

The Divine Exchange

Isaiah 53:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
⁵ But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:4-6 (NIV)

⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Introduction

These famous verses are about the vicarious suffering of the servant of God, whom we understand to be the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Vicarious suffering is suffering endured by somebody as a substitute for somebody else. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sins so that we could inherit eternal life.

Sorrow and Suffering

The Lord transforms our griefs and sorrows. These refer both to spiritual and physical sickness. Hence, the NIV uses “pain” and “suffering.” In his ministry on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ addressed all kinds of human suffering (e.g., see Matthew 8:16-17). As our Great High Priest, he also understands our suffering at very deep levels (e.g., see Hebrews 4:14-15).

Questions

1. How are you encouraged personally by the reality that Jesus Christ feels your pain?
2. Do you have any issues in your life that you need to bring to him in prayer?

Sin

Not only does God understand and feel our pain, but he deals with the problem of sin in our lives. Sin really is the state of separation that exists between God and humanity.

- Transgressions – violations of laws; overstepping of established limits
- Iniquities – unjust and immoral acts

Mercy

The Lord Jesus Christ took the punishment that we rightly deserved.

Grace

Not only did God, through Christ, withhold bad things from us, he brought good things (i.e., his unmerited favor) into our lives as well.

Sickness

Verse 5 declares: “by his stripes we are healed” or “by his stripes healing has come to us.” This verse refers both to spiritual and physical healing (see 1 Peter 2:24 and Matthew 8:16-17).

Questions

3. What do you think the text means by the term “peace”?
4. Have you ever experienced spiritual or physical healing from the Lord?

Satan

Through the death of Jesus on the Cross, both Satan and death were defeated (see Colossians 2:15 and Hebrews 2:14-15).

Salvation

The vicarious suffering and the work of Jesus on the Cross (and through the Resurrection) is a wonderful revelation of God’s salvation. Salvation is clearly the forgiveness of sins as has been alluded to in our text. However, salvation is more than gaining entry into heaven; it is rescue of people from sins and the effects of sin. My definition of salvation, then, is God’s rescue of us from the things that diminish or destroy us in our spirits, minds, bodies, relationships, and other aspects of our humanity. See also Luke 4:16-21 cf. Isaiah 61:1-2.

Questions

5. How do we appropriate God’s benefits of salvation?

For more information on the topic of salvation, please visit my website: <https://www.wilfredgraves.org>. I also invite you to read my book, *In Pursuit of Wholeness: Experiencing God’s Salvation for the Total Person*.