

Title: The “Insider”
Text: Isaiah 53.10-12
Theme: Justification
Series: Isaiah #47
Prop Stmtnt: The cross shows us the heart of God by securing our salvation.

Did you ever notice that one of the things that we all have in common, is that every single one of us fears that we really do not belong. Every one of us has this sense that we are on the outside looking in. We live with an inherent insecurity. If you are old, you fear that you do not have anything to say to students. You fear that they will think of you as being obsolete and irrelevant, so it is easy to shy away from conversations with them.

Generations, races, incomes, education degrees and abilities are all reasons why people feel excluded. But, the irony is that even though we fear being on the outside, we tend to resent those whom we perceive to be on the inside, and we form groups for outsiders and exclude from our group anyone whom we think is an insider. In other words, we try to make outsiders insiders and insiders outsiders. Part of this is fueled by our national identity. We are proud of the fact that we are not impressed with anyone who is in leadership. After all, if you think that as king, you can make us drink your tea, we’ll throw it into the harbor. Politicians who forget where they came from and act like Washington insiders are easy to resent, unless of course, they give us special access and make us feel like an insider.

But, what are the assumptions that we have about insiders? We believe that they have access to information and resources that are not available to others and that they will use that information for their own benefit and hurt the rest of us and we have reason to believe that. Over ten years ago, Martha Stewart sold 4,000 shares of stock that she owned in a drug company that at the time was worth over \$50 per share. Her friend, the CEO of the company, had warned his friends and family that the their big cancer fighting drug was probably not going to be approved. So, everyone on the inside sold their stock before the announcement was made and before the stock dropped to under \$10. This problem is repeated over and over to the point where we expect people who have power to be corrupt. And that is what makes it so difficult for us to have a proper view of God. We tend to assume that God is like us. Therefore, when we think of one who is all-powerful and eternal, we are inherently distrustful. God is the ultimate insider but he is, on so many levels unlike us. What does He do with the access he has to all of his power? How does he use his position to stomp on the weak? This is why we need to study this text. God is so unlike us that it takes us a long time to wrap our heads and hearts around passages like this. Here we see a God that we desperately need, and yet one whom we resist trusting in, but who has given us every reason to trust.

In this final section of the Servant’s Song, we really see how involved God the Father is in all of this. These last three verses are like the final verse of a majestic hymn that brings all of the parts together of the previous four sections and sets them on display in magnificent fashion. The tragedy that the Servant will face will not be the final word. This tragedy is the means of securing triumph. All of this is the will of the Lord.

1. The Will of the LORD (10)

Notice that verse 10 begins and ends with this phrase. It is the will of the Lord to crush the Servant and the will of the Lord to exalt the Servant. But, why does he crush the Servant? He crushes the servant so that we would not be crushed.

A. **To crush the Servant** (so we would not be crushed)

You cannot understand your life and this world if you do not know where you came from, what went wrong, what can be done about it and what happens after this. Those are the four questions that plague every person, and that every philosophy and religious system attempts to answer. The only coherent system that satisfactorily answers those questions is Christianity. You cannot understand Christianity without understanding the entire Bible. In the very beginning, we learn that sin is the worst thing that could ever happen to the human race. It devastates people, it fractures relationships, it breaks trust, it causes pain that goes deeper than any physical torture, it results in violence, death, murder and unspeakable atrocities. Sin crushes. God made humans, but he did not make us capable of living under the weight of sin. Guilt destroys us. Sin is a weight that burdens the human heart with guilt. We do everything that we can to rid ourselves of this burden, but there is no relief. Our culture and therefore many of our churches resent and detest the use of the word "sin." Those who use it are often accused of inflicting psychological damage upon people. Why? Because we do not know what to do with guilt! And people who point out the obvious are deemed to be the problem, when the problem isn't with the person who speaks the truth, but the problem is that we are guilty. Sin crushes people. That is why God warned Adam and Eve so specifically about it. That is why he revealed his law and everything in it to show how serious it is, and how impossible it is for man, on his own to deal with it. We have to be rescued from our sin, by someone outside of us. Isaiah is speaking of the day when that Savior comes. He, who is perfect (9), who has no sin to condemn him, is going to be crushed by our sin. It is the will of the LORD to crush the servant with our sin, so that our sin would not crush us. Otherwise, we have no hope.

That is why coming to faith in Christ involves a personal understanding of what sin is. In order to turn to Christ and accept his work (life and death) as the accomplishment of my salvation, I have to acknowledge my need. I need more than deliverance from the consequences of my sin; I need deliverance from sin. Conversion to Christ involves a turning away from my sin (repentance) and a turning to Christ (belief) as my Lord and Savior. The Servant was crushed for my sin because sin is crushing. If Christ was going to take my sin, then he was going to take the consequences of my sin with it, and he did.

Now, even though it was the will of the LORD to crush the Servant, the Servant was not forced or compelled to do this. The Father carried out his will through the free and voluntary choice of his son. Notice the phrase, "*he (the Father) has put him (the Son/Servant) to grief when his (Son/Servant) soul makes an offering for guilt.*" The Servant makes the offering. That means that the Servant is both the one making the offering as well as the offering that is made. He is not coerced. He makes the offering.

This gives to us a little insight into how God relates to himself as God. God delights so perfectly in God, that there is absolutely no shred of tension between the members of the Trinity. The will of the Father, the obedience of the Son, the delight of the Father and the trust of the Son are part of the dynamic of love and joy that God has as God. This is foundational for everything in all of creation. This is why the Islam religion will never capture hearts. They have no Trinity. There is no delight in God as God. In order for God to be a God of love, there has to be an object of his affection. God (Father, Son and Spirit) loves himself and finds joy in himself. Therefore, the trust of the Son in the Father is so perfect that the Son voluntarily offers up himself because his Father determined that this was the way for our sin to be dealt with. The Son was so confident in the plan of his Father, that he surrendered himself to death. He knew that it was the Father's plan to not only crush him, but then...

B. To exalt the Servant.

I am convinced that this is one of the statements that Isaiah made because the Spirit of God was directing him, even though Isaiah did not understand exactly how this was going to happen. In order to see your children and have your days extended you have to be alive. This phrase, "prolong his days" (or something very similar) occurs 21 times in the OT and is almost always a reference to having your earthly life extended. How could the Servant die and have his days extended? Did Isaiah know that he was predicting the resurrection of Christ? I am not certain that he did. Isaiah could have said that if he wanted to. But I believe that Isaiah is writing down things that he himself had to take by faith and see how God was going to pull it all together.

Here is what Isaiah knows. As a direct result of the Servant's dying, the Servant is going to see his children, he is going to have his days prolonged and the will of the Lord is going to prosper through him. This is why we have to have him. If he is crushed for our sins, he will be exalted. If we are crushed for our sins, we are destroyed. If Christ pays for our sin, we can be forgiven. If we try to pay for our sin, we will be paying for eternity. Sin is that serious, and our righteousness does not count, it does not matter how hard we try. How do I know? That is what the next verse prophesies. This verse tells us why it was the Lord's will to crush the Servant and why the crushing of the Servant accomplished our salvation.

2. The Satisfaction of the LORD (11)

A. God's just wrath is satisfied. (propitiation)

Notice the first phrase of v.11. God is described as seeing the anguish of the Servant and being satisfied with it. This is telling us how God's wrath is appeased. The New Testament word for this is: propitiation. I know that people make many jokes about sin, but when you are in the middle of it, there is no humor in it. I have gone to court on many occasions. I once served on a jury for a couple of weeks. Just sitting there and listening to the details of the crime is hard because these are not actors playing a part, and we don't stop for a commercial. These are lives that are ground up by the sins of others. I watch

them and wonder, will they ever get over this? Sin is a monster. God's wrath is the righteous response of his pure justice to the offense of sin. We simply do not look at sin the way God does, and so, we think that God's wrath is some sick and twisted tantrum.

Christopher Hitchens, (famous atheist who recently died) was really hung up by this. He used to say that it is completely untenable for God to command the Israelites to kill the Amalekites. What kind of a God is this? And you are okay with that? You do not see any problem with that? I am completely serious when I say this. I do not see any problem with God commanding that. I do not relish it, but neither am I in the least bit embarrassed by those passages.

I believe the Bible. I recognize that my believing the Bible does not make it true. But I do believe the Bible, in part because there is no other system of thought or explanation of the world that provides meaningful and satisfying explanations for life as we know it. The Bible begins with an assumption of the existence of God and a statement of the initial act of God in creation. He is and He made it, therefore, He makes the rules. He made it and the rules as a reflection of who he is. He is righteous. He is perfectly holy, just, an incapable of sinning. He is infinitely pure and his righteousness is absolute. Therefore, his response to sin corresponds to the seriousness of it. Sin is so serious and so crushing that he warns us repeatedly about staying away from it. When an entire nation, like the Amalekites is completely given over to immorality, child sacrifice and other grievous matters, God is acting in a manner that is perfectly consistent with his character by having them wiped out. He is offended by sin. And humans have the audacity to tell God that they are offended by God being offended by sin. What are we thinking? We are the sinners, whose views on life are skewed because of our sin. We are not capable of being perfectly objective, yet we think that we can tell God that he needs to calm down a bit and not take sin so seriously?! Sin is serious. Therefore, God's wrath against sin is absolutely terrifying and you cannot handle it. As Psalm 1 says, "*the wicked will not stand in the judgment.*" They are incapable of absorbing the righteous wrath of God. God knows that. So, Christ came to this earth, and took upon himself the form of a man. He did what the first man should have done; that is, he trusted God perfectly. And now, he was able to do what do man could do, but as the God-man, he could. He died in our place. This was not a mere example of being kind to others. When Christ died on the cross, he took upon himself all the wrath of His Father that would have otherwise been poured out upon you. He absorbed it, in your place.

Imagine standing in front of a dam that is 3 miles high and 10 miles wide. Behind it is a body of water that due to its volume is exerting enormous pressure upon the dam. You are standing 500 feet away, when the dam gives way and in mere seconds the millions and billions pounds of pressure are released your way and are about to decimate you. At the last instant, the ground in front of you opens up in to a cavern so large that you cannot see the bottom. The water, instead of crushing you, thunders into this cavern until the entire body of water is gone. The wrath of God is like that water. You, the sinner deserve it, yet Christ; the cavern received it and absorbed it upon himself instead. You, the sinner, received no wrath. He, the Savior, received no mercy. Christ took the wrath of every

single person who will ever trust in him. With the Father's wrath satisfied, the Father is now free to express his unlimited love and kindness to his children.

B. God's salvation is accomplished. (justification)

The next phrase now connects the Father's satisfaction to our salvation. Notice (11b) "*by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous.*" By what the Servant knows/experienced, he (and only he) is the reason why many are accounted as righteous. This statement is expressed in the NT by the word: justification. Justification means to be accounted as, or to be declared as righteous. How can this be? How can we be sinners and be declared righteous? It is only because of Christ. We just found out how God can be just and be merciful. This phrase tells us that we can be sinner and saint. To be accounted righteous, means that righteousness has been added to your account. The only righteousness that God accepts is his own, because only his own is perfect. The life of Christ on this earth provided an infinite amount of righteousness because Christ perfectly pleased the Father. His life of infinite perfection qualified him to be the full and final sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, when he died, he paid the debt of our sin so completely that there is nothing left for you to pay. It has already been done. It is all there, all for you to accept by faith. When you agree with God that your sin is wrong and offensive (confession) and trust Christ as your Savior, then your sin is taken from you and placed on Christ (who died for it), and his righteousness is placed on you and you are accounted as righteous.

C. God's forgiveness is displayed. (expiation)

So, what happens to our sin that is placed on Christ? "*he shall bear their iniquities*" reminds us that because he takes them from us, he is the one who deals with them. The word that describes this is "expiation." It means to remove our sin. Therefore, since this accomplishment of our salvation is so incredible and so final, and so perfect, the Father not only guarantees our salvation as the result of this, but he guarantees the exaltation of the Servant!! When in the course of a battle a soldier dies in order to save the life of other soldiers or for his country, we applaud the sacrifice, but realize that he paid the ultimate price. Others are going to enjoy the fruit of his sacrifice. He did the sacrifice; others get the reward. Post-humus awards do not matter to the dead. They are dead. This is what is so amazing about God's plan for our redemption. The one who dies, does not lose.

3. **The Promise of the LORD** (12)

A. The Servant will be rewarded. (12a)

The Servant does not just die. The Servant is rewarded. While there is no doubt that Isaiah is writing about things that he does not fully understand, somehow, someday God is going to reward the Servant who dies. In fact...

B. The Servant will share his victory with his friends. (12b)

“he shall divide the spoil with the strong”

Both of these phrases describe what victorious armies do as a benefit of their success. They plunder their enemies and bring the bounty home to share with family and friends.

Ok, now let me wrap this up and attempt to help you see how this all fits together. When you repent of your sin and trust only in Christ as the One who died for you, you are not only forgiven and declared righteous, but you are adopted into the family of God. You are, at that moment a part of his church. You are restored to a relationship that God intended for you to have with him from the very beginning. God’s design for you was for you to know him and love him and trust him as your father. Everything that you have is a gift to you from him to be used for your joy and his glory. Before you came to Christ, you wasted what you were given on yourself. But, you have been redeemed from that. That is, you have been bought back by Him, for Him, through Christ. He not only bought you back through the death of Christ, but the death and victorious resurrection of Christ also redeemed for you and for the people of God (the church) all of the gifts that you had been wasting. This is what Paul talks about in Ephesians 4. Christ rose victorious from the grave and he gave gifts to the church. The gifts of leadership, speaking, serving, mercy, encouragement, etc., are the spoils of war that Christ secured, that Christ plundered, that Christ redeemed, that Christ bought back to where they belong. If you are a follower of Christ, he not only redeemed you, he gave you gifts that he redeemed as well. Those gifts are to be used in a manner that reflects the Giver. We serve him in response to the fact that he died for us. This is an act of love and appreciation. We do not serve to earn his favor. We serve because we have been redeemed and instead of wasting the gifts on ourselves, we use these gifts in order to build up the body of Christ.

The Servant is actually a Warrior-King who returns from the dead, victorious in battle. The salvation that he purchased, cost him his life, but he gladly did it because it was the only way that you could live with him forever. Christ chose to die for you because he did not want to live without you. And everything that you have is from him and for him. And for you to ignore him and not love his church (his people) and not serve with the gifts that you are given, is like a child who is too busy to open and play with the gifts that his father gave him for his birthday.

- C. Because the Servant accomplished this for us.**
- D. And the Servant will never let us go.**

When the Ethiopian official read these words in Isaiah 53, he was understandably confused as to who they were speaking about. When Philip got done showing him that it was Christ. The official stopped the chariot and said, “I need to get baptized.” He believed.

When you realize that God, the ultimate insider sent his Son who was treated as the ultimate outsider, so that we could included on the inside forever and loved by a King who will never let us, who wouldn’t believe?