



DEVOTIONALS:

29 -31 JANUARY thru 1- 4 FEBRUARY 2023

Read: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isaiah lived in the 7th century before Christ. After Solomon died, the kingdom of Israel was divided into the Northern and Southern kingdoms. Each kingdom had its

own leaders and prophets. Isaiah was a prophet in the Southern kingdom living in Jerusalem.

He was an educated man and came from a leading family and so he served the king's court as minister. Prophets served as religious and political advisors since their leaders sought the will of God in what they did as kings. This was often a source of conflict because many of the kings didn't want to follow the word of the prophets when they received it.

In this capacity, Isaiah lived and served through the reigns of several kings in Jerusalem.

During his lifetime, however, Isaiah saw the Northern Kingdom destroyed and the Assyrian army (which conquered the North) march right to the gates of Jerusalem itself. He had advised King Hezekiah not to surrender and prayed for the city and an angel stopped the foreign army and saved the city, a high point of his ministry.

His writings are a commentary on the things that took place in his own lifetime but he also prophesied about future events:

- The fall of the Northern Kingdom
- The rise of the Babylonian Empire 100 years before it happened.
- The decline of Egypt as a world power.
- The eventual fall of Jerusalem and its restoration under King Cyrus who wasn't even born when he made this prophecy.

Aside from his predictions, Isaiah also spoke of the spiritual condition of the nation and its role in the world. It is here where the image of the "Servant" comes in: Isaiah described the nation of Israel as God's servant who at times suffered because of its relationship to God but would one day be vindicated, one day be restored from captivity.

Sometimes, however, he described the servant as a person, a man who would come to serve God for a special purpose. In chapters 49-55, Isaiah speaks about this idea of the servant. Sometimes it is the nation, sometimes the individual. The context determines which one. In chapters 52-53, Isaiah talks about the servant as a person and what is amazing is that through his description of the Suffering Servant, he gives a perfect account of Jesus' life and ministry here on earth.

In this chapter, Isaiah provides one of the clearest descriptions and prophecies of Jesus' person and work contained in the Old Testament. This passage is commonly referred to as the "Suffering Servant" passage in Isaiah because it pictures the Messiah of Israel – not as a conquering political hero (as some of the people thought He would be) – but as one who would save His people through His own personal suffering.

It is an extraordinary passage because of its accuracy in describing the person, the purpose and the promise of God fulfilled through Jesus Christ – all foretold 700 years before His appearance. It is incredible because the information contained in this passage could not be applied historically, morally or theologically to any other religious leader in history except Jesus Christ: only He could be the Suffering Servant.

In this passage, written 700 years before the appearance of the Messiah, Isaiah describes perfectly three things that we now know about the Christ, Jesus:

- His personality – Isaiah's description of His attitude, how He was perceived and treated and how He reacted could not fit any Jewish character or any other religious leader throughout history. No one else fits this profile, except Jesus.
- His purpose – The doctrine of salvation by substitutionary atonement is perfectly explained here. He clarifies why God is doing this 700 years before He does it! Not animal sacrifice, but the willing sacrifice of God's own chosen servant on behalf of sinners, this is the basis of Christianity; no other religion has this as a central feature.
- His promise – The prophecy even goes beyond the time that the actual events are going to take place. In the passage, Isaiah describes the promise that God makes to the Messiah and to those who will benefit from His appearance.

To the Messiah the promise is that death will not be able to hold Him because He is sinless. The empty grave and witness of the Apostles confirmed this – the angels are witnesses that He is at the right hand of God.

To those who accept Him, the promise that their sins will be forgiven, and that the punishment that they would have to endure forever has fallen on Him.

As marvelous as it is, Isaiah's prophecy could at best describe what a person could look forward to, could hope for in the future. While he lived, they had only the sacrifice of animals to appease their consciences for sin (and this only reminded them of sin, it didn't cleanse their guilty consciences).

We, on the other hand, have the blessing of having seen his prophecy fulfilled and have, today, access to the sacrifice of the Messiah to wash away our sins, to guarantee our salvation and to protect us against the judgment to come. What Isaiah, through the miracle of prophecy saw, we through the word of God have access to now – the opportunity to be saved through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said it Himself in Mark 16:16, "Those who believe and are baptized will be saved."

Question and Reflection to Consider:

Christ has suffered and died in your place. Christ made the perfect offering for our sin and guilt. Have you trusted in the One who suffered for you? This message of hope in Jesus Christ is available to you, too, right now.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for sending your Servant, Jesus to die for my sins, that I would be able to be in right relationship with you.

Stewardship for the Whole Congregation

People in our congregation are in different places financially. We are working towards ensuring our stewardship ministry disciple all. "But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8

People find themselves in different places financially. We have folks who are stressed out, struggling to meet their monthly bills, and wondering how they're going to get through the month. We also have others who are making it from month to month but are in unrealized danger because they're not being intentional enough with their money. And we

have those who are blessed with relatively abundant resources but aren't maximizing the impact of their situation for *making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world...*

God calls all of us to Biblical standards of stewardship. But exactly what that looks like differs in different circumstances. Jesus told the rich young man to sell everything and give to the poor, then come and follow him; but he made no such request of Zacchaeus, who nonetheless demonstrated Biblical stewardship in his own way (compare Matthew 19:16-22 with Luke 19:1-9).

Stewardship means being faithful with God's resources in whatever situation we're in. We can be faithful stewards (or not) in the midst of debt. We can be faithful stewards (or not) in the midst of plenty. Faithfulness in stewardship is not so much about where we are financially, but more about being obedient with God's resources in that situation.

WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS...Please return your pledge card by Jan. 29, 2023

PRAYER & CONCERNS

HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU TODAY?

- Our Sweet, Sweet Gentleman, **Mr. Allan Kieckhafer** passed away on January 25, 2023. We have stood on the shoulders of this saintly giant and we give God thanks for all that he taught us, the amazing legacy of service he has left us to live into and the vital a role he played in helping us grow into who we are now. "Almighty Father, you have built up your Church through the love and devotion of your saints: inspire us to follow the example of Mr. Allan whom we grieve his passing. May we, Faith Ave. United Methodist Church, rejoice with him in the vision of your glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen." We pray for Mr. Allan's family and the community of West Bend. Funeral arrangements are pending.
- Words cannot begin to express the heartfelt sadness and grief we are experiencing for the passing of our beloved **Ms. Beverly "Bev" June Vogel**. To Ms. Bev's family: "Always be assured that you have our full support, prayers and love." May God grant us grace, that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow hope, in death resurrection. Amen.
- The theme of our Fall Stewardship was "Earn, Save, Give" as we passionately prayed for God to bless us indeed, and enlarge our territory! We believe our church will demonstrate their faith and their gratitude for God's gifts by making generous pledges to continue supporting the mission and ministry of Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church in 2023. Thank you to all who completed their 2022 pledge commitments and have already turned in their 2023 pledge forms, and a heartfelt *thank you* to those who made new pledges or increased their pledge! Every gift is welcome and needed to helps to support our ministry.
- **We still need YOU! We need leaders and volunteers to serve in various positions on committees and boards. You may not think you have the gift, talent, and/or time to serve, but all are called to work in the kingdom. We need you!**
- We extend our deepest condolences and prayers of love and support to **Mr. Brett Barnett** on the passing of his sister, **Ms. Jerrie Barnett**. A Celebration of Life Service will be held, December 18th, in Michigan. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. Cards and notes of condolences and support can be mailed to: Mr. Brett and Ms. Mary Barnett, 932 Hillcrest Street, West Bend, WI 53095.
- With love and support, we extend our heartfelt condolences to **Mr. Leslie Dalton** on the passing of his sister, **Alice Dickmann** on Dec. 7. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen. Messages and cards of care and condolences can be mailed to: Mr. Leslie and Mrs. Alana Dalton, 4959 Lake Drive, West Bend, WI 53095
- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We're keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095.

- **Ms. Jeri Bowerman**, had cardiac stents inserted. Please send her your cards and notes of love, support and courage: Ms. Jeri Bowerman, New Perspectives Senior Living, 2130 Continental Drive, #322, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** having been diagnosed with Epilepsy, is still working with her medical team to find the correct medications and doses to control the seizures. She is very grateful for your love, prayers and support. Special prayers for Mr. Pat as he cares for Ms. Sandy. Cards and notes can be sent to: Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.
- **Mr. Ralph Hensel**. A Celebration of Life Service was held on Saturday, November 19, 2022 for Mr. Ralph. Continue to pray and care for Ms. Bonnie and the family. Cards and notes of support and love can be mailed to: Mrs. Bonnie Hensel, 629 Highland View Drive, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Bro. Bob Krell**, prayers for strength and continued healing. Please mail cards and notes of prayer and encouragement to: Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095
- **Ms. Nancy Whitson** is still admitted at The Pavilion at Glacier Valley. She requests your prayers and support as she continues to journey with health concerns. Please send cards and notes of encouragement to: Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095
- **Mr. Dick Simmons**, diagnosed with acute leukemia. “Dear God, we place our worries in your hands. We place Mr. Dick’s sickness under your care and humbly ask for strength and comfort. Be near him in times of weakness and pain; sustain him by your grace, that Mr. Dick’s strength and courage may not fail; give him confidence in the power of your grace, that even when he is afraid, may he put his whole trust in you. We pray all of these things in Your name. Amen. Mr. Dick, Ms. Shirley and family, we are sending you love, hugs, support and prayers during this difficult time. Cards, notes filled with prayers and support can be mailed to: Mr. Dick and Mrs. Shirley Simmons, 2908 Valley Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095.
- Lord, we ask you to plant seeds of courage and hope in **Ms. Lora Santiago**, daughter of Mr. Peter and Ms. Katie Glaser, as melanoma cancer has been found in her leg despite having immunotherapy. Your seeds of love and care through cards and notes can be mailed to: Ms. Lora Santiago, C/O Ms. Katie Glaser, N166 W21211 Glencoe Lane, Jackson, WI 53037.
- **Mr. Len McGinnis, Jr.**, continues to quietly face medical challenges. Your cards and notes of support and well wishes for Mr. Len and Mrs. Shelia McGinnis can be mailed to: 1230 Vogt Drive, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Ms. Linda Green**, sister of Mrs. Debra Matthies, thank you for your continued prayers for strength and courage as her cancer has returned and has metastasized. She is starting another round of chemotherapy and request your prayers that it will be successful. Please send her your cards and notes of support and faith. Her mailing address is: Ms. Linda Green, 2920 Donahue Ferry Road, Pineville, LA 71360.
- Many of our **church family members and friends** are experiencing health concerns. Please join me in praying for their healing and restoration. Amen.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I am your servant. Show me where I can give, serve, and follow you better. Give me opportunities to make an impact to those around me. When trials come, give me the strength to stand strong in my beliefs. Even though I may be persecuted, I know that no weapon can hurt you and no enemy can defeat you. Amen.

No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” says the Lord. – Isaiah 54:17

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin