

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle
Good Friday
18 April 2014
Trinity Lutheran Church, Wichita
Isa 52:13-53:12

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

Did Isaiah really see what he says he saw?

“Behold,” – that’s a “look” word.

It’s a word of vision, of seeing something or someone.

“Behold,” Isaiah says, “Behold, my servant.”

Who is this servant?

Isaiah says *He shall act wisely; He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be glorified.* (52:13)

When we hear that, we can’t help but to think of Christ—
and we’d be right, of course.

But the problem is, the image Isaiah sees isn’t what we think of as “*high and lifted up,*”
or even “*glorified.*”

When we hear that, we jump straight to the Ascension,
to His sitting at the right hand of the Father, full of glory, having finished His suffering.

We think of His golden throne, bleached white garments, clean face, and nurtured wounds—
only the nail marks remain.

But that’s not what Isaiah sees.

Not yet.

This *high and lifted up*; this *exaltation* and *glorification* isn’t the ascension—it’s the cross.

He goes on:

*“His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and His form beyond that of the children of mankind.”* (52:14)

What Isaiah sees is a broken man.

Dead, dirty, and covered in blood.

His skin is ripped apart, His tendons and ligaments no longer holding the bones in place—

“no beauty that we should desire Him.”

What Isaiah sees is “*a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.*”

And yet He speaks of Him as *high and lifted up*, even *glorified*.

What glory is there today?

What glory is there in the mocking and the scourging and the nails and the thorns?

What glory is there in the blood that seeps out of one wound and into another?

What glory in the dust that covered His body when He fell while carrying the cross?

What glory in the splinters of wood, or the nails in the feet?

What glory is there in the cross?

Isaiah proclaims the truth of what he saw:

*“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...
He was wounded for our transgressions;
He was crushed for our iniquities;
upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with His stripes we are healed...
The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* (53:4,5,6)

That’s the glory of Good Friday.

It’s not in pomp or circumstance.

It’s not in beauty that attracts the eye, but beauty that attracts the soul.

It’s the glory of salvation, and Isaiah saw it in the form of a lifeless, bloody, dirty, man,
high and lifted up on the cross.

Today is the day that the devil thought was his day.

Hell can rage all it likes, that is until Easter.

And then Hell’s fury is silenced.

Today death took what isn’t his,
and he’s in for a mean surprise.

For none of this is by accident.

Nothing is done apart from the God’s will—

as Isaiah says, *“Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him;
He has put Him to grief.”* (53:10)

This is God’s doing.

And God does it all for you.

And that’s what makes Good Friday so good.

Isaiah saw all of this some 700 years before it happened.

That’s what a prophet is—one of the Lord’s servants called to see His word, His will.

This vision gave hope to the people of Israel in the midst of their fears and their own brokenness.

For it was a vision that proclaimed the end.

The end of sin and death and the rage of the devil.

It proclaimed an end to suffering and sorrow and anger and depression.

It marked the end of sin, our sin.

And wherever sin comes to an end, joy abounds.

This vision Isaiah saw is also the one we’re given to peak in on.

Rather than being called into the divine council as Isaiah was,

we’re given to hear and see this vision through the word of the Evangelists.

We’ve followed Christ from the upper room, to the Mount of Olives,

from the Chief Priest’s quarters, to the seat of Pilate.

We’ve walked to the *via dolorosa*,

and felt the weight of the cross with Simon of Cyrene.

We've felt the sorrow of Mary
 and stood under the cross with St. John.
 With Joseph of Arimathea we've sought the Kingdom of God in the body of Jesus.
 And with the centurion we praised God, proclaiming that truly this man is the Son of God.
 All of this, through the words of the evangelists—those holy Gospel writers.

And just as this vision created faith in the saints of old,
 so do these passion accounts create faith in us here and now.

St. John says today,
*“He who saw it has borne witness—
 his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—
 that you also may believe.”* (Jn 19:35)

This is written that you may believe.

For all that He suffered,
 all that He bore was for us!

His cross was for us:
 His mocking for us,
 His lashing and crowning and bleeding and dying—
 all, for, us!

But you weren't there.
 Neither were those who heard Isaiah.
 And yet these things are written *that you may believe*.

And by believing, you have all of them—
 just as though the blood and the water poured from His side right onto and into you.

For this Jesus—*my servant*, as Isaiah calls Him—
bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

And that means you.
 You, who's sin is great—
 Christ has done it all for you.

Though it doesn't look like glory,
 and though you'd never expect to find God suffering, or bleeding, or dying—
 here you have Him; and here, He has you.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit