

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
March 1, 2020
1st Sunday in Lent

Scripture Lessons: Romans 5:12, 17-19, Mathew 4:1-11
Hymns: 155; 369; 143; 377:1,10

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 53:1-3

Who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.

He has no form or comeliness;

And when we see Him,

There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

3 He is despised and rejected by men,

A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Incredible!

What does that word imply? That something that took place is so unlikely, so out of step with expectations, so extraordinary that it is just really hard to accept that it

could be true. That is the characterization of what we have before us this and every Lenten season. Everything about Jesus is extraordinary! Everything about Jesus being the Promised Messiah, the Champion of salvation, the Lord of all the earth is just so foreign from mankind's expectations. Jesus just doesn't fit into the precast mold of what the Messiah should be! And then there's the cross! Yes, I know we have come to look to the cross of Christ with wonder and even adoration, for by faith we know what was accomplished on **that** cross, the cross of Christ.

That is the disconnect between us and the world; and we thank and praise God that in His grace we have come to be disconnected from the world and connected to Christ crucified.

And that is how our text begins. That is how the Lord introduces this amazing chapter of prophecy concerning His Servant Who was to come into the world. "*Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*" (v.1) It is by God's grace alone that we have believed the LORD's own report of this wonder of salvation, and by the Spirit opening our understanding we have seen the mighty arm of the LORD revealed in the face of Christ, our crucified Savior.

However, what happens with us as we live in faith and year after year review the events surrounding Jesus' passion is that we lose some of that amazement and seeing just how unlikely and incredible the gospel of a crucified Savior is! We begin to take all the circumstances surrounding Jesus' sufferings and death for granted; dismissing the most amazing truth in all the world with a casual, "Oh, yeah, I know all that!" **Six hundred years** before Jesus was born into the world the Spirit revealed a most stirring picture of Jesus as OUR SACRIFICE! This is the theme for our Sunday Lenten sermons today and for the next five Sundays. Once again we shall consider what the most amazing Individual ever to live on this earth accomplished. It was nothing less than the most incredible

feat of salvation, not only more than one could ever imagine, but far beyond anyone's ability to believe!

We begin our meditations on *Our Sacrifice* by finding in Jesus --

THEME: Our Lowly Sacrifice.

Our text reminds us of --

I. Jesus' Lowly Beginnings.

Isaiah 53:2a "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground."

When Isaiah served as prophet, David's descendants still sat upon the throne in Jerusalem. However, Isaiah prophesied of judgment befalling Judah, and the days would come when the line of David would appear to be cut down, leaving nothing more than an old dried up stump. Much earlier in his book of prophecy Isaiah had written of the rise of the Messiah from such a stump with words indicating this fall of the house of David.

Isaiah 11:1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Yes, Jesus was the Son of David! It was to be through Jesus as the Messiah that David's kingdom would possess that eternal quality which the Lord had promised David so long ago. However Jesus entrance into this world was not the royal entrance people watched for with great expectation. It was NOT at all like when Kate and William had a baby in London! Indeed, who was there to take notice of the birth of the King of the Jews? The angels directed the shepherds in the hills of Bethlehem to search for a Baby lying in a manger, in a stable. No one else took notice of this birth, after all it was just a carpenter and his

young wife who had come to Bethlehem for the census. There was nothing remarkable to observe.

And so it began, a lowly beginning for a great and glorious Savior. A lowly beginning for a Mighty King who did indeed rise to win for us salvation. He began as a tender branch growing from the root of David.

And the appearance of the Lord did not really change as we observe --

II. Jesus' Lowly Presentation to the World.

Isaiah 53:2b "He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him."

Isaiah's prophecy was the perfect description of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was no Absalom, the son of David who drew people's attention and devotion with his handsome features and long thick hair! The women didn't swoon when young Jesus went walking by. He was just Jesus, son of Joseph, the carpenter. End of story. Jesus' physical appearance didn't attract any attention. He was simply one of the tradesmen in town. Nothing remarkable to be found in Jesus.

Then Jesus' public ministry began. Then He revealed His glory as the Christ. He healed people, and people sought Jesus out for His miracles. He focused on teaching the people. He taught in their synagogues, including in His hometown of Nazareth. They were amazed at His teaching. Luke tells us, "*So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"*" (Luke 4:22) and yet as Jesus spoke to them they "*were filled with wrath,²⁹ and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.*" (Luke 4:28-29)

This was not the kind of Messiah they desired. A carpenter didn't fit the bill at all! Oh but He did! It was just as the Scriptures foretold. Jesus was not about impressing people with His physical features or great physical strength or swordsmanship. He preached repentance, declaring that the kingdom of God was at hand! Jesus pointed away from a kingdom of this world. His kingdom was a spiritual kingdom in which He would rule hearts with the gospel, and win for fallen sinners eternal salvation. And that tied directly to His lowliness.

Paul reminds us of Jesus' humility and lowliness in his epistle to the Philippians: *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*

(Philippians 2:5-8)

And so we see how Isaiah's words of prophecy were fulfilled in --

III. Jesus' Lowly Sufferings and Death.

Isaiah 53:3 "He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

We already talked about how the rejection began. Even the disciples struggled with Jesus' lowliness, persisting in their questions about when He would finally establish His kingdom! They were hoping for a worldly realm. It is when we get into Jesus' passion that we see this rejection reach its climax. On the night of the Last Passover Supper Jesus warned His disciples that all would be offended because of Him. They insisted that they would never, ever turn away and desert Jesus. Peter was warned that he would deny

the Lord three times that very night, but Peter insisted he would die with the Lord before that would happen. And yet it all happened.

When Jesus was arrested they all forsook Him and fled. We then find Peter in the High Priest's courtyard; a place Peter should have never gone, putting himself in the way of temptation. When asked about Jesus, Peter denied, and denied, and with curses denied yet again! "*And we hid as it were our faces from Him.*" (v.3)

Then the trial before Pilate began and there were no longer crowds crying out "Hosanna," but a mob screaming, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "*He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*" (v.3)

They falsely accused Him. They demanded He be condemned. So Pilate ordered that Jesus be scourged, a cruel torturous punishment that tore the flesh from a man's back and cut down to the bone. The crown of thorns was pressed down upon Jesus' brow. He was dressed in an old purple robe and set out before the people. It had to be a pitiful sight that even Pilate thought would incite some sympathy from the crowds. It was enough to cause heads to turn away. The sight of Jesus by this point would have been difficult to see, very difficult indeed to look at without becoming ill. And the crowds screamed, "Crucify! Crucify!"

And yet the depth of grief was yet to come. His deepest sorrow would come in the dark hours of God forsakenness. A grief no other living human can comprehend or even relate to, that grief of God forsaking His Son, His only-begotten Son, the Son of whom He had declared He was well pleased.

"Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends thro 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.” (The Lutheran Hymnal
153:2)

And so we begin again our review of Jesus’ passion. **It is incredible!** It is more than any man can truly comprehend. The Spirit asks, *“Who has believed our report? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* (v.1) Do you see the power of God in this lowly Servant of the Lord? Do you believe? Praise God that His Holy Spirit has lead us to know Jesus and the lowly sacrifice He made that we might have life in His name!

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.