

In the early years of the Christian church, the Apostle Philip, was led by the Holy Spirit, out into the wilderness, on the road that links Jerusalem and Gaza. And there he met a very important Ethiopian eunuch, the treasurer of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians (he was a long way from home)...

And he was reading something. He was reading something from the prophet Isaiah, and he couldn't understand it. And Philip said, "Let me tell you what it means." And beginning with that very passage from the prophet Isaiah, he introduced that Ethiopian eunuch, to Jesus Christ.

Because even though, the prophet Isaiah had written these words over 700 years before Jesus was even born, Jesus is the one that they were written about.

And this Ethiopian, was so moved by these words, and so moved by the Holy Spirit, that when they came upon water, he said, "Look. There's water. I'd better get baptised."... And he was.

And these same words, can so move us today. I don't know why the Jews had so much trouble understanding that the Messiah must suffer, because the words we read in Isaiah, leave absolutely no doubt...

And on this Good Friday, as we look back and remember the suffering of Jesus, we're going to hear these words of God's Prophet, that were so accurate, in every detail, that they perfectly describe the crucifixion of Jesus... But more than this – they tell us "**Why.**" "What was the purpose of His suffering and His death???"

And the fact that it was written, over 700 years before it happened, means I can confidently tell you, this was no accident of history – this was God’s plan – this was God’s purpose...

It’s the story of the suffering servant. Let me read it for you:

Isaiah 52:13–53:12

- ¹³ See, my servant will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.
- ¹⁴ Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any
man
and his form marred beyond human likeness—
- ¹⁵ so will he sprinkle many nations,
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will understand.

- 53** Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of YHWH been revealed?
- ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
- ³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.

Like one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

- 4 Surely he took up **our** infirmities
and carried **our sorrows**,
yet **we** considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.
- 5 But he was pierced for **our** transgressions,
he was crushed for **our** iniquities;
the punishment that brought **us** peace was upon **him**,
and by **his** wounds **we** are healed.
- 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and YHWH has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
- 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
And who can speak of his descendants?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
- 9 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.
- 10 Yet it was YHWH's will to crush him and cause him to
suffer,
and though YHWH makes his life a guilt offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,

and the will of YHWH will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ After the suffering of his soul,
he **will** see the light of life and be satisfied;

by his knowledge my righteous
servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

“Jesus died for us”, is no glib statement...

And it's not just Jesus' death – it's His suffering

What was so awful. What was so terrible, that Jesus suffered so terribly? What deed, was so horrendous, and so repulsive to God, that the cost of redemption was so high???

Well, you might consider it “no biggie”... But here it is:

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;

That's it.

- Sin, is choosing our way, over God's way.
- Sin, is living for self, instead of living for God.
- Sin, is feeling, "I know better"... or "I just don't care"...
- Sin, is when we decide that The Lord God Almighty, is "irrelevant"...

That's it...

And because:

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,

because

each of us has turned to his own way;

YHWH has laid on [Jesus]

, our iniquity...

It is because we have turned to our own way, that Jesus suffered terribly and died brutally, on the cross...

You know, most people in the world, think of themselves as good people – "I don't need to be saved". "I don't need God..."

But that very attitude, is the root of the problem...

We've gone astray. We've turned to our own way... God has told us that there is **only one way** to get to Him, and that's through Jesus... But we humans don't accept that – we've got **another** way. We live by our **own** rules. We live by our **own** standards... And if God **ever** mattered, well **that's** a thing of the past, because we know **better** now...

Oh, my heart aches, when I realise that my sin – my going my own way, is what caused Jesus to suffer so terribly... What can I do to make up for it??? Nothing.

This is the beauty of the Gospel:
In His suffering, Jesus made up for it. Jesus did what I couldn't... Jesus, took upon **His** own body, the suffering that we deserve, for choosing our way over God's....

The only one who **never** went astray... The only one, who **always** went God's way... Our beautiful Saviour, was executed as a criminal, to make things right, for us....

My, what a saviour...
What love...
What sacrifice...

By his punishment, we can have peace with God;
By His wounds, we are healed... That's why this is Good Friday and not Bad Friday

How can we respond??? We' can't know this, and not respond.

Well, don't let Him do it for nothing...

He went through this, to fix what was broken... It is now possible, for us to turn from our own way, and to turn back to God...

Then, what else can we do, but worship???

Let's pray,

Oh Lord,

I'm sorry for all the times I've gone astray and followed my own way;

I'm sorry for not following you as my Lord.

Father, forgive me.

Lord Jesus Christ,

We thank you for the price you paid on the cross,

As you suffered and died.

It was our sin; our iniquity, that you bore that day...

Thank you Jesus.

And Lord, we give you our hearts.

Help us to follow you, with our whole heart.

From this day, until eternity,

Amen...