

Isaiah 53

by William MacDonald

The sermon explores the significance of the Messiah's death and substitutionary sacrifice, highlighting God's greatness, love, and power in saving humanity.

Duration: 32:43

Scripture: Psalm 19:1, Isaiah 53:1, Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9, Revelation 2:17

Topics: "Suffering Servant"

Description

In this sermon, Eric Shorcken shares his personal testimony of coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. He reflects on the hymn 'How Great Thou Art' and how it reminds him of the awe-inspiring power of God displayed in the creation of the universe. Eric also mentions an experiment with a telescope that aimed to see the outer limits of the universe. He emphasizes the importance of experiencing the grace of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and encourages listeners to acknowledge their need for a Savior.

Transcript

I'd like you to keep in mind that this grace that we've been thinking about, that's the kind of grace that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to extend to you this morning if you have not yet experienced the grace of being saved by grace through faith, not of works, but through the Lord Jesus Christ and the work He did on Calvary. Now let's listen to our brother. I've asked Eric Shorkin to share in the service this morning.

Eric and his wife Sandra have four children. They've been serving the Lord down in Brazil for the last ten years, nine years, nine years, and they're back home now. And we have a standing joke between Eric and myself that I think I've given his testimony more than he's given it himself.

Maybe someday you'll have him come back and he can give it himself here. But I'm just going to ask Eric now to come forward and share with us from the word of God. Morning.

We began the service this morning by singing a hymn that's precious to all of us, How Great Thou Art. And we read in the first stanza of that hymn. Oh, Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hands have made.

I see the stars. I hear the rolling thunder. Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

I have to confess that the stars have always been special to me. But they have never been more special than when I first came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my savior. It seemed as though heaven was

closer as I gazed upon the stars.

We had the opportunity to go to Yosemite, the Yosemite conference. And Yosemite is away from the lights of the city here in the Bay Area. So many more stars are visible in Yosemite than here.

And we had a guest with us at Yosemite. She was from Brazil and she noticed what we noticed. It seemed as though there are more stars in the northern hemisphere than the southern hemisphere.

And so she was amazed when she came and spent time with us at Yosemite to see how many stars there really are in the sky. And the Milky Way became extremely visible, much more visible to her up here in the north than in the south. And it's a band of white going across the sky that really are millions and millions of stars.

And I learned something recently about the stars that even amazed me much more than before I knew this. And it was brought to our attention by Rick Bellis, one of our elders. He's also a scientist at the Livermore Lab and he his hobby is astronomy.

So he knows a lot about the stars. And he spoke to us about an experiment that he was waiting for for a long time that had to do with the famous Hubble Space Telescope. For you that aren't familiar with that, it's a telescope that they placed in space so that they could study the stars in the universe more accurately without the atmosphere to impede vision.

And they put it out there and they had to spend, I don't know how many millions or maybe even a billion dollars fixing it because it wasn't done right the first time. But when they fixed it, they were able to carry out various experiments. And he was explaining an experiment that he was particularly looking forward to.

You see, they thought that with this telescope, they would be able to see to the outer limits of the universe. And so what they did, they thought they would focus this big, fantastic telescope on a point in space that was black. Now, looking from here, we would be able to picture a lot of points that look black in the sky, but they're not really.

It's just that we can't see the stars. So they would have to locate this point with another telescope. And they located a point where apparently there were no stars in that path.

And what they did is they focused the Hubble telescope on that point in space for 100 hours to collect all the light they could to see what's beyond. And they figured if they didn't find anything that we really can indeed see to the outer limits of our universe. And so what that space represents is like a grain of sand if you held it at an arm's distance.

That's what that space represents that they were picturing. And they focused the Hubble telescope on that for 100 hours. And then they developed the film that they made from it.

And you know what they found? They found over 1,500, not stars, but galaxies of different shapes and forms. Each galaxy representing millions and billions of more stars. And the fantastic thing about it was that they were seeing full shapes of galaxies.

And if they were all the same size, they would assume that that was the outer limit. But in this picture were smaller and smaller pinpoints that were not stars, but more galaxies. So they assumed that if they pictured the Hubble telescope, let's say a bigger telescope, even within that small portion of space, they would see

another 1,500 in every little black spot they could find.

And so what they found out is that the universe is much, much larger than they ever imagined. And us Christians that know God really realize the impact of that. Our God is great.

He is great. And He made each one of those stars. And it's interesting because we read in Psalm 147, 4 and 5, this verse.

He counts the number of the stars. We can't count them, but He counts them. He calls them all by name.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power. His understanding is infinite. Our God indeed is great.

He's got a name for each star. And you know, there's something amazing about that because the stars differ in size. They differ even in characteristic.

And I learned something. There's a star, and I believe it's in the constellation of Orion. And the name of that star is Betelgeuse.

And this star is different than other stars, but there's a certain class of stars that it fits into. It's a giant star. And I'm not sure the name of this class, but it's a red giant.

And it's a star that pulsates. It gets bigger and smaller. And it pulsates, does one cycle every five years.

Bigger and smaller. And this star is so big that at its smallest size, it's the size of the orbit of Mars. You see? In our solar system, we have the sun.

Then we have, I believe it's Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars. So the diameter of that sun at its smallest point is bigger than the orbit of Mars. That's at its smallest point.

Five years later, it expands to the size of the orbit of Jupiter, which is way out there. And it just pulsates like this every five years. And you might not think that's a great thing, but when you realize the distance and calculate the distance, that star is enlarging and shrinking at a rate that outer edge of the size of that star travels 10,000 miles per hour.

Just every five years. It's moving at tremendous speed. And that's a characteristic of this particular star.

We call that star Betelgeuse. But God's got his name for that star. And it's something about God naming things that speaks about that thing.

You see? When God names something, it says something about that thing. And that star we call Betelgeuse has God's name attached to it. And who knows how many more characteristics of that particular star that that name speaks of before God.

Now, if you're like me, you can get lost in all this magnitude, and you can start feeling smaller and smaller and smaller. Wow, in this vast universe, who and what am I? You see? Who and what am I? It makes me feel very small. And it makes me feel very insignificant.

And it makes me feel like, what does it matter if I exist or not? What does it matter to anybody? What does it matter to such a great God that I exist? You see? And when I learned this, another verse came to my mind. And it speaks of those that know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and their Lord. It speaks of the future.

You see? Because we have various people in this room. We have a lot of people. You see? Each person is different.

Each person has their own personality, characteristics, qualities. And God knows what those are. God knows you intimately.

And He loves you. He did more than name the stars. He knows you.

He knows every single person. And He loves you. And He loves you so much that He wants to do something for you.

He wants to save your soul. He wants you in heaven with Him for all eternity. And that's why Jesus died for you.

He died for me. And it says, one day... There's a lot in us that God doesn't like. He loves us, but He hates our sin.

You see? And one day, He's going to separate us from our sin forever. And it speaks of that time. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

In Revelation 2.17, it says, To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone. And on the stone, a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it.

You see, that's what God wants for us. He has a place for us. Not among the stars, orbiting around something.

But in heaven with Him. And He has a new name that He wants to give us. And that new name speaks, I believe, of us.

And how He knows us. And how we're special to Him as an individual. And how we're different from everyone else.

You see, He loves you. And He loves me. And that's where we find our significance.

In that God loves me. And God loves you. Do you long for that new name? Do you long to live with Him in heaven? The perfect place? Do you long to see His glory? The stars are just a small picture of His glory.

Yet we can see the stars. Will you be there? Will you have that white stone with your new name on it? If you're not there, it's not because God doesn't want you there. It'll be because you didn't want to be there.

And I'd like you to think about that this morning. And thank you very much for your time. Perhaps we could turn to Isaiah 53 and read a little biography of the one who made the stars.

Remember that this was written 700 years before the Lord Jesus Christ came to earth. What I'd like to do is just give a running commentary on the chapter. So if you have a Bible, it would open to Isaiah 53.

I'll read a verse and then just comment on it. Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Who had believed our report? What report? The report of the coming Messiah. Isaiah looks down through the corridors of time and he sees the Messiah coming.

And he's predicting there by inspiration of the Spirit of God that when he comes, he's not going to be well received. He's not going to get a royal welcome. That's what he means when he says, Who has believed our report? The report of the Messiah.

And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? The arm of the Lord there means the power of the Lord. It means the strength of the Lord. And the same answer applies here as applies in the first part of the verse.

Who has believed our report? Not many. To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Not many. You see, the arm of the Lord is only revealed to those who believe the report of the Messiah.

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground. This refers to the wonderful growth of the Lord Jesus Christ here, the Messiah here upon the earth. Marvelous.

He was a tender plant. He was one who was always obedient to his father and mother, one who was sinless in all his ways, was so unlike the rest of mankind, a tender plant, a root out of dry ground. He came at a time most unexpected and in circumstances most unexpected, cradled in a manger there in Bethlehem.

Just think of it. The great God coming down to earth and the best that man can give him is the feed box of cattle as a bed. Many a beggar's imagination, doesn't it? But that's what he's referring to.

And Isaiah saw this in outline long before it ever happened. He has no form nor comeliness. And when we shall see him, there's no beauty that we should desire him.

That's amazing, isn't it? That when the Son of God came down into this world, men thought he was just another person like themselves. He wasn't particularly good-looking, I don't think. He said he had no form nor comeliness.

When we shall see him, there's no beauty that we should desire him. Men weren't naturally drawn to him. And that's marvelous when you start to think of it.

It is the only perfect life that was ever lived on earth. And he received what? Hatred. Yeah, that's what he received, hatred.

Why was he hated? Well, in that connection, I can't help but think of what happened once when the chief rabbi of Great Britain was on the television and the commentator asked him, why have the Jewish people been so hated? And he said, it's the dislike of the unlike. The dislike of the unlike. And that was a very good answer.

And you have that here in Isaiah chapter 53, the dislike of the unlike. Here's a son of God, he comes into the world, he's absolutely perfect in all his ways. He came unto his own and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. Notice verse three, he despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Hated.

You say, that's shocking. Well, I want to tell you something. If he came to San Francisco today, he'd get the same reception.

The heart of man hasn't changed at all. It's still the same. Despised and rejected of men.

You know, the name Jesus is the name that's banned in the media today. The name Christ is the name that's banned. And Christ is just another name for Messiah.

It's just another form of the name of Christ. Listen, it can only be used in cursing or in ridicule. Despised and rejected of men.

A man of sorrows who knew what grief was. And that's amazing, isn't it? That my God, the one who put the stars, that hurled the stars into space. All the galaxies that Eric has been speaking about he comes into this earth.

And the creatures whom his hands have made hated him. I tell you, a beggar's description, doesn't it? A man of sorrows. Isn't that amazing that the Messiah coming to the earth would ever have this name attached to him? Man of sorrows.

Man of sorrows. What a name for the Son of God who came to ruin sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah.

What a Savior. We hid as it were our faces from him. We didn't want to look at him.

We were only comfortable when we could forget him. Only sad when we remembered him. And once again, the heart of man hasn't changed any.

Have you ever noticed that when God enters a conversation most people are uncomfortable. They can't speak of him in a personal way. They can say, my God, the one who created me.

Oh no, they couldn't say that. They can use his name in blasphemy. They can use his name in profanity.

No, they're uncomfortable to talk about God. Talk about whether, talk about the Republican Convention or the Democratic Convention or something like that. But don't talk about God in any personal way.

He was despised and we did not esteem him. But listen, surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

What does that mean? Well, Isaiah by inspiration of the Spirit of God looks forward to the time when the Messiah is nailed to a cross of wood. And we stood there before the cross and we said, He must have suffered greatly. He must have sinned greatly to be suffering so greatly.

We esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. God was punishing him, we thought, for the sins that he committed. He must have been a great sinner.

That's what Isaiah is saying. That's what the people would say when the Lord of Glory was crucified. Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows.

Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But here's the real truth of the matter, friends. He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. With his stripes we are healed.

And here is 700 years, I say, before the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah predicting that he would die. Well, of course, that wasn't new either.

Daniel had predicted that too. Daniel had predicted that before the temple was destroyed in Jerusalem, the Messiah would die. Daniel chapter 9. And here's Isaiah predicting it too.

And he predicts something more than that. He predicts that his death would be a substitutionary death. He wouldn't be dying for sins that he had committed.

He'd be dying for sins that I had committed. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace. That is, the chastisement whereby we might have peace was upon him. And with his stripes we are healed.

Wonder of wonders. Wonder of wonders that God became man and came down to this scene and died so that we might live with him eternally. By his stripes we are healed.

Substitutionary death. That's what it is. Vicarious substitutionary death.

Verse 6. All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. All we like sheep have gone astray.

How true that is. The heart of man, a fallen sinful man. We want to do our own thing.

We don't want any cosmic deity to be telling us what to do, do we? That's what Isaiah predicted. All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way.

I thought what a picture to compare sinful human beings to sheep. I don't know if you've had much acquaintance with sheep but they're not the most intelligent creatures on the face of the earth. And neither are we in our fallen condition.

We've turned everyone to his way. The Lord has laid on him. That is, Jehovah, God laid upon the Lord Jesus at the cross of Calvary the iniquity of us all.

Marvelous, isn't it? Absolutely marvelous. And man would have never written the Bible. He never would have written anything like this.

He would have written, well, you know, there are many ways to God and everybody has to work it out for himself, you know. And just by doing certain good deeds you can earn your way to heaven. That's not what my Bible says.

It says the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. And the Lord Jesus bore there in his body on the cross of Calvary the penalty for all my sins. And he says, now just believe on me and you'll be sure of a home in heaven.

Marvelous, isn't it? He was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth. He led as a lamb to the slaughter as a sheep before her shearers is done so he opened not his mouth. That's marvelous, isn't it? He never fought back.

I tell you, that's power, friends. Power is when you have the power to fight back and you don't do it. And he didn't do it.

He had that greatest of all power. The only time he spoke at his trial was when the high priest put him under oath. The high priest said, I adjure you by the living God that you tell us that you are the son of God.

Well, according to the law of Moses when you were put under oath if you didn't testify, you were guilty. And so the high priest put him under oath and he testified. That's the only time he testified.

Otherwise, led as a lamb to the slaughter as a sheep before her shearers is done so he opened not his mouth. Verse 8. He was taken from prison and from judgment and who shall declare his generation for he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgressions of my people he was stricken. He was taken from prison and from judgment.

Well, actually he never was in prison. He was denied prison and that's really what this verse means. He was hurried away from prison and from justice.

You know, it's interesting today a man can be ever so guilty. He can be guilty of murder and yet his trial will go on week after week and month after month and year after year. The Lord never had that.

He was never given that opportunity. He was hurried away from prison and from justice. Judgment often in the Old Testament means justice.

He was given a false trial, a kangaroo court and false witnesses stood against him. That's what I say. Isn't it wonderful to have such eyesight that you can see this 700 years before it actually happens.

Well, that's what happened. He was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of my people he was stricken. And this is what believers in the Lord Jesus can say.

The transgression of my people he was stricken. He didn't die for his own sins. He died for my sins.

Was it for me? For me alone the Savior left his glorious throne. Highest splendor of the sky. Was it for me he came to die? It was for me.

Yes, all for me. Oh, love of God, so rich, so free. He died for me, my Lord and King.

It says they made his grave with the wicked but he was with the rich in his death because he had done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth. After the Lord Jesus was crucified Joseph of Arimathea came and asked for his body that he might give it a decent burial. That isn't what they had planned for it.

They had planned to throw his body down into the valley of Gehenna where it would either be eaten by foxes or consumed by the fires. That's what they had planned. An indecent burial.

But it says here they made his grave with the wicked. That's what they planned to do. But he was with the rich in his death.

Joseph of Arimathea had a tomb that was carved out of solid stone. No man had ever lain in it. And he made it available to the Messiah.

He was with the rich in his death. Why? Because he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth. It says yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

God saw fit to bruise him. Why? Because we couldn't be saved in any other way. Thus to ourselves we never could have been saved.

God had to intervene in the affairs of this world and send a substitute to die for us. Notice what it says. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days.

The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. When somebody comes to the Lord Jesus, receives him as Savior, he is satisfied. He's satisfied with what he suffered, bled, and died.

And that's what it says in verse 11. He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant shall justify many.

That means by the knowledge of him, by coming to know him, my righteous servant, God's righteous servant, the Messiah, will justify many. What does that mean? It means he will reckon them righteous. It means when he looks down and sees a person repenting of his sins and trusting the Savior, he reckons him righteous.

There's no charge against him. The penalty has been paid. The case is closed.

Marvelous, isn't it? That's what it means. By the knowledge of him, my righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. You know, all through this chapter, you have the substitutionary death of the Messiah for his people and for the people of the world.

Now, there's an interesting thing here. In verse 12, he's alive again. He's alive again.

I mean, he died in the preceding verses, and now he's up. What is that? Resurrection. The resurrection of the Messiah.

The greatest tested, proved incident in the history of the world. Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoiled with the strong, because he poured out his soul into death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. There's so much in these verses.

This refers to the spoils of his victory. He rose from the tomb, triumphant over sin and death and hell, and he ascended back to the right hand of God in heaven, and God gave him gifts as a result of his marvelous work there. He poured out his soul into death.

He was numbered with the transgressors. Well, we know that was true. He hung there on a cross with a thief on the right hand and a thief on the left hand, numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many.

He bore the sin of the world. The love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead. And he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them rose again.

And he made intercession for the transgressors. Well, he did make intercession for the transgressors, didn't he? Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. What a wonderful biography of the one who put the stars and named them all, and named them all.

I often mention that one of the families in my family tree they're still living, and they had a large number of kids, and they named two of them Mary. One of them's Big Mary and the other's Little Mary. They ran out of names rather quickly, didn't they? But God didn't run out of names.

You know, in that same passage where he says he calls the stars all by name, it says he comforts, he heals the brokenhearted. I think that's lovely. That the same God of the universe, the same God of the Hubble telescope is the one that knows how to heal the brokenhearted.

The one who's infinitely high is intimately nigh, and he really is. If you're here with a broken heart today, he's the one that can heal that broken heart for you. If you're here and you don't know him, Eric has already invited you to.

Put your faith and trust in him and be saved for all eternity. That's what it's all about. That's exactly what it's all about.

Our eternal destiny that lies in the hands of the Savior who died for us and rose again. Shall we pray? Father, what a wonderful book. We think of your book of creation and how the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork.

We can know there's a God just by looking up into the stars at night, but we'd never know your love that way. We have to look to the cross of Calvary and see the Savior dying for us and see inscribed upon the cross in shining letters, God is love. We just thank you for that wonderful work that he did for us, bearing the sins of many, being numbered with the transgressors.

We thank you for all here today who have acknowledged that they were sheep going astray and who have bowed the knee to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We pray for any who are still in their sins, bound for a lost eternity. We pray that they'll wake up to their great, great need, look off to the Messiah, to Jesus, and receive him as their very own.

We pray in his worthy name. And we do want to give thanks, Lord, for the food that has been provided downstairs. You open your hand and you supply the desire of every living thing, and we just bless and praise you for it.

Pray that we might have happy fellowship around yourself as we partake of these good things and recognize you as the giver of every good and perfect gift with whom is no variable, lest neither shadow of turning. Receive our thanks in the Savior's name. Amen.

They're ready downstairs, so everybody is welcome to go downstairs and partake of the food.

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