

**THE CRADLE, THE CROSS, AND THE CROWN**  
**December 18, 2016 morning service**  
**Isaiah 53:1-12**

Take your Bible this morning and go to Isaiah chapter 53 and as you find that text I'm going to ask you to stand with me and we're going to read the 12 verses of the 53rd chapter. There is no greater text about the cross in the Old Testament, maybe Psalm 22, but 700 years before the cross Isaiah prophesied and we find it in the 53rd chapter. It really begins in the 52nd chapter when you back up to verses 13, 14, and 15 and I'll reference that in a few moments today. But as we come just seven days to the celebration of the cradle we are grateful for the cross and we anticipate His crown. We talk about those things around this season of the year and preach about them this morning and we make our way through this 53rd chapter of Isaiah. You see, Jesus Christ was born to die. He came to die for you. In that crucial moment of His life, He atoned for your sin and mine. In Isaiah 53, 700 years before the cross we find the old prophet giving us these words. I want us to read it together out loud. Isaiah 53.

*Who has believed our message?  
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,  
And like a root out of parched ground;  
He has no stately form or majesty  
That we should look upon Him,  
Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.  
He was despised and forsaken of men,  
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
And like one from whom men hide their face  
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.  
Surely our griefs He Himself bore,  
And our sorrows He carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten of God, and afflicted.  
But He was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed.  
All of us like sheep have gone astray,  
Each of us has turned to his own way;  
But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all  
To fall on Him.  
He was oppressed and He was afflicted,  
Yet He did not open His mouth;  
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,  
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,  
So He did not open His mouth.*

*By oppression and judgment He was taken away;  
And as for His generation, who considered  
That He was cut off out of the land of the living  
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?  
His grave was assigned with wicked men,  
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,  
Because He had done no violence,  
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.  
But the Lord was pleased  
To crush Him, putting Him to grief;  
If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,  
He will see His offspring,  
He will prolong His days,  
And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.  
As a result of the anguish of His soul,  
He will see it and be satisfied;  
By His knowledge the Righteous One,  
My Servant, will justify the many,  
As He will bear their iniquities.  
Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,  
And He will divide the booty with the strong;  
Because He poured out Himself to death,  
And was numbered with the transgressors;  
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,  
And interceded for the transgressors.<sup>1</sup>*

Philip left Jerusalem, went down to Gaza, and found an Ethiopian in his vehicle who had come out of the queen's court of Ethiopia to go to Jerusalem to worship. He left there and was going home and he had obtained a copy of the Old Testament and he was reading these very verses that we are reading today and the Bible says that Philip attached himself to that vehicle, to that chariot the Ethiopian was in and he said, "Do you understand what you're reading?" And the Ethiopian said, "How can I? Is this man speaking of Himself or is He speaking of another?" The Bible says that from there Philip preached Jesus unto Him. Out of that 53rd chapter Philip understood what Isaiah wrote to be a word about the coming Messiah and that day the Ethiopian believed, was baptized, and went home to share the gospel.

The cradle, thank God for the cross, and glory to His name for the crown that is on His head is our great intercessor this Christmas season. You see, the death of Jesus on the cross is the gospel and it's that that I want to talk to you a few moments about this morning and then I want to call you to respond to the gospel and then I'm going to give a go backward invitation. Most Sundays I give a come forward invitation but today I'm going to go stand yonder at the Christmas tree. I'm going to ask you if you want to decide for Christ who died for you to go to the Christmas tree. Why do we have

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a Christmas tree? Because of the evergreen and the lights and it became a symbol of using for Christ. I'm going to ask you to come there to join our church. I'm going to ask you to come there to repent. I'm going to ask you to come there to be ready to be baptized today. I'm going to ask you to come there in confession. A go backward invitation if you will. Jon will be singing a song. I'll be standing there. The Spirit of God will be speaking into your heart and you will respond to the cross of the one who was born in the cradle who now wears the King's crown.

Father, I give you these next moments and ask you to speak to us. Touch us, convict us, and help us give praise and glory unto the King of kings who died for us. It's in the matchless name of our Savior we pray. Amen.

As you're seated, let me give you four truths about atonement, about Jesus dying for us. Four simple truths I want you to see. First of all I want you to see the pain, the pain of atonement. It's found as I said to you in chapter 52, as you look back a few verses where this thought really begins in chapter 52. In verse number 14 the Bible says: Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men. When Jesus died, His body was marred. They beat Him. They bludgeoned Him. You could not even tell who He was because of the pain that He suffered in His body but He didn't just hurt physically, He also hurt within His heart.

In chapter 53 we find in verse 3 He was despised and forsaken of men. Have you ever been forsaken? Someone turned their back, even His Father turned His back. The disciples turned their back. People went away. It has often been said Jesus died of a broken heart. Oh the pain of His body, the pain of His heart but verse 10 and verse 11 speaks of the pain of His soul. The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him not just to death but to grief if He would render Himself a guilt offering.

You see, friend, all of your sin, everything you've ever done was laid on Him. As a result, verse 11 says, as a result of the anguish of His soul. He was crushed. His soul was in anguish because of me. I did it. I put Him there. My sin is what broke His heart. The pain in His body, the pain in His heart, the pain in His soul. Oh the pain of atonement.

Secondly we see, not only the pain of atonement, but the price, the price of atonement. It's found in verse number 5 of Isaiah 53. Look at it. He was pierced. They nailed Him. Crown, thorns in His scalp, spikes in His ankles, into His hands, wrists, thorns, a spike into His side. He was pierced. Why? Because of your transgressions. It is your fault. It was your transgression. You transgressed and God pierced Him for you. The verse goes on to say not only are we pierced through but He was crushed. Why was He crushed? Because of you. It was your iniquity, your transgression and mine that crushed the Savior. He was scourged. He was chastened for your wellbeing. Look at it. Hallelujah. Chastened for our wellbeing fell upon Him. Scourging heals us. The King James tells us by His stripes we are healed. Not

everybody gets well this side of heaven but everybody gets well the other side of death, those that know the Lord. It's His stripes that heal us.

Peter picked up on this text in I Peter 2, verse 24. Peter wrote: and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. Oh the pain of it but the price. Jesus gave His all. It was the price for your transgression, for your iniquity. He was pierced and crushed. The pain of it, the power, the price.

Thirdly, the power. Let me tell you, friend, there is no other power like or greater than the power of the cross. Verse 6 says we all like sheep have gone astray. We've turned each one to his own way and the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to be laid over on Him. He was oppressed, verse 7 says, and He was afflicted, yet He didn't open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep silent before its shearers. He did not open His mouth. In silence He died. We strayed. He paid. We all like sheep ran our own way. We've gone astray. We've left faithfulness. We left the foundation teaching of our fathers. We've all strayed. How do we get home? Let me tell you, we strayed, He paid. That's how we get home. That's the power of the atonement. Hallelujah. What a Savior.

There was a gentleman that wrote an old song. It's 134 in your blue hymnal. It says that Jesus paid it all. I want you to look at these four stanzas. Sharon, just pop the first one up there. "I hear the Savior say, thy strength is small." I have some people say, "You know, I'm good enough to get to heaven." Let me tell you, friend, the law will condemn you. You can't live up to the law. "Your strength is small, child of weakness, you better watch and pray and find in me thine all in all." Look in verse 2. "Lord, now indeed I find Thy power and Thine alone can change the leper's spots and He can melt."

Some of you have got a heart so hard, let me tell you, God can melt your heart of stone. You see some people are just wicked and difficult. God, through the atonement, melts your heart of stone. Look at that third stanza. Oh my goodness. "For nothing good have I." What have you got that's good enough? Nothing, he said. "Nothing good have I whereby Thy grace to claim. I wash my garments white in the blood of Calvary's lamb." Then that fourth stanza, hallelujah. "And when before the throne," you listen to me, you will stand there one day. You're going to stand and give an account. I don't care who you are, what you are, where you've been, who you think you know, you will stand before the throne. When I stand there, I'm going to stand complete because Jesus died my soul to save and my lips will still repeat. What is it? Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow. What a Savior.

That's the power. He takes all of your stuff and washes it away. All of it. Every nasty thing you ever thought or looked at. Every mean streak you ever had. Every time you stray, He pays because His blood covers a multitude of sin. We see the pain of it, the price that He paid, the power of atonement that He displayed. Then there is the prayer of atonement. Oh yes.

Look down in verse number 12 of Isaiah 53. At the end Isaiah said: *Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death [He was poured out], And was numbered with the transgressors; [He became sin for us] Yet He Himself bore the sin of many [all of us, He died for us and then notice], And interceded for the transgressors.* Friend, the only way for you to get saved is for Jesus to pray for you. The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 7 and verse number 25 that He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him since He always lives to do what? Make intercession for them. Jesus sits at the right hand of God making intercession right now. I couldn't preach if He didn't pray. You couldn't live if He didn't pray. You'd go to hell if He didn't pray. The prayer of atonement is that He's on the cross and even on the cross, what was it Jesus cried out to the Father? Yes, I know. *Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?* But He looked down and said, "Father, forgive them. They don't understand."

That's what He prays for you. He prays for you. Lord, they don't know. You say, "Pastor, I'm highly educated. I have a Ph.D." Well wonderful. That won't even get you on the first rung of the ladder. Dr. Criswell used to talk about Ph.Ds. He said, "Once I was an amoeba. Only one cell could be found. Then I was a tadpole swimming all around. Next I was a monkey in a banyan tree and now I'm a professor with a Ph.D." He'd say, "Whoop de do." Thank God for smarts, thank God for education, but let me tell you, friend, unless Jesus prays you don't have redemption but He does pray. Hallelujah.

Paul said in Romans chapter 8 and verse 34: *Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also [does what? He] intercedes [Hallelujah. He intercedes] for us.* He's praying for us. It's the prayer of atonement. Glory, glory, glory to His name.

Well that's the introduction to the sermon but we go straight way to the application. Go with me back to Acts 8. The Ethiopian is sitting in his vehicle and he reads this Isaiah passage and says, "Philip, is He speaking of Himself or another?" Philip from there preached Jesus to Him and then what did the Ethiopian do? The Ethiopian did what you must do. Here are his three actions that he took. Number one. He personalized the cross. Now there are people who argue today about limited and unlimited atonement. Did He die for everybody? You know, friend, what you've got to understand is He died for you. I believe out of I John 2:2 He speaks about dying for the sin of the whole world. I believe He died for everybody. Not everybody agrees with me. There are some people that are wrong but we're still friends. You see, Jesus died and what you've got to do is understand He died for you. You've got to personalize the cross. It's not enough to say He died for the sin of the world or for everybody or for a big group. He's got to die for you. You see, friend, it was you. It was your transgression. It was your sin. It was your iniquity. It was your darkness. It was your blasphemy that nailed Him to the cross and He died for you. This Ethiopian personalized it and you must personalize it today.

When we have that go backward invitation you need to get out of your seat and walk out there and give me your hand and say, "Pastor, I'm ready today. I'm ready today to be saved." I met a young man out there this morning that got saved here two weeks ago. He walked in. I said, "How are you doing?" He had on a shirt and a tie and he's all cleaned up and he said, "Well, preacher, I'm trying. I'm cleaned up. I'm ready to go." He looked a lot different than he did the day he came and got saved here two weeks ago. He said, "I'm walking with the Lord." It was a miracle of God. He changed his life, forgave his sin. His name was written in the Lamb's book of life, going to heaven. That's why we do church. Now we've got to help build him as a disciple and we're going to do it. Praise His name.

You've got to personalize the cross. Secondly you've got to picture the cross. I don't mean draw a picture of it or picture it in your mind. You must be the picture of the cross. What I mean by that is the Ethiopian, he was in his vehicle and Philip was with him. He was teaching him and he said, "Look, here's water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Philip said, "Nothing. You can be baptized if you believe." The Bible says they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Saturday afternoon at 6:00 I'll be standing there in the baptistery. Some of you need to join me. You need to come be baptized. You need to paint the picture of baptism. That's what baptism is. It paints the picture of Jesus' death, of going in the tomb of being buried, of His dying and that's the picture you paint when you are baptized. You say, "Jesus died for me," and thank God He didn't stay dead because He came out of the grave. What do you do with the atonement? You personalize it. Friend, let me tell you, if you don't personalize the cross, you're going to go to hell when you die.

I heard this week of a man who was in the hospital. He was mean as hell, cussing the nurses and carrying on with the doctors and nobody could come see him. He had surgery and as he was just kind of coming out from under the anesthesia he kind of looked over and he said, "Who closed the blinds? Who closed the blinds? Somebody open the blinds." The nurse came over and said, "I closed the blinds." She went to lift them up. She said, "I didn't know when you came out from under the anesthesia." She said, "The building next door is on fire and I didn't want you to think you had died and ...." It was just a subtle witness she had brought.

Let me tell you, friend, if you don't personalize the gospel, you'll miss heaven and gain hell. Yes indeed. You've got to personalize it and after you personalize it then you picture it. You paint it. You're baptized. You're not ashamed. You walk in the water and the preacher puts you under the water and raises you up and you picture it. You personalize it. You picture it.

Then you proclaim it. That's what the Ethiopian did. He went back with the gospel. When Philip baptized him he was caught away. He got back in his vehicle, into his chariot, and went home to proclaim the gospel. You've got to tell it. Hallelujah. You respond to the gospel. Friend, it's your job. If you're saved, you're supposed to be

telling somebody. This is the greatest and easiest week of the year to invite somebody to church. I'm just telling you, nearly anyone will come on Christmas Eve. Statisticians tell us that a high percentage of people will come with you at 4:00, 6:00, or 11:00 this week or next Christmas morning. If you'll just ask them to come, they'll come but you've got to make an invitation.

