

The Problem of Sin ▪ Isaiah 53:4-6, 9-10; Eph. 5:25-27

Ryan Perz ▪ May 1, 2022

Intro: The famous words “Houston, we have a problem” have turned into a common phrase we use when something has gone seriously wrong.

We may picture and hear actor Tom Hanks, but they were actually originally spoken from astronaut Jim Lovell, who called mission control on April 13, 1970 on board Apollo 13.

- We continue to look this week at the doctrine of sin.
- When it comes to sin, we can say: “Humanity, we have a problem”.
- That’s how Ephesians 2 describes it, pre-salvation.

(Eph. 2:3) —that all mankind are by nature children of wrath.

Humanity, we have a problem.

Now, when we have a problem, *we try to:*

--Either fix it,

--Or just ignore it; pretend it’s not there; go on with our lives.

Both of these are dead ends when it comes to sin.

- › *The problem of sin is not ours to fix.*
- › *If it were left for us to fix, we would be hopeless.*

If we miss that, then we miss what the Christian faith is about—we can’t fix the problem of sin.

One of the first futile attempts to “fix” the problem of sin shows up in Gen. 3:7—Adam and Eve sew fig leaves together in attempts to cover the shame of their nakedness.

It’s as if God’s gives us a clear picture at the beginning, that sends a clear message.

“Humanity, you have problem....and you cannot fix it”.

- The passage we have in front of us today shows us how God fixes the problem of sin.
- Before we go to the Word, I want to share from the Heidelberg Catechism.

Question: What is your only comfort

in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death— to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

At the heart of this, is the essential truth: God works a plan for the problem.

GOD SENDS A SACRIFICE FOR US (Is. 53:4-6; 10;12)

- The prophecy of Isaiah comes some 700 years before Jesus walked the earth.

Now we are getting at the heart of how the problem of sin is dealt with:

- › This particular chapter is so rich, that some have called it “The 5th Gospel”.

The gospel is not just for unbelievers.

Even if you’ve known and believed this truth for years now, there is a fresh appreciation even the most seasoned believer can draw from the simple truths of the gospel, again and again.

- The text is one of the Servants Songs in Isaiah—begins back in 52:13-12—
- The song emphasizes the Servant’s high *exaltation and* deep humility.

Now the NT makes it clear this is fulfilled in the life, death, and triumph of Jesus.

(Acts 8)

(1 Pet. 2:24)

- We see the theme of deep humility developing starting in v2.
- Jesus comes apparently insignificant—he was not attention grabbing. He would not stand out in the crowd. If you passed him on the street, he looked ordinary.
- V. 3 goes further: he was despised and rejected. Many people did not like him or accept him or his message.

“Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”.

Grief could also mean *physical sickness*.

(See the ESV footnote; every time you see grief, think physical sickness—vss 3, 4, 10.)

So this could imply that Jesus has his own physical affliction. Migraines. Backache. A man who spent his vocation with parts of his body breaking down—maybe he needed a shoulder surgery.

Think about it....Jesus could have healed people even while he had his own splitting headache. Some people are more sickly—is that what the verse is getting at?

But sickness can also be used as a metaphor of sin; which makes more sense here....and fits with God dealing with the problem of our sin.

And it sets up for v4.

“Surely he has borne our griefs.” (sickness)

- We are all infected with the sickness of sin.

(Vss. 4-6) are the central stanza and carries the weight of emphasis. (Kidner)

(53:4-6)

- The main emphasis is on how God deals with the problem of our sin... through His Suffering Servant —through the cross.

—There is much packed into it—and some strong words to show us the gravity of the problem.

--“Pierced”: a word that describe a fatal death blow (51:9).

--“Crushed” is another word that describes the cruel agony of death.

- So these verses teach us something essential about the Sacrifice (Penal Substitutionary Atonement).

(V6) It's seen in v6 as well “the LORD laid on him the iniquity of us all”.

“Laid on” can describe a *hostile attack*.

- Penal Substitutionary Atonement—God sent Jesus to pay the price, suffer the outpouring of God's wrath —the hostile attack...*yet in our place*.

In other words, Jesus did not get what he deserved, but stepped in for us, to take on what we deserve.

(9b) “Although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth”

Substitution runs all through this.

- So every moment of pain that Jesus experienced; every nerve that recoiled; every drop of blood that flows down the cross and hits the ground....is for us.
- The bitterness of his suffering hits us if we re-read the description Is. 52:14—Jesus body was a mess; maybe his mother would hardly be able to recognize him.

Most of the pictures of crucifixes are lies—they have a pretty cleaned up body of Jesus that probably would not have required much more than a visit to Urgent Care.

Jesus' body was so broken that probably the major trauma center of a Metro hospital may say: "Not much we can do".

To many of us, even the sight of him dying on the cross would cause us to get sick and vomit.

Now substitutionary atonement makes sense and is clear from this text. But some deny it—usually because they have either a low view of the Bible, or a low view of sin...or they recoil from a God who has wrath.

- Yet this is how God reveals he deals with the problem—v10.

This was God's will. This was part of the plan—not plan B, but plan A.

Gospel

"What the Servant did, the Lord did." (Alec Moyter)

- › The Servant's sacrifice actually achieves a salvation for his people.
- › It deals with the Problem in a real, eternal, decisive, God-exalting way that should stir our heart and move our affections!

"Stirring oratory, soaring music, learned philosophy, clever arguments, do not have the power to stir the deep affections of the human hearts like a faithful exhibition of Jesus Crucified."

(Michael Reeves)

This was God's plan, his *only plan* to deal with the problem.

Gospel: The question this morning, friends: is the problem of sin dealt with in your own life?

Can you repeat the words of the Heidelberg Catechism?

Can you say, "He was pieