

Main Idea: In Isaiah 52:13-53:3, the prophet invites us to behold the Servant who suffered. He makes two predictions about Him, and both predictions hold tremendous implications for our lives, as we’ll see.

- I. Behold the honor of the Servant (52:13-15).
 - A. He will act wisely (13a).
 - B. He will be exalted (13b).
 - C. Before this, however, He will suffer (14).
 1. His appearance will be appalling.
 2. His treatment will be inhumane.
 - D. In so doing, He will sprinkle the nations (15).
 1. He will act as a priest.
 2. He will act as a king.
- II. Behold the humiliation of the Servant (53:1-3).
 - A. Here’s what He did (1-2).
 1. The King made himself vulnerable (2a).
 2. The Majestic One became common (2b).
 - B. Here’s what He endured (3).
 1. The world despised Him.
 2. The world rejected Him.
 3. The world devalued Him.

Make It Personal: When we place ourselves in the shadow of the cross...

1. We behold what our Savior deserves.
2. We behold what our Savior desires.

Before sermon: Redeemed people...SING THE WORD (March – Psalm 25:4-5)

For the past month we’ve been learning about sin. Today we’re turning our attention to God’s solution for our sin problem. His solution is none other than the person and amazing work of His own dear Son.

Let’s talk about the title of our series. We’re calling it *In the Shadow of the Cross*. I recently spent time with my youngest grandchild playing with flashlights. In fact, this will be one of your assignments today in community groups.

Think about what a shadow is. Shadows are interesting. A shadow has no intrinsic substance. It has no weight. It takes up no room. Yet it’s there. And if you see it, I mean really *see* it, it sort of grabs your attention.

Think about it. You put a light on an object and a shadow appears. A shadow is created by something else and if the shadow is formed by a compelling object, once you see it, your eyes are drawn to it. You stare at it. You wonder what caused it.

That is what our series is intended to produce. We’re going to gaze, stare, behold an object. We want to put light on this object so that we might gaze at its shadow and then live in that shadow. This experience changes a person in fundamental ways, as we’ll see.

The light is Isaiah 53. The object is the most dreadful, wonderful sight ever seen by human eyes. We’re going to spend four Sundays gazing at Isaiah’s text, at this sacred object, at this amazing person. My goal is that as we walk out of this room each week, we will leave under the shadow of the cross. The climax will take place on Resurrection Sunday, April 20, as we celebrate the outcome of the cross.

To help us learn how to live in the shadow of the cross, we have a gift for you. A team of men are investing a labor of love on a woodworking project called *The Cross Shadow*. Each family will receive one on April 13. This gift has two purposes.

** 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.

First, it's intended to create gospel conversations for you, with your families, friends, and neighbors too. Sherry and I are planning to invite our neighbors to our home both on Good Friday and on Easter morning at sunrise and give them *The Cross Shadow* as a gift, and talk about why the cross means so much to us. You might consider doing the same.

The other purpose of *The Cross Shadow* is to assist you in your personal and family devotional life. It's a tool to help you memorize and sing Bible verses and hymns about the cross. I'll demonstrate how at the end of this message and then do so more fully in our Sunday evening service on April 13.

We also have a theme song which we'll be teaching you at the end of today's service, some take-home-theology, to help us walk into our week in the shadow of the cross.

My friends, here's the truth. We have a masterpiece and may not even realize it. No amount of money could touch it. It's a portrait unlike any other. The artist didn't use a paintbrush and colors, but a pen and words. This depiction is so vivid and lifelike that we can't stop looking at it.

The artist drew this picture seven hundred years before the subject in his painting came to the earth. God in His kindness gave this portrait of His Son to Isaiah so the world would recognize His Son when He arrived. Sadly, though the picture could be no clearer, the world missed Him. And many are still missing Him.

As we gaze at Isaiah's masterpiece in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, I must warn you. The image is graphic. We will see sights that will touch our hearts deeply and perhaps cause our eyes to well up in tears.

It certainly did the hymnwriter who wrote, "*O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down, now scornfully surrounded with thorns Thine only crown. How pale Thou art with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn, how does that visage languish, which once was bright as morn!*"

I want you to know up front, beloved, that the pace of this series will be intentionally slow. We're going to devote four messages to the examination of fifteen verses. I don't want us to rush through Isaiah's text, but to follow its development carefully and prayerfully, line by line, marveling at its message word by word.

Let me give you the text and titles of all four messages...

"Behold the Servant Who Suffered" (52:13-53:3)

"The Servant Who Died as a Substitute" (53:4-6)

"The Silent Servant" or *"Silent to the Last Breath"* (53:7-9)

"The Servant's Pain, Our Gain" (53:10-12)

Isaiah begins his word-picture with a command. "Behold," he says in 52:13 ("See" says the NIV). That's precisely what we will do. We're going to take a close, careful look at an inspired portrait of the Servant who suffered.

Let's begin to place ourselves in the shadow of the cross by reading today's text.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 52:13-53:3

Behold, my Servant, writes the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah penned these words more than seven hundred years BC. He is speaking for God. Who is this Servant? This is actually the fourth and longest of the "servant" songs in Isaiah.² It's also the climax of the second section of Isaiah's book (chapters 40-66), if not the entire book.

Sometimes "servant" in Isaiah refers to Israel, but not here. Israel failed to serve the Lord again and again. That's why this servant is coming, *the Servant*.

Isaiah 53 has been called the "gospel of the Old Testament." It is quoted or referred to at least eighty-five times in the New Testament. In Acts 8:34, for instance, a man from

² The four servant songs are 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; and 52:13-53:12.

Ethiopia was reading Isaiah 53 and asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” In the next verse, “Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus (35).”

And the Ethiopian’s life was changed that day. Such is the power of Isaiah 53. If you want to know Jesus, my friend, if you want to know Him *well*, then Isaiah 53 is worthy of your attention.

Behold, my Servant! Indeed, we shall. As we behold Him in today’s text, we will see two stunning features. In scene one, His honor. In scene two, His humiliation.

I. Behold the honor of the Servant (52:13-15).

Listen again to verses 13-15, “Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.”

In this first scene, Isaiah indicates that the coming Servant is a king. He is a victor. He is royalty. Though we don’t see the term, we know who this is. This is the Anointed One predicted throughout the Old Testament. This is the Messiah, and Isaiah mentions four accomplishments pertaining to His *honor*.

A. He will act wisely (13a). “My servant will act wisely,” God says through His prophet (in the NIV). He “shall deal prudently” is how the KJV translators rendered the phrase. What does that mean? To answer this question, we must dig deeper into Isaiah’s use of this phrase “my servant.”

In the eighth century BC, Isaiah preached a twofold message. In chapters 1-39 he told his people judgment was coming, for a holy God must judge sin. Then in chapters 40-66 he preached a message of comfort, for a gracious God doesn’t deal with sinners as they deserve.

But how can God manifest both His holiness *and* grace? How can He both judge sin *and* pardon sinners? Isaiah is now giving the answer beginning in Isaiah 52:13, “See, my servant shall act wisely.”

Here’s how God will do it, says Isaiah. Through the One He calls “my servant.” Who is this servant? If you have read the first half of the Bible, you know that God chose *Israel* to be His servant. Out of all the nations on the planet, He selected Israel to do His bidding in the world.

But Israel kept failing. Over and over again, Israel blew it as God’s servant. Instead of pleasing the Master, Israel did what all sinners do. Israel went its own way.

And then God in His mercy intervened. God made an announcement. He said He was going to send a substitute into the world to act in Israel’s place. This substitute would be *the Servant*. Whereas the first servant (Israel) failed, this servant would succeed. He would fulfill the plan of God perfectly. Unlike foolish Israel, He will act *prudently*. He, Isaiah says, will *act wisely*.

What else will He do? Isaiah mentions a second accomplishment.

B. He will be exalted (13b). The NIV says, “He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.” Do those words sound familiar? On the day the Lord called Isaiah into the ministry, He gave the prophet a vision of a most spectacular sight. Do you remember what it was? Isaiah described it in Isaiah 6:1, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, *high and exalted*, and the train of his robe filled the temple.”

Isaiah saw the Lord. He saw Him sitting on His heavenly throne, *high and exalted*. That was in Isaiah 6. And now in Isaiah 52, he says that God’s servant will be raised, lifted up, and highly exalted. This *will* happen, future tense. And where? Not just in heaven, but on earth too, as we’ll see in a moment.

But this is an unusual king. He will be exalted, without a doubt.

C. Before this, however, He will suffer (14). Notice the flow of the text again, paying special attention to the tense of the verbs. Verse 13 says, “My servant *shall* act wisely; he *shall* be high and lifted up, and *shall be* exalted.” The exaltation will come.

But according to the prophecy, something else will occur first. Verse 14 says in the ESV, “As many were astonished at you.” Then a hyphen. Then, “His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance.” The NIV puts it this way, “Just as there *were* many who were appalled at him—his appearance *was* so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.”

Notice the verbs. They’re past tense (*astonished, marred*). Isaiah is describing an event future to him that will precede the exaltation of the Messiah. Before the Servant is honored, He will suffer. How bad will his affliction be? Isaiah describes the suffering in two ways.

1. *His appearance will be appalling.* The ESV says many will be “astonished”. The NIV says many were “appalled” at Him. Here’s how one Hebrew dictionary defines this term: “to be horrified, terrified, dismayed, i.e., have an emotion or attitude of horror and great fear, implying also dismay and discouragement.”³

This is the effect His appearance will have on observers, says Isaiah. It will be horrible, *appalling*. But that’s not all.

2. *His treatment will be inhumane.* According to Isaiah, the Servant is going to suffer such abuse that His appearance won’t even be human-like. He will be “marred” (ESV), “disfigured” (NIV). As the old AV puts it, “His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.”

This isn’t Isaiah’s first mention of the Servant’s inhumane treatment. Two chapters earlier the prophet contrasted Israel’s sin with the Servant’s obedience, and records these words of the Servant in Isaiah 50:6. “I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.”

In Bible times, people respected a man’s beard. To pluck his beard was to show utter disdain for the man. In 2 Samuel 10 the Ammonites humiliated David’s servants by shaving off half of their beards.⁴

This is what He will endure, says Isaiah. Inhumane treatment to the point that his appearance will be appalling. And of course, what Isaiah predicted, the Messiah endured.

The New Testament documents the abuse in four gospel accounts. They slapped Him. They spit in His face. They buffeted Him. They struck Him with the palms of their hands (all recorded in Matt 26:67). They hit Him on the head, scourged and whipped Him and pummeled His flesh until He no longer appeared human.

Take another look at that term “marred” in verse 14. That word appears elsewhere in the Old Testament. Do you recognize it? It’s in the Pentateuch, where it describes the kind of animal that was *unacceptable* as a sacrifice to God. A Jew could not offer a “marred”, blemished animal to God.

³ DBL Hebrew #9037, taken from *Logos*.

⁴ Observation by Arthur Walton, *Portraits of Christ in Isaiah*, p. 84.

Yet here we see the Servant. He Himself is acceptable, even perfect. Yet He becomes marred. Why? Why would God allow His chosen Servant to become as a blemished animal?

Isaiah answers the question in verse 15, “So shall he sprinkle many nations.”

D. In so doing, He will sprinkle the nations (15). What does that mean? The language indicates that when the Servant comes, He will fulfill two roles.

1. *He will act as a priest.* The term “sprinkle” has connections to the sacrificial system. It’s what the priests did with animal sacrifices. For example, this is what God told the Jewish priests to do with a sacrificed animal in Exodus 29:20-21.

“Slaughter it, take some of its blood and put it on the lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then *sprinkle* blood against the altar on all sides. ²¹ And take some of the blood on the altar and some of the anointing oil and *sprinkle* it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. Then he and his sons and their garments will be consecrated.”

If there’s anything that God makes clear in the Old Testament, it’s this. To approach Him, you must come on *His* terms, not your own. If you are a sinner (and that includes all of us), you can’t enter His presence until something happens. Your sins must be *covered by blood*.

“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins,” says Leviticus 17:11. God says there must be an atonement, a blood sacrifice, a *sprinkling*.

That’s why He gave Israel the priesthood. The priests *sprinkled* the people. And that’s what The Servant would do, says God through Isaiah. He will *sprinkle*.

But who will He sprinkle? Only the Jews? No. “So shall He sprinkle *many nations*.” That’s interesting. When God first chose Israel, His intent was to use Israel to manifest His glory throughout the whole world. Yet Israel failed. Instead of displaying God’s glory, servant-Israel distorted God’s glory before the on-looking world.

But this Servant won’t fail. He, the perfect priest, *will sprinkle many nations*.⁵

O my friend, do you long to be clean in the eyes of God? If so, I have good news for you! In the words of the hymnwriter...

*Would you be whiter, much whiter than snow?
There’s pow’r in the blood, pow’r in the blood:
Sin stains are lost in the life-giving flow;
There’s wonderful pow’r in the blood.*

*There is pow’r, pow’r,
Wonder-working pow’r
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is pow’r, pow’r,
Wonder-working pow’r
In the precious blood of the Lamb.*

He will be a priest, says Isaiah. Yet not just a priest.

2. *He will act as a king.* Notice carefully the result of His “sprinkling” work mentioned in verse 15 (NIV). “So will he sprinkle many nations, and *kings will shut their*

⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.”

This is world-changing, my friend. Isaiah says that after the Servant finishes His work as *priest*, kings will shut their mouths because of Him.

When in the world does a king ever shut his mouth? Here’s when. When he’s in the presence of someone greater, right? A king keeps telling other people what to do until someone more powerful, more important, more honorable enters his realm. And at that point he acknowledges it is *not* his realm any longer and shuts his mouth.

My friend, the day is coming, as surely as the Servant was once marred, when the kings of the earth will shut their mouths and stop their boasting. And if that’s what *kings* will do, the people who are the most powerful on the planet, what about the rest of us?

Indeed, *every* knee will bow and *every* tongue will confess that the Servant, Jesus the Christ, is Lord of all (Phil 2:10-11)! And it will happen just like Isaiah predicted twenty-seven centuries ago.

The truth is, it’s already happening in part. In Romans 15:21, the apostle Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 to show why he is so passionate about taking the gospel to unreached people groups throughout the world of his day. He says, “It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation. Rather, as it is written: ‘Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand (Rom. 15:20-21).”

This is why Paul was a missionary. This is why we sent Douglas and Lacey to ABWE last week to be trained to become career missionaries. So that Gentiles will glorify God, just as Isaiah said they would.

Church family, we have a wonderful team of about twenty missionaries, but the reality is that most of them are over the age of fifty, and most are in their sixties and up. Where’s the next generation of servants who will say, “I want to be a part of seeing the fulfillment of Isaiah 52:15? I challenge you, teens and twenty-somethings. You have a life in front of you. Should God so choose, would you be willing to invest it so that an unreached people group will hear about Him and see His beauty?

And there is work to be done here too! For there are unreached people all around us who need to experience the cleansing power of His sprinkled blood.

Let’s keep praying to that end, church family! O Lord, send another generation of laborers into Your harvest field, so that Your Beloved Servant and Son will receive the honor He deserves.

This is what we see when we gaze at the portrait in final verses of Isaiah 52. We see the *honor* of the Servant. Then we come to Isaiah 53 and see something else.

II. Behold the humiliation of the Servant (53:1-3).

Isaiah begins with two questions in verse 1. “Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

You’ll notice a pronoun change. In the final verses of Isaiah 52, the words “he,” “his,” and “him” appear over and over. There will be a similar emphasis on third personal pronouns starting again in verse 7 through the end of the chapter. But in the first six verses of Isaiah 53, Isaiah switches from “he” and “him” to “we,” “us,” and “our.” In the NIV, I count fourteen first person plural pronouns in this section.

That’s because the discussion in the first six verses of Isaiah 53 is very personal. Isaiah is describing the humiliation of the Servant, and he does so by using terms that draw us in. This humiliation has to do with us.

“Who has believed our message?” Isaiah asks in verse 1. In the previous verse, he predicted that the day is coming when kings will shut their mouths before God’s Servant, when the Servant will be highly exalted.

But who believes that? We’re living in a world full of people who most certainly do *not* believe it. The atheist, Richard Dawkins, doesn’t buy it. North Korea’s dictator, Kim Jong Un, certainly doesn’t. The Islamic terrorist doesn’t. But the truth is, if you have yet to repent and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you don’t really believe it either, or you would call out to Him now before it’s too late.

The apostle John quoted this verse to explain the negative response of people to Jesus. Listen to John 12:37-38, “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: ‘Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’”

Paul likewise referenced this Isaiah text to explain the opposition he faced as he presented the gospel. He says in Romans 10:16, “But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’”

My friend, though the message may be hard to believe, it is nonetheless true. Isaiah predicted the Servant’s exaltation just like he predicted His humiliation. His exaltation is future. It’s coming. His humiliation has already occurred, and Isaiah describes it for us right here.

We’re on holy ground, beloved. Beginning in verse 2, Isaiah beckons us to behold the suffering Servant and portrays His humiliation in two ways.

A. Here’s what He did (1-2). Listen to verse 2, “For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.”⁶

We’re still talking about the King, the One before whom all other kings shall shut their mouths. But this King did something very *un-kingly*.

1. *The King made himself vulnerable (2a).* Isaiah refers to the Servant as a “young plant” (NIV “tender shoot”). This isn’t the first time Isaiah used this language. Back in 11:1, he made this prediction, “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.” Jesse, of course, was King David’s father. This prophecy indicates the coming Messiah, like a shoot from a stump, will come up from the lineage of David.

But in chapter 53, we’re told something peculiar about this coming King. Before He rules, He will become like a tender shoot, in other words, fragile and delicate. And He will grow up like a root out of dry ground, that is, exposed to danger and unprotected.

What does this mean? It means that when the Servant comes, He will arrive not with a spectacular display of power but in lowliness and weakness. He will do what is unthinkable for a king. He will make Himself vulnerable.

Yet there’s more. A second very un-kingly action.

2. *The Majestic One became common (2b).* Contrary to the artwork you may have seen, when Jesus came to earth, there was no halo around His head. His skin didn’t shine (except when He was transfigured on the mountain). Here is Isaiah’s portrait.

“He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.”⁷ Ponder those words. He had no impressive “*form*”, for He was robed in

⁶ The NIV says, “He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”

⁷ NIV “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”

ordinary flesh. Nor did He possess a trace of “*majesty*” (one translation uses the word “lordliness”), for He was born in a stable and raised in a peasant carpenter’s home.

And no *beauty* either. In 1 Samuel 16:18, this word “beauty” is used to describe David to Saul. David was a “fine-looking, handsome” man. But according to Isaiah, the Servant did not have a striking appearance. There was nothing about His appearance that would have indicated that He was the Son of God.

Let this sink in. When the Son of God came to earth, He looked like a man. Though He retained His deity, He *was* a man, an ordinary, common, unimpressive, lower-class man who had no earthly clout or connections. In His own words, He “had no place to lay His head.” When He died, He had no money and was buried in a borrowed tomb.

This is the true picture of the Servant. This is what He did. The One before whom kings will shut their mouths made Himself vulnerable and became common.

B. Here’s what He endured (3). Verse 3 says, “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

Isaiah uses three poignant verbs to depict the response He received from the world.

1. The world despised Him. The term appears twice in verse 3. He was *despised*. He was *despised*. Daniel used this word in Daniel 11:21 to refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the hated persecutor of the Jews, the man who desecrated the Jewish temple in 165 BC by offering a pig on it. You can imagine what the Jews thought of him. Isaiah says, “That’s what they’ll think of the Servant too. They’ll *despise* Him.”

2. The world rejected Him. If you despise something, you naturally try to get rid of it. You don’t want it around. And so it was with the Servant.

“What do you want me to do with Him?” Pilate asked the crowd.

Their reply? “Crucify Him!”

“But what has He done?” Pilate responded. “Do you want me to crucify your king?”

“We have no king but Caesar!” they shouted. “Crucify Him!”

Thus, the world not only despised Him, but rejected Him too. Yet there’s one more verb.

3. The world devalued Him. “We esteemed Him not,” says Isaiah. The verb “esteem” means “to think, regard, or value.” When God’s beloved Servant came, the world didn’t think much of Him. It wasn’t impressed by Him, particularly once He made His true intentions known.

Let’s not miss the pronoun. First person plural. *We*. It wasn’t just the Jews who did this. *We* did it, says Isaiah. *We* esteemed Him not. *We* didn’t value Him. *We* didn’t want Him. Why should we? He said He came to save sinners. But we’re not sinners. We are good people, worthy of God’s love and acceptance. Aren’t we?

Isaiah answers that question for us in verse 6 (part of next week’s text). What are we? We are like sheep who have gone astray. All of us. We have turned away from God our shepherd, every one of us, and chosen to live our own sinful, hell-deserving way.

And what did the LORD God do? Hold on to your seats. *The LORD* (the One we have turned from). *Has laid on Him* (His beloved Servant). *The iniquity* (the sin, the transgression). *Of us all*.

Unthinkable, yet true! The Servant has *borne our griefs*, says verse 4. He was *pierced for our transgressions* and *crushed for our iniquities*, says verse 5. The *chastisement that brought us peace* was UPON HIM.

He was not the kind of Messiah we wanted, yet He didn’t shrink back, says Isaiah. He accomplished what we needed. He took our place. He became our substitute. And because He did, we need to make *the shadow* of the object upon which He died *our abiding place*.

Like Elizabeth Clephane did. A young woman who died at the age of 39, who penned this resolve of her life.