Thursday I flew early to Montreal and I was with church planters all day on Friday. That was some of the greatest young men I've ever met in my life. They tell me stories of people getting saved in that old French city and how God's doing a work. Man, I was so blessed. I spoke to their banquet group for Christmas on Friday night and they all came together. We were up on the 20th floor of a hotel downtown. You could see the whole city. Those men talking about, "I'm over here and I'm over here. Pray for these people. We're telling." They were telling stories of people that had been saved in their contacts. We went to bed and slept just a little while and popped up at about 2:30 and ran to the airport to catch the 5:30 flight. We got there and opened up the Montreal airport. I'd never opened an airport before. We got in and settled into my seat and got a bump up to the front. I was glad for it. A guy was sitting next to me and I began to chat with him. It was obvious that we needed to say something about the Lord. So you have a choice. So we began to engage.

Friend, you don't have to witness to everybody. You shouldn't witness to everybody. You just ought to witness to everybody the Holy Ghost tells you to witness to. If you'll do that, He'll keep you busy. He'll wear you out if He finds a willing witness. So I got on that plane. We shared. We got to Atlanta and hopped on the next flight. A sweet lady sitting right down here came on and said, "Hi, Dr. Traylor, I'm from Austin, Texas. I listen to you on the Internet." The guy sitting next to me, he said, "You must be famous." I said, "No, but the Lord is famous." I began to share. He lived in Baker, Florida and works for the military. He said, "Olive Baptist Church. My momma and daddy live three blocks from your church." He said, "I've been thinking about coming down there and taking them to church. They don't go but I got right with God." He told me when he got saved. We just had a great fellowship.

I got on and there was another guy across the way. We were sitting there and we began to talk. He was just cussing, carrying on about that flight and this and just taking the Lord's name. Just wicked. He did it. He looks over at me and he says – he's a guy that is an accountant for the government. That scared me at first. So finally after carrying on, he looked over and he said, "What do you do?" I said, "Well I'm an accountant for the King of kings and Lord of lords and we're taking an audit right now."

Let me tell you, friend, if you know Jesus and you do not tell the gospel you are guilty of high treason before the King of kings and Lord of lords. If you know the truth and you don't share the truth, it's high treason that you would keep that – you will go to heaven but you will have blood on your hands. We've got the greatest news in all the world. It's a wonderful season to share it and we should be telling people of the blessed Master. That's what the Ethiopian did. He personalized it. He pictured it in baptism. Then he went home to proclaim it and tell the world that Jesus saves.

He died for you. He died for me. Blessed be the name of our great King. Jon's going to slip over here and he's going to begin to sing, "Jesus Paid it All." When he sings this song I'm going to walk there to the Christmas tree and some of you will come to where I am. You say, "Pastor, I want to believe today. I want to personalize it. I need Jesus. I need to be saved today." Some of you will say, "Preacher, I've been saved but I need to join this church. I need to be a part." Good, come. We'll have some people there to share with you, chat with you and just in a quiet way we'll talk about what that means. You say, "Pastor, I've been straying. I'm saved but I've been straying. I need to come home." I'm telling you, Jesus will help you and we'll pray with you and you can cry out unto Him.

You may not want to come out there and talk to anybody. You may just need a quiet place. You come here to this altar and get on your face before God. Somebody's here and ought to put your membership at Olive Baptist Church. You ought to join this church. It'll be a great week. Remember to do it on Christmas. I joined here 26 years ago. It's not a perfect church but it's a good place. God will put you here and it'll be a better place.

In a moment I'll stand right out there. He was crushed, bruised, pierced through for our transgression. Just for you, personalize it. You need to be baptized, then make the picture. Get ready. Oh Christmas Eve at 6:00 will be a great time. Come. I'll be doing the baptizing that day. There's nothing magic about me doing it but I've always baptized on Christmas Eve and I'd be honored to baptize you. Get ready for that. Be a part of our family. We're going to stand and sing in a moment and Jon's going to lead us and he'll sing the first and then maybe the last stanza and then we'll all together sing that chorus. At the cradle, the cross, He now wears a crown of intercession. He paid it all for you.

My first little church, that 40 some odd, I baptized a little girl. She was really scared. Her mother, Lisa, came to me later and said, "Pastor, she's scared you're going to hold her under that water a long time." I said, "Well, you know, we don't." She said, "I know. We helped her." Then she kind of chuckled and she said, "Her favorite song is Jesus Painted it All." She said, "She sings it that way all the time." I said, "You know, that's really what He did. With His blood, He painted it all." It's the blood of the Lamb. That was the price of the spotless one. Just for you. Just for me.

Tonight Liz and I are going to teach. We're going to look back over our life. I'm going to tell you seven things that I believe are bedrock in our relationship and then Liz is going to share a few things and then we're going to have a party. But before we get to any of that, don't miss atonement. It's just for you.