bible answers this question more vividly for us than Isaiah 53:10-12. When we ponder the cross from God's perspective, we see two outcomes. We see pain. And gain. At the cross.

I. We see pain at the cross (10a).

It's been twenty-one years ago since Mel Gibson produced the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. Have you seen it? I could hardly watch it, for it portrays in graphic clarity the physical pain that Jesus endured when wicked people crucified Him.

Yet someone caused our Savior pain, someone that we don't see in the movie. Who was it? Hold on to your seats. *God*. God Himself inflicted pain on His chosen One. Notice the verbs in the first part of verse 10. *Crush*. And *put*. The subject of those two activities is the LORD, which is God's covenant name, *Yahweh*. Isaiah identifies two actions that Yahweh carried out against the Servant at the cross.

A. The Lord crushed the Servant. Verse 10 says, "Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him." Why did Jesus die such a horrid death? Again, one might say, "It's because Judas betrayed Him. That's why He died, because of Judas." Granted, Judas was guilty of a great crime, but that's not the ultimate reason He died.

Another might say, "He died because Caiaphas was a self-seeking, power-loving high priest. If Caiaphas had been a righteous man instead of a renegade, the crucifixion wouldn't have occurred." It's true that Caiaphas was wicked, but he's not why Jesus died.

"Pilate was the reason," another might suggest. "If Governor Pilate had been more interested in justice than in protecting his position, the cross would have been avoided. It was *Pilate's* fault." No, not ultimately.

Another might say, "It was the soldiers. They drove the spikes into his hands and feet. They caused His death." Again, no. They contributed, but they didn't cause it.

You say, "Well, it must be the crowd's fault. After all, the crowd forced Pilate's hand and chose the guilty man, Barabbas, over the innocent Jesus." Once again, no.

"Well then," you ask, "why did it happen? Who caused the Servant to die?" Listen again to Isaiah's answer. "It was the LORD's will to crush Him." Yes, it's true that Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and the rest committed unthinkable crimes, and they are responsible for them. As are we. *We* are responsible for the cross, for *our* sins made the cross necessary. Yet ultimately, it was the merciful God Himself who willed it.

Did you realize that according to Revelation 13:8, the Messiah was “slain from the creation of the world”? In eternity past, the Triune God Himself designed the event that occurred at the cross.

Does that blow your mind? It does mine. Yet it’s true. Listen to Jesus’ own words in John 6:38-40. “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but **to do the will of him who sent me**.³⁹ And this is **the will of him who sent me**, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.⁴⁰ For **my Father’s will** is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Why did the Servant die? It was the Lord’s will.⁴ And not just that He *die*. Isaiah says, “It pleased the LORD to *bruise* Him (KJV).” The ESV and NIV use the verb “crush.” The Hebrew word can be translated “break in pieces.” God Himself chose to *crush* His elect Servant.

The prophet Zechariah said something similar in Zechariah 13:7 “‘Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!’ declares the LORD Almighty. ‘*Strike* the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.’”

But there’s more. Isaiah mentions a second, divinely initiated activity. First, the Lord *crushed* the Servant. Second, the LORD *put*. “He has *put* Him to grief (ESV).”

B. The Lord caused the Servant to suffer. How so? In two ways.

1. *He endured physical agony.* Most people are familiar with this. Mel portrayed this clearly. The thorny crown on His brow. The whipped flesh. The exposed bones. The unthinkable agonies of death by crucifixion. Yet as bad as the physical agony was, it pales in comparison with a second kind of suffering.

2. *He endured spiritual alienation.* Notice the next phrase in verse 10, in the NIV, “*And though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering.*” The Servant died how? As a guilt offering. The ESV says, “When his soul makes an offering for guilt.” Or as the KJV states, “an offering for sin.”

For the first part of my life I thought that God sent Jesus to earth to be my example. I went to a church that talked a lot about the golden rule. *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.* That’s why Jesus came. To show us how to do that. To inspire us to do that.

Here’s the problem. That’s only part two of the story. Jesus did not die merely to give us a good example to follow. He died as a *guilt offering*.

You say, “What is a *guilt offering*?” God gives us the answer in the Torah. Listen to Leviticus 5:17–19, “If anyone sins, doing any of the things that by the LORD’s commandments ought not to be done, though he did not know it, then realizes his **guilt**, he shall bear his iniquity.¹⁸ He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent, **for a guilt offering**, and the priest shall make atonement for him for the mistake that he made unintentionally, and he shall be forgiven.¹⁹ It is a **guilt offering**; he has indeed incurred **guilt** before the LORD.”

⁴ Another text that emphasizes the divine design in the cross is John 12:27-33, “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.²⁸ Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.³⁰ Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine.³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”

Guilt is a huge problem, indeed a *universal* problem. Where does guilt come from? That's a loaded question. I googled, "Why do people feel guilty?" and one of the first answers I found was a post from Psych Central entitled, "*Why You Might Feel Guilty All the Time: What to Do About It.*"⁵ Here in part is what it told me about guilt.

"Feeling guilty all the time can contribute to developing anxiety and depression, but there are ways to manage these feelings so they don't get in the way of living your life as you want to."

"Because excessive guilt can leave you ruminating on "should haves" and "could haves," it can contribute to developing certain mental health conditions, such as: Anxiety disorders. Depression. Obsessive-compulsive disorder. Dysphoria."

"If guilt is challenging for you, there are ways you can manage these unhelpful feelings.

1. Identify your triggers for guilt.
2. Practice self-awareness.
3. Write it out.
4. Talk it out.
5. Practice self-compassion.
6. Learn from your mistakes.

How we deal with guilt is one of the main differences between psychology and biblical counseling. Psychology looks at guilt by turning *inward*, with the assumption that guilt "gets in the way of living life the way you want to." But the Bible looks at guilt by turning *upward*. Guilt is actually a good gift from our Creator. It's the warning light on the dashboard that says there's trouble in the engine.

What causes guilt? Ultimately, sin does. When I do something that God prohibits or fail to do something that God commands, I feel guilty. What should I do with these feelings? Ignore them? Try to replace them with positive self-talk? Mask them with chemicals? Blame-shift others as the cause? No, that's like putting a bandaid on a cancer sore.

My friend, if you're struggling with guilt, I have good news for you. In His mercy God Himself provides the solution. What was His solution in Leviticus? He instructed a guilty person to bring a ram without blemish to a priest. The priest would then offer the ram to make an atonement for the sinner. The ram was called a "guilt offering."

You see, in God's universe sin has a penalty. It is death. But God's provision for the removal of sin is the death of a substitute. That's what the guilt offering was for the Jewish people, an offering which the Lord accepted in the place of the guilty person who offered it. And that's what Isaiah predicted that God would provide by sending the Servant into the world, His beloved Son, to become "an offering for guilt."

Would you offer your child to take away someone else's guilt? And if you were that child, would you agree to give your life? Not one of us would. Yet that's exactly what God chose to do at the cross. And that's exactly what His Son chose to do as well, for this was a mutual decision.

Listen to Jesus in John 10:17-18, "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

⁵ <https://psychcentral.com/health/why-you-feel-guilty-all-the-time>

Paul marvels at this staggering expression of love in Romans 5:6-8. “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Yes, He died as a *guilt offering*. For the *ungodly*. For *us*. That’s why we gather in this church-house every Lord’s Day, to worship the One who became a guilt offering for us. The One who took our sin and guilt is worthy of our trust, thanks, and worship, isn’t He? If you don’t have a church home where you are presently worshipping Him and learning how to live for Him, you are welcome here. We’d love to have you join us as we marvel at His love, my friend.

This is the first thing we see when we look at the cross from God’s perspective. Pain.

II. We see gain because of the cross (10b-12).

You’ll notice a shift in the tense of the verbs at the middle of verse 10, from past tense to future tense. The past tense verbs speak of the pain. The future tense verbs speak of the gain. According to Isaiah, the pain will not be the end. The Servant’s pain will result in gain. What kind of gain? Isaiah reveals four outcomes/benefits.

A. There is vindication (10b). Verse 10 continues (ESV), “He has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”⁶

There’s quite a change in tone from the beginning of verse 10 to the end. Isaiah says that after God’s Chosen One becomes a guilt offering, He will vindicate Him in three ways.

1. *The Servant will have a people.* Jesus once said (John 12:24) “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

That’s what Isaiah predicted. “He will see His offspring [‘seed’ in the KJV].” He who was alone will have a people! And who are His people? His people are those who believe in Him. Have you believed in Him? If so, this is you, and me. We are His seed, His offspring, His people. We are not our own. We are *His*.

Notice the focus. He doesn’t exist for us. We exist for Him. This is what He gains because of His pain. The Servant will have a people.

2. *The Servant will have a future.* When He comes, the Servant is going to die, says Isaiah. But death won’t be the end. Isaiah predicts the Servant’s resurrection in verse 10, for His death will not be His final day. The Lord will “prolong his days.”

David made a similar prophecy in Psalm 16:9-10, “Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the grave, *nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*”

He will die, yes, but He won’t decay. To the contrary, He will have a glorious future. Jesus makes this declaration in Revelation 1:18, “I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

3. *The Servant will fulfill God’s plan.* Isaiah says, “The will [KJV, ‘pleasure’] of the LORD will prosper in his hand.” Notice how verse 10 both begins and ends emphasizing the Lord’s will. It was the Lord’s will to *crush* Servant, and it will be the

⁶ NIV “Though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.”

Lord's will to *prosper* Him. In other words, God determined to judge His Son, and God also determined to exalt Him. He will vindicate His Son.

Warren Wiersbe tells a story about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon. The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience. But the words from the bench silenced his plea: "Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged."⁷

Wiersbe explains, "One day Jesus Christ will say to rebellious sinners, 'During that long day of grace, I was the Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your Judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!'"⁸

My friend, if you have yet to repent and put your trust in the Servant, you need to know this. God will vindicate His Son. As surely as He crushed Him at Calvary, He will vindicate Him by judging those who have rejected Him.

B. There is justification (11). The ESV says, "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities."⁹

This is one of the most beautiful doctrines in all of the Bible. *Justification* answers the question, "How can I ever stand in the presence of a holy God?" There are only two options. One, you are perfect. Or two, you are justified. *Perfect* people and *justified* people are the only people who can abide in the presence of God Almighty. And since no one is perfect, that leaves only option two. We must be justified.

How does that happen? Isaiah gives the glorious answer in verse 11.

1. *The Servant satisfied God's justice.* What did Isaiah say would occur after the Servant suffered? Look again at the beginning of verse 11. The NIV says, "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life *and be satisfied.*" Who will be satisfied? Who is the "he" mentioned here? Is Isaiah saying that after the Servant's suffering ends, *the Servant* (that is, the Anointed One, Jesus) will be satisfied? Certainly, Jesus was satisfied after He completed His redemptive work and cried out, "It is finished!"

But it could refer to God the Father. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be *satisfied,*" is the rendering of the KJV. When God the Father sees what happens on the cross, He is satisfied. Why? Because on the cross His Son meets the righteous demands of His own justice. Sin must be judged. And at the cross, it was.

Whether Isaiah has the Son's satisfaction in mind, or the Father's, I'm not sure. But of this there can be no doubt. When the Triune God looks at the cross, He is most certainly satisfied. And this is good news for those of us who have sinned.

How so? Because of a second accomplishment.

2. *The Servant justified His people.* "By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities (NIV)." The term "justify" means "to declare or make righteous." In fact, in the Hebrew text the phrase reads, "My righteous servant will make righteous many."

⁷ Story told in Warren Wiersbe's *Meet Yourself in the Psalms*

⁸ As told by [Doug Van Essen](#).

⁹ Here's the NIV, "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities."

That's what the Servant Jesus did. By dying for sinners, He "*justified*" them. While on the cross, God imputed the sins of hell-deserving people to His Son, and imputed the righteousness of His heaven-deserving Son to His people. God treated His Son the way sinners deserve to be treated, and He treats sinners who believe the way His Son deserves to be treated, because He is righteous.

This is glorious news, beloved. This is the gospel. The God of the Bible justifies sinners. So, this very moment, you are either justified or you aren't. Justification isn't a process, but a one-time event.

This is the greatest need of our unsaved children and grandchildren. To be justified. Listen to Paul's invitation in Acts 13:38-39, "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is *justified* from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses."

There is the basis of justification. It's not our goodness—we have none before a holy God. It's not our works—they are as filthy rags to a perfect God (Isa 64:6). It is Christ. When a sinner believes in Jesus Christ and His atoning work, God *justifies* that sinner. He declares that sinner to be right with Him on the basis of the merit of His Son.

You say, "I want to know more about this thing called 'justification'." Great! I recommend a good book to you. *Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. It's filled with verses you'll want to add to your Cross Shadow. Such as...

Romans 3:23-24 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are *justified* freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Romans 5:9 "Since we have now been *justified* by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

Rom. 5:19 "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be *made righteous*."

My dear friends, was there pain at the cross? Yes, think of it as pain with purpose. Because of the cross there is justification. We can be right with God and know we are right with God! We can sing with confidence these words by William Cowper (another card for the Cross Shadow):

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

*E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die;
And shall be till I die;
And shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die.*

But there's more, a third benefit. There is vindication, justification, and *exaltation*.

C. There is exaltation (12a). Isaiah speaks for God in verse 12 (ESV), "Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."¹⁰

There are two aspects to this exaltation. Here's the first.

1. *God will honor the Servant.* He says He will "give Him a portion among the great." When the Servant came to earth, He entered the world in obscurity and experienced rejection. There was no fanfare, only a cross. That's what man gave Him.

But God says, "Because My Servant was willing to endure this shame, I will give Him a portion with the great." And He did. It began when He raised Jesus from the dead. Then He gave Him a choice seat at His right hand in heaven. And one day He will exalt Him on the earth, and every knee will bow before Him.

Yes, God will honor His beloved Servant. But there's a second exaltation.

2. *The Servant will honor His people.* Isaiah says, "He will divide the spoils with the strong." In Bible times, when a military leader conquered a foe, it was not uncommon for him to return home and share the fruit of his effort with his subjects. That's what Isaiah predicted the Servant would do.

And He did. Paul describes it this way in Ephesians 4:7-8, "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and *gave gifts to men.*'" What a gracious Savior we have! He is exalted, and He shares His exaltation with His people.

Hebrews 2:14-15 also speaks of this sharing (another Cross Shadow passage!), "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

One more benefit. There is vindication, justification, exaltation, and intercession.

D. There is intercession (12b). "For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." What an amazing conclusion to this prophecy! Through the Servant's pain, we experience the gain of intercession in two ways.

1. *We have a sin-bearer.* Look at the word "bore." It means "to carry a load on your back." That's what the Servant did. He bore the sin of many. Now notice the word "many." We saw the same word in verse 11. It doesn't say "all" but "many." He will justify *many* (11). He bore the sin of *many* (12). The Servant did not die merely to make salvation possible for the world in general. He died to justify and save *a people*. When He died, He bore the sin of those people. Granted, the blood He shed is sufficient to save any who will call upon Him in faith, but it's efficient to save His people.

When He died on the cross, Jesus had specific people in mind. He bore their sin. He died, not simply for sin in general, but as their sin-bearer.

Peter he marvels at this powerful truth (and in fact quotes from Isaiah 53) in 1 Peter 2:24 (one of my favorite Cross Shadow texts), "He himself *bore our sins* in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."¹¹

¹⁰ NIV "Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors."

¹¹ Other significant NT texts: **Hebrews 2:17** "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."

In his sermon entitled “*The Precious Blood of Christ*,” Charles Spurgeon put it this way, “Christ, therefore, came and was punished in the place and stead of all His people. Ten thousand times ten thousand are the souls for whom Jesus shed His blood... I may make sacrifices; I may mortify my body; I may be baptized; I may receive sacraments; I may pray until my knees grow hard with kneeling; I may read devout words until I know them by heart; I may celebrate masses; I may worship in one language or in fifty languages; but I can never be at one with God, except by blood; and that blood, ‘the precious blood of Christ.’”¹²

Listen to the final words of Isaiah 53, “And makes intercession for the transgressors.” This is what we have, beloved. Present tense.

2. *We have an advocate.* Years before Isaiah penned these words, according to Exodus 32:32, Moses *made intercession* for Israel. But Moses had a problem, as do we. Moses made intercession for his wayward people, but he too was a sinner. He needed (the world needed) someone sinless to make intercession. And God sent Him.

“Who is he that condemns?” asks Paul in Romans 8:34. “Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also *interceding for us.*”

Hebrews 7:25 declares, “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to *intercede for them.*”

And 1 John 2:1 offers this encouragement, “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who *speaks to the Father in our defense*—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

I began this message by suggesting that we will never understand the empty tomb unless we first understand what happened to the person who was placed in that tomb. We’ve just seen Isaiah’s answer.

The Bottom Line: There is both pain and gain at the cross.

He experienced both for us, beloved. Which means two questions are in order.

1. *Are you grateful for His pain?* Oh, how He suffered! But it was not random pain, meaningless pain, but pain for a purpose. God crushed His Son, and God says He is *satisfied* with the pain His Son experienced. The question is, *are we?*

Are you grateful for what He endured, my friend? Have you told Him? Are you showing Him? God says there is *gain* because of the cross that He now offers to you. To experience this gain, you must admit that your sins took Him there and that God judged Him there in your place. You must stop trying to reach God on your own efforts and put your total trust in the risen Savior who died for you.

“What should I say to Him?” you ask. Say something like this (words worthy of adding your Cross Shadow).

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.*

Hebrews 9:26b “...But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

¹² Charles Spurgeon, *Twelve Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ*, p. 36.

*Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save and Thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;*

Foul, I to the fountain fly, wash me, Savior, or I die?

2. *Are you a participant in His gain?* What is the gain? Because of the cross, God gains. And we gain. God gains a people, former rebels who now love and live for Him and will enjoy Him forever. We gain forgiveness and a new heart and eternal life. We gain the privilege of abiding in the shadow of His cross until we see Him face to face.

Closing Songs: #183 *"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"* (all three verses to new tune with new ending), then #220 *"He Lives"* (verses 1 and 3; final chorus piano drops out)

If you're able, use the recording app on your phone to record the congregation as we sing together our closing songs today. Play it this week as you gaze at the shadow of the cross in your quiet time.

Community Group Discussion:

1. Today we are finishing our series *In the Shadow of the Cross*. How has the Lord used Isaiah 53 in your life as we have meditated on it together this month?
2. Read again Isaiah 53. What verse stands out most to you in this prophecy?
3. The Servant experienced many kinds of pain which are identified in Isaiah 52:13 to 53:9. List as many as you can find. Then look carefully at verse 10. The kind of pain the Servant experienced in verse 10a is far worse. How so?
4. In the final verses of his prophecy, Isaiah identifies four gains that will come as a result of the Servant's terrible death. What gain do we see in verse 10b? In verse 11? In verse 12a? In verse 12b? What must we do to be a participant in these gains?
5. Spend time as a group offering prayers of thanksgiving for the Servant's work. Then offer prayers of intercession for others who still need to hear and respond to the good news regarding the Servant.