*Beneath the cross of Jesus, I fain would take my stand;
The shadow of a mighty Rock within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat and the burden of the day.*

*Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One who suffered there for me;
And from my smitten heart with tears, two wonders I confess:
The wonders of redeeming love, and my unworthiness.*

*I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of his face;
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain or loss;
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.*

My friend, the terrible, beloved object we've seen this morning in Isaiah 53, the cross of Jesus, creates a shadow which must become our abiding place. Is it yours? I'm concerned that many people, including those sitting in churches all across Appalachia this morning, have never truly moved into the cross's shadow.

Make It Personal: When we place ourselves in the shadow of the cross, we behold two beautiful realities.

1. *We behold what our Savior deserves.* What does the Servant deserve? He is the King, right? And as King, He deserves *honor*. How do we honor Him? First, by putting our trust in Him. He suffered and died because in His assessment, we need a Savior. We need our sins removed. Will you agree with His assessment and accept Him as the King who came to save *you*?

And this is just the beginning. We honor Him by believing in Him, obeying Him, submitting our lives to Him, giving Him our heart's loyalty and devotion.

My friend, look at the cross. Are you giving the One who died there, who three days later conquered death itself, what He deserves?

I challenged you earlier, young people, to consider becoming a vocational missionary. Listen to what another missionary, David Livingstone, once said, "People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply acknowledging a great debt we owe to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny? It is emphatically no sacrifice. Rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, danger, foregoing the common conveniences of this life--these may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing compared with the glory which shall later be revealed in and through us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us."

There's a second beautiful reality that becomes perfectly clear when we place ourselves in the shadow of the cross. We behold, not just what He *deserves*, but what He *desires*.

2. *We behold what our Savior desires.* He gave His life to “sprinkle many nations.” He desires for the peoples of the world to benefit from the blood He shed. He desires for them to be holy, sprinkled clean, resembling Himself. He wants them to enjoy a relationship with Him forever!

Do we desire what He desires? Sometimes we don’t, even those of us who believe in Him. This is why we must choose every day to abide in the shadow of the cross. Everything becomes clearer when we place ourselves in this shadow.

I want to help you do so this week. And for this reason, I’m going to come out of my comfort zone once again and demonstrate what I do in my own home to place myself in the shadow of the cross. You too can do this. I want you to do this.

I’ve tried to recreate the scene for you on the platform. This is what my attempt to abide in the cross’s shadow looks like for me in my morning quiet time. My desk. My chair. My guitar. And this little tool I use, the Cross Shadow. It contains memory cards, with verses about the cross, and hymns about the cross (some written by others, some of which I have written).

I’d like to sing several Scripture texts about the cross (we’ll be putting these on 3x5 cards throughout this series), as well as the theme song for our series, *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*. You’ll likely recognize the lyrics of this beloved hymn, but we’ll sing it today to a different tune.

I encourage you to use your phone and take a picture of #183 in the hymnbook. You’ll need that picture for an assignment you’ll be doing later in community groups.

Allow me now to show you how to begin your day in the cross shadow. I’ll be singing Matthew 20:28, Isaiah 53:6, 1 Peter 2:21, Hebrews 10:14, Galatians 2:20, and then our song *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*.

Closing Song: #183 “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” (sing all three verses to new tune)

If you’re able, use the recording app on your phone to record the congregation as we sing together our closing song today. Play it this week in your quiet time. Learn it. Sing it. Place yourself in the cross’s shadow through it.

Community Group Discussion:

1. Today we are beginning a series which will culminate on Resurrection Sunday April 20. This series, an exposition of Isaiah 53, is entitled *In the Shadow of the Cross*. What is a shadow? Take a few moments and make some shadows with your hands, then discuss the following. What are some characteristics of a shadow? What does the imagery of a shadow have to do with our series?

2. Who was Isaiah (feel free to consult your Bible study helps)? What is Isaiah’s objective in writing the book we call Isaiah? In Isaiah 52:13 the prophet introduces us to a person identified as “my servant”. Where else do we see this term in Isaiah? In the rest of the Bible? Who is this person?

3. What do we learn about the Servant in Isaiah 52:13-15? What honor will be given to Him?

4. What do we learn about the Servant in Isaiah 53:1-3? What humiliation will He experience?

5. Throughout our series we’ll be putting several Scripture texts and songs on cards for use in our devotional times. Take time as a group to write on 3x5 cards the lyrics of our theme song *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* (#183 in our hymnbook). In the third stanza the hymnwriter says, “I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place.” What does this mean? What actions can we take this week to make the cross’s shadow our abiding place?