
Justice is hard to come by in this world. Sometimes innocent people suffer for crimes they didn’t commit. That’s what happened to Jesus when he was crucified 2000 years ago. Though he had done no wrong, uttered no threats, committed no crime, and had hurt no one, the powers that be decided that he had to die. So they trumped up charges against him, shuffled him from one hearing to another, and in the end they got what they wanted.

He died a criminal’s death, hanging between two thieves.

But he didn’t deserve to be there.

When Isaiah considers the death of the Servant of the Lord, he stresses how Christ responded to unjust accusations, how no one came to his aid, and how even his burial testified to the wrong way he was treated. This passage ought to drive us to our knees in gratitude to Jesus for what he endured for our salvation.

Let’s begin by considering what Jesus didn’t do and what he didn’t say when he stood before his accusers.

I. His Submissive Silence - (v. 7)

“He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.”

Sometimes you are known by what you don’t say. In this case, Isaiah prophesied that Christ wouldn’t open his mouth to defend himself, even in the face of certain death. Hundreds of years later that came true when he stood in front of his accusers:
“But Jesus kept silent” (Matthew 26:63).

“He didn’t answer” (Matthew 27:12).

“But he kept silent and didn’t answer” (Mark 14:61).

“But Jesus made no further answer” (Mark 15:5).


“But Jesus gave him no answer” (John 19:9).

When Jesus stood before Pilate and Caiaphas, he would not defend himself, and he didn’t try to explain himself. In the case of Caiaphas, his mind was already made up.

**Pilate’s situation was different.** Because he was confused about Jesus’ true identity, he didn’t have a bias against him. But even with Pilate, Jesus would only speak in order to force him to make a decision, not to enter into a debate with him.

**Pilate had to decide what to do with Jesus.** (Matt 27:22) In that sense, he stands for all of us. Once Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, he should have let him go. But he didn’t.

We can speculate about Pilate’s motives for hours, but in the end he couldn’t wash his hands of the guilt of Jesus’ blood. Jesus spoke to him only to help him come to a decision. Once he knew the truth (that Jesus was innocent), the Lord had nothing more to say to him.

**Pilate stands for all of us.** When Peter wrote to the beleaguered, scattered, persecuted Christians in the first century, he used this passage as an example for how to respond when you are attacked for your faith: (1 Peter 2:21-23).
“For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.”

According to Peter, following Jesus means that sometimes we will suffer even when we have done nothing wrong. The greatest honour for any Christian is to be like Jesus.

When we suffer unjustly, we share in a tiny portion of what happened to him. Though he did no wrong, he was betrayed, tried, denied and crucified. Though he never sinned, he was hated by the power brokers who plotted to kill him.

**How will we respond?**

**Peter points to Jesus and says, “He didn’t retaliate.”** When we are insulted, our natural inclination is to return an insult for an insult. **But Jesus chose a better way.** As the old spiritual puts it, **“He never said a mumblin’ word.”** When he stood before Pilate and Herod, and when he faced the jeering mob, he uttered no insults, he made no threats.

When they scourged him, he didn’t retaliate.

When the soldiers put the crown of thorns on his head, he didn’t curse at them.

When they drove the nails in his hands and feet, he didn’t threaten them.
When the bystanders spat at him, he didn’t spit back.

When they swore at him, he didn’t swear back.

**You find out what you really believe when others mistreat you.** Sometimes the real test of your faith is what you don’t do. Sometimes you’ll be a better Christian by not saying anything at all.

Do you think Jesus was a helpless victim that day at Calvary?

**He was the Son of God.** He had the power to call down a legion of angels to set him free. He had but to say the word and all of heaven would come to his aid. **But he never said that word.**

He was truly the Silent Saviour who, having all power in his hands, decided not to use it against those who tormented him.

**II. His Unjust Sentence (verse 8)**

“Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.”

**Who protested the death of Christ?**

**Who spoke out against this miscarriage of justice?**

**Who came to his defense?**

**The answer is no one.** Of all the major personalities involved in the death of Christ, ironically it was Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who showed the most concern for Christ. Unlike his trial before Caiaphas when he would not defend himself, Jesus engaged
in a dialogue with Pilate because the governor seems on one level to have been seeking the truth.

At least he came to the right conclusion. Three times he said, “I find no guilt in him.” In the end, he caved to pressure and sentenced Jesus to death. His guilt is therefore all the greater because he knew what he was doing.

No one spoke up for Jesus.

The Jewish leaders were so enraged with Jesus that they were determined to kill him. Fueled by fear and jealousy over a Galilean rabbi they couldn’t control and didn’t understand, they paid off Judas, arrested Jesus at night, put him through six hearings before morning, and then stood by as the Romans put him to death.

He was cut off, Isaiah says.

He died before his time.

He was only a young man, in his early 30s when he died.

No one spoke up for Jesus

When someone dies young, we think of all they might have accomplished, the songs that might have been composed, books that might have been written, and amazing discoveries that might have been made.

“He might have been a successful businessman.”

“He might have been a star athlete.”

“She might have been a superstar.”
And on goes the sad speculation about what might have been.

That may be our worst fear. . . that we will die before our time.

We die too young . . .

Or we die too soon . . .

Or we die with our work unfinished . . .

Or we die with our dreams unfulfilled.

You can’t say that about Jesus.

What else did he have left to accomplish?

He was put to death for the transgression of his own people.

Jesus finished all he came to do

Only one person in history never left behind any unfinished business. His name is Jesus Christ. He is the only person who could come to the end of his life and say - with absolute and total truthfulness - “I have finished everything I set out to do.”

Just before Jesus died, he cried out, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Note that he didn’t say, “I am finished,” for that would imply that he died defeated. Rather, he cried out “It is finished,” meaning “I successfully completed the work I came to do.” It is the Saviour’s cry of victory.

Since Jesus Christ paid in full the price for our sins, the work of salvation is now complete. That’s what we mean when we talk about the “finished work” of Jesus Christ. That’s not just a slogan; it’s a profound spiritual truth.
What Jesus accomplished in his death was so awesome, so total, so complete that it could never be repeated. His work is “finished.” Hebrews 9:25-26. There is nothing more God could do to save the human race. There is no Plan B. Plan A (the death of Christ) was good enough.

III. His Humble Grave

“He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth” (v. 9).

How could this be?

How could Jesus be assigned a grave with the wicked and yet also with the rich in his death?

When Isaiah wrote these words, he no doubt must have wondered about this himself. The wicked and the rich generally end up in different places. A truly wicked person might be buried in an unmarked grave or in some obscure corner of a cemetery.

We bury the wicked with dishonour and with as little fanfare as possible. But the rich we honour with monuments and flowers and generous inscriptions. We make sure that 100 years from now passers-by will know that “an important man is buried here.”

We forget the wicked and remember the rich.

That’s how the world works.

So how could Jesus be counted both with the wicked and with the rich in his burial? He died for sinners everywhere by taking their iniquity upon himself (“Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of
us all.” v. 6). Though he lived a sinless life, Jesus died for sinners and thus was assigned a grave with the wicked.

**Christ died a sinner’s death though He himself was sinless**

**But where was He buried?** In a tomb borrowed from a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60).

**Thus even the burial of Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy to the letter.** Even though no one could have foreseen it in advance, both the nature of his death **(by crucifixion)** and the place of his burial **(a rich man’s tomb)** fulfilled prophecy given 700 years earlier.

All of this happened even though Jesus was innocent.

He had done no violence.

He committed no sin.

He told no lies.

It’s hard for us to grasp how amazing this is because we have nothing to compare to it. **That is, we don’t exactly know what being “sinless” is because all of us are sinners.**

**He was pure, holy, and perfect in every way.** He never sinned, not even one time. Though he was severely tempted, he never gave in. All the rest of us fall so far short that we cannot begin to be compared to him. **He is the only righteous man ever to walk this earth.**

And we crucified him.
His reward for doing God’s will was a bloody Roman cross. Here is the wonder of grace at work. From the murder of a perfect man came God’s plan to rescue the human race.

**Christ died for us while we were "still" sinners**

Out of the worst evil, God brought forth the greatest good. Only God could have done it. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Note the little word “still.”

We were “still” sinners when Christ died for us. He didn’t die for us while we were still “church members” or “good people” or “law-abiding citizens” or “nice neighbours” or “high achievers,” but he died for us while we were still lost in our sin and far away from God.

How do we come into contact with the benefits of Christ’s death? Reach out with the empty hands of faith and trust in Christ as your Lord and Saviour. The door to heaven is marked, “For Sinners Only.”

What we couldn’t do for ourselves, God has done for us through the death of his Son. The only thing left is to believe in him and run to the cross.

Lay hold of the Son of God who loves you and died for you. Cast yourself completely on Jesus for your salvation.