

SERMON NOTES
Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12
“Healing for Sinners and Sinned-Against”

Intro:

- Do you remember the scene in the movie “*Forrest Gump*” when after years of a lifestyle of drugs and promiscuity and brokenness, Jenny returns to visit Forrest, and they go together to the abandoned shack where Jenny lived as a girl and was sexually abused by her father?
 --looking at that place of pain, the memories and hurt and anger began to overwhelm her – and she burst into tears and began picking up rocks and started throwing them as hard and as angrily as she could at the shack
 --when there were no more rocks, Jenny took off her shoes and threw them too
 --finally, she fell to the ground sobbing
- As Forrest witnessed and reflected on the scene, he said: “*Sometimes I guess there just aren’t enough rocks*”
- How about you? Have you ever felt like Jenny?
 --*have you ever run out of rocks?*
 --where do you turn with your deepest hurts and most intense anger?
 --*have you considered bringing your deep-seated pain and anger to the Cross?*
- **Jesus can truly identify with us when we suffer because he has personally experienced the breadth and depth of human suffering.**
- But, as Stephen Seamands points out in his excellent book “*Wounds That Heal*,” not only did Jesus suffer personally on the cross, **he also suffered vicariously** -- meaning that he took our suffering into himself – experienced our suffering in addition to his own
 --for not only does Isaiah 53 say that he was “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*”
 --but also (vs. 4) “*surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*”
- What does the familiar hymn say? “*What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear*”
- Most of you understand the meaning of Jesus bearing our sins so that we can be forgiven – but how much have you meditated on the meaning of Jesus bearing our griefs so that we can find healing by his wounds?
- “*He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*”

- Franz Delitzsch: *“The meaning is not merely that the Servant of God entered into the fellowship of our sufferings, but that He took upon Himself the sufferings which we had to bear and deserved to bear, and therefore not only took them away... but bore them in His own person, that He might deliver us from them.”*
- We are all both sinners and sinned against – both wrongdoers and sufferers
 - the Good News is that the Cross of Jesus Christ addresses both our sins and our sufferings*
 - the Good News is that Jesus is both our Sin-bearer and our Pain-bearer*
 - in him we find forgiveness for our sins – and healing for our hurts*
- Randy & Terry Butler: *“At the Cross”*
- *I know a place, a wonderful place
Where accused and condemned
Find mercy and grace
Where the wrongs we have done
And the wrongs done to us
Were nailed there with him
There on the cross*
- *“The wrongs we have done, And the wrongs done to us, Were nailed there with him - There on the cross”*
- Many of the sins we commit have their origin in unhealed wounds due to being sinned-against
- *We come to the Cross again and again seeking forgiveness for our sins – but what do we do with our unhealed wounds due to being sinned-against?*
- **The Good News of the Gospel is not only that our sins are cleansed by Jesus’ blood but also that our wounds are healed by his wounds**

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

- Isaiah 53 is the fourth and most famous of Isaiah’s Servant Songs that foretell the ministry of the coming Messiah – some 700 years before Christ

Bulletin insert: 4 Servant Songs from Isaiah 42, 49, 50, and 52-53

- *He will not crush those who are weak or quench their smallest hope*
- *He will bring full justice to all who have been wronged*
- *He will set captives free*

- *He will bring light and salvation to the ends of the earth*
- This Servant of the LORD is the same Messiah as prophesied in Isaiah 61 – the prophecy that Jesus adopted as his mission statement in Luke 4:

Isaiah 61:1 (NKJV)

The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,
 Because the LORD has anointed Me
 To preach good tidings to the poor;
 He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
 To proclaim liberty to the captives,
 And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;

- *And how would the Messiah accomplish this mission of healing the brokenhearted and setting captives free and bringing salvation to the ends of the earth?*
- By means of his vicarious suffering and substitutionary death as foretold in Isaiah 53:
- *He will bear our griefs, sorrows, iniquities, sin & guilt*
- *By his wounds we are healed*
- Though written 700 years before Christ, Isaiah 53 describes the suffering and death of the Messiah as though Isaiah were sitting at the foot of the Cross and writing an eyewitness account and theological interpretation of Christ's crucifixion

II. HEALING SINNERS BY BEARING THEIR SINS AND INFIRMITIES

Isaiah 53:5-6 (NKJV) ⁵But 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.
⁶All 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 53:11 - 12 (NIV) He will bear their iniquities...he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- *Jesus heals sinners by Bearing our iniquities – our willful sin and rebellion*

- It is the teaching of the Bible that forgiveness of sins is made possible only by the shedding of blood – the death of a substitute -- *this involves an innocent substitute enduring punishment on behalf of the guilty*
- Jesus Christ sacrificed his own life on the Cross as a Substitute taking the place of us condemned sinners
 --*to say that Jesus died for us is to say that he died in our place – he died our death as the punishment for our sin and guilt*
 --**“The divine punishment leading to our salvation and wholeness came upon him”**
 --**“The Lord caused the punishment for the sin and iniquity of all of us to fall upon him”**
 --*Jesus Christ bore all the sins of humanity in his body on the Cross –*

Charles Spurgeon:

The heart of Christ became like a reservoir in the midst of the mountains. All the tributary streams of iniquity, and every drop of the sins of his people, ran down and gathered into one vast lake, deep as hell and shoreless as eternity. All these met, as it were, in Christ's heart, and he endured them all.

Luther: *“I see my sin in Christ, therefore my sin is not mine but another's. I see it in Christ. It is a great thing to say confidently: My sin is not mine. I behold my sins heaped on Christ. My sins have been transferred to Christ. He has them.”*

Have you accepted this good news by faith?

- all of your sins have been transferred to Jesus Christ*
- in exchange, his righteousness becomes yours by faith
- he suffers the punishment for all your sin and guilt*
- and you are credited with all his righteousness
- that is the promise of the Gospel*
- and it becomes real in your experience when you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior

Tell yourself the truth: ***Jesus Christ is the bearer of my sins***

-the way to experience peace with God and a clean conscience is neither by denying your guilt nor by beating yourself up over your sins

-the way to experience peace with God and a clean conscience is by confessing your sins and fixing your gaze on Christ and His Cross

We cannot truly appreciate the magnitude of what it meant for Jesus to bear our sins and the sins of humanity on the Cross

--yet even that was not all

- **For on the Cross, He was also Bearing our infirmities – our physical, emotional, moral and spiritual diseases & weaknesses**

Isaiah 53:4 (NIV) ⁴ Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

- Vs. 4: *“He took up our infirmities” = “He bore our infirmities”*
- Same word as in verse 12: *“He bore the sin of many”*
- Same meaning: ***to bear, to carry for others***
- *Just as Jesus bore our sins for us – he also bore our infirmities for us on the Cross*

- **According to the NT, the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4**

Matthew 8:16-17 ¹⁶When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.”

- *The Greek words for “took up” and “carried” can mean either “bore the burden of” or “carried away”*
 --Carried away makes the better sense in the context of Matthew 8:17
 --but there may also be a reference to Jesus in some sense bearing the burden of our infirmities and diseases in his healing ministry
 --Certainly in Isaiah 53 there is a deliberate connection between bearing our infirmities in vs. 4 and bearing our sins in vs. 12
- There are similarities between Isaiah 1:4-6 and Isaiah 53:4-5 which suggest that *the infirmities which Jesus bore are especially those infirmities that are related to an unhealthy moral or spiritual condition*
 --***thus the physical and emotional and moral and spiritual diseases of humanity were transferred to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:4-5***
 --“by his wounds we are healed” in 53:5 would thus apply to our emotional and moral and spiritual diseases as well as to our physical sicknesses
- The Book of Common Prayer has a prayer of repentance that simply says:
“There is no health in us”

--our human condition is fundamentally flawed and unhealthy – spiritually, morally, mentally, emotionally, relationally and physically – *we live in a fallen world under the dominion of sin and death – and there is no health in us*
Jesus took all that upon himself on the Cross

- We are by nature rebels – we don’t want anyone else telling us what to do or how to live – not even God -- *preferring to decide for ourselves what is right or wrong*
- *But some of our sins and infirmities are more due to our weaknesses than to defiant rebelliousness*
- We are creatures of flesh – and as such we have appetites and needs and weaknesses that can become areas of temptation
- **And many of our sins are rooted in wounds we bear as a result of living in a fallen world – growing up in imperfect families – entering adulthood with what can be called “love deficits”**
- ***In many cases it is true that we sin because we have first been sinned-against***
- ***That is one reason why there is no health in us***
- It is good to know that there is a remedy for our sins – the Cross of Jesus Christ – and there by faith we can experience the forgiveness of our sins
- ***But what about those unhealed wounds that provide such fertile soil for a new crop of sins?***
- We need more than forgiveness – we need healing and freedom from the hurts and wounds of the past
- ***The Good News of the Gospel is that just as we can find forgiveness for our sins if we come humbly to the Cross in repentance and faith – so also we can find healing for our sinned-against-ness at the Cross***

III. HEALING THE SINNED-AGAINST BY BEARING THEIR PAINS, SORROWS AND SUFFERING

As Stephen Seamands points out, *in the same way a car engine needs oil to run smoothly, human beings need the oil of unconditional love and compassion and acceptance in order to function with a good degree of health*

--when that oil of unconditional love is in short supply – especially during the early formative years -- as it is in some families – there is significant psychological wear-and-tear damage resulting from running their engines without enough oil

--of course, a car engine will usually burn up or shut down without sufficient oil
 --but we human beings just keep on going
 --some people manifest in obvious ways that they are running low on the oil of parental and human love
 --other people seem to be quite successful and well-adjusted outwardly, but experience inner pain and emptiness nonetheless

- How do people cope with the pain of running low on the oil of compassion and love?
- *By turning to what Stephen Seamands calls “behavioral narcotics” – relying on patterns and habits of behavior, relating or coping that serve as pain relievers for the inner emptiness of love deficits*
- Of course, some people turn to actual chemical substances like drugs or alcohol
- *But more common in Christian circles would be these kinds of “behavioral narcotics”:*
 - **Workaholism**
 --filling one’s life and mind with so much activity and work and busyness and striving for success that there is little time or room left to feel the pain of insecurity and inadequacy caused by love deficits
 - **Control**
 --constantly striving to maintain control of one’s life, circumstances and other people and groups as a defense mechanism against chaos or being hurt
 - **People-pleasing**
 --constantly monitoring what others want and expect from us so as not to disappoint them or give them cause to not like us or criticize us or reject us
--people-pleasers are often good servants – and are appreciated in service organizations such as churches – but there is an unhealthy core within and they often become slaves of their own servanthood
 - **Dependency**
 --habitually surrendering our will to the will of another for reasons of fear and feelings of inadequacy
 - **Perfectionism**
 --wearing a mask of perfection and uprightness to cover up inner turmoil and insecurity
 - **Escape**

--escaping pain through the use of alcohol, drugs, promiscuity, pornography, or other self-destructive behaviors

- Behind these “behavioral narcotics” is an unhealthy, addictive mindset based on lies such as these:

--“*I am essentially a bad, worthless person and therefore undeserving of love*”

--“*No one would love me if they really knew the real me*”

--“*If I don’t meet my needs my way, they will never get met*”

- Behind the infirmities and the behavioral narcotics are the hurts
- *These hurts – feeling unlovable / feeling worthless / feeling powerless / feeling alone / feeling no one can be trusted to meet our needs – these are the kinds of hurts that we need to bring to the Cross*
--these are the kinds of hurts that we need to bring to the One who took up our infirmities and carried our diseases

Isaiah 53:4 (NKJV) ⁴ ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;

“Carried our sorrows” can also be translated “bore our pains”

--the word for “carried” here is the same as the word for “bear” in vs. 11 “he will bear their iniquities”

--so **Jesus is not only our Sin-bearer // He is also our Pain-bearer**

- *Where do we turn with our griefs and sorrows?*
- We can either turn to pain-relievers such as alcohol or shopping or work or food or busyness or sexual relationships or pornography in order to dull the pain resulting from a significant loss or emotional pain
--or we can turn to the **Man of Sorrows who is our Pain-bearer and find our healing in his wounds**
- Is your pain physical? Bring your pain to the Cross
- *The blows Jesus endured enable him to identify with all who have suffered extreme physical abuse or pain*
--Bring your physical pain to the Man of Sorrows who is your Pain-bearer
--by his blows / by his stripes / by his wounds – we are healed
- Is your pain emotional? Bring your pain to the Cross
- **The Love of God is the most powerful healing force for broken hearts**
- **When we come to the Cross and gaze at the suffering Jesus endured on our behalf – because of His great love for us – then we experience the Truth of how deeply we are loved by God**
- **By His wounds we are healed**

- *Do you know the pain of rejection – bring that pain to the Man of Sorrows who was despised and rejected by men*

Isaiah 53:3 ³He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

- A young woman told of the time when she was 8 and wrote her father whom she had never known because of a divorce
--she wrote: *I just want you to know about me. I like hopscotch, biology, and dissecting things. You don't have to respond, but I just wanted you to know about your daughter.*
--Her letter came back unopened with these words scrawled across the envelope: *"Return to sender – send no more letters"*
- *Sometimes rejection is not that blatant*
- It may be more like the experience of this young man who excelled in football all the way through high school and college: *"My father is not a mean man. He would never say or do anything to intentionally hurt you. But my father is a workaholic. He wasn't ever around when I was growing up. And he has never once in my life seen me play football."*
- Leanne Payne writes: *"Unhealed rejections become seedbeds of diseased matter such as bitterness, envy, rage, fear of rejection, and a sense of inferiority."*
- **Jesus knew the sting of rejection throughout his life.**
- *He was born in a smelly stable / forced to flee the country / treated with contempt by the religious establishment / spurned in his hometown / and even was misunderstood by his own family*
- His closest friends promised to be faithful but failed him when he needed them the most the last night of his life
- *Peter, the leader of the Twelve, responded with "Jesus who?" and "I swear I have no idea who you're talking about" when asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples*
- Jesus was not only rejected by strangers and adversaries – he was betrayed by one of his friends and disciples, Judas
- *And after a mockery of a trial, Jesus suffered the indignities of mocking and taunts throughout his ordeal*

- *Have you ever felt neglected, deserted, betrayed, disrespected, mocked, abused, misunderstood or misjudged?*
- **Bring the pain of rejection to the Cross – to the Man of Sorrows who is your Pain-bearer**
- *Gaze at your wounds – then gaze at his*
- And remember, he not only sympathizes with your rejection – but he actually bore your griefs and sorrows and pains on the Cross
- Jesus says to you: *“Give all your rejection to me. Let me bear your rejection in my broken body. Let me absorb the pain into myself. Give me the hurtful words, the lonely times you were neglected, the occasions you felt let down or betrayed. Give me the abuse. Let me bear the brunt of your rejections. Let my wounds of rejection touch and carry and heal yours.”*
- *Jesus also bore the pain of our shame*

More than anything else, the Cross was a symbol of shame

-this form of execution was reserved for the scum of society: slaves, hardened criminals, and rebels against the state

-the purpose of crucifixion was not merely to torture and to kill, but also to shame and to humiliate

Shame is a common experience

-it may grow out of experiences of public humiliation or failure

-it may come from experiences of rejection

-it may come from early life experiences of criticism or ridicule at school or at home

-it may come from being abused or sinned against

Shame hurts very deeply and can destroy a person’s sense of self-worth

-shame can damage people so deeply that it causes them to feel fundamentally flawed, unlovable, unworthy, and irreparable

The Cross is the starting point for the healing of shame

-because the Cross shows you that no matter how badly damaged you think you are, God sees you as valuable

-no matter how unlovable you may feel, the Cross shows that God loves you

*-no matter how hopeless and pessimistic you may feel, the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus offer the hope of deep healing and newness of life - **after great pain, comes new life***

By enduring the shame of the Cross, Jesus secured our worth and acceptance with God

-no shame or humiliation can destroy that worth or separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord

- *Jesus also bore our God-forsakenness – this was perhaps the most intense and crushing pain that Jesus experienced on the Cross*
- Perhaps the most difficult part of suffering is feeling abandoned or forsaken by God in the midst of the suffering
--have you ever counted on God to come through for you – only He didn't come through?
--have you ever felt let down by God // disappointed with God // angry with God // betrayed by God?

Have you ever felt that God has allowed you to suffer more than you could bear?

- *Have you ever cried out to God “Why?” – only to have your cries be met with a cold, stony silence?*
--have you ever felt forsaken by God – forgotten by God – unloved by God – cut off from fellowship with God?
- *What do you do with such feelings?*
- Here's what Jesus did:
- From the Cross he cried out in intense spiritual pain: *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”*
- At this moment on the Cross Jesus was bearing the pain of the God-forsakenness that we deserved due to our sin and guilt
- **On the Cross, Jesus took up all the depths of our feelings and experiences of God-forsakenness into himself – into the depths of his own soul – and he bore that pain for us**
- Because of that, however much we may sometimes feel forgotten or separated from God – *we will never as believers experience the reality and magnitude of God-forsakenness that Jesus experienced on the Cross*
- **On the Cross Jesus bore our sins // On the Cross Jesus bore our infirmities and pains // On the Cross Jesus bore the pain of our God-forsakenness – so that now, through faith in Jesus Christ – we are totally accepted, fully pleasing, deeply loved, completely forgiven, and empowered to live a new life in Christ – because of the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus**
- *By his wounds, we are healed*

- **When deep hurts are not healed by God's love at the Cross, they can fester and become compost for bitterness, depression, rage, and other toxins to the soul**
- *Jesus bore all the sins of humanity in his body on the Cross – all the sins we have committed – and all the sins that have been committed against us*
- **On the Cross, Jesus was bearing the wrongs we have done to others and he was bearing the wrongs others have committed against us**
- **Just as we come to the Cross for forgiveness of sins we have committed, we also come to the Cross for healing grace for the sins others have committed against us**
- Just as we cannot experience God's forgiveness by denying or excusing or minimizing our sins – but rather we must own up to our responsibility for our sins and bring our sins to the Cross – *so also we cannot experience healing for our wounds by seeking to avoid our problems or by running from our pain – instead we must face our pain head-on and bring our hurts to the Cross*
- On the Cross the arms of Jesus are outstretched – opening himself to the pain // accepting and bearing and absorbing the pain into himself
--our instinct is to protect ourselves from pain by using our arms to shield our face and body from pain – and to use other psychological defense mechanisms to try to protect our soul from pain
--But the arms of Jesus on the Cross are open / extended / reaching out
- *Just as Jesus invites us to bring our sins to the Cross in order to find forgiveness, so also Jesus invites us to bring our hurts to the Cross in order to find healing*
- **In fact, we can even bring our rocks to the Cross – Jesus can handle whatever anger we may be feeling toward God**
- *There can be no healing for our souls – no healing for our damaged emotions – while we are running from our pain*
- **By his wounds, we are healed**
- **That healing occurs when our wounds and Christ's wounds are brought together – when His wounds touch our wounds with healing love**
- *By his wounds, we are healed*

Life Response: *Bringing Our Hurts to the Cross*

Altar Call - *"Jesus, I Come"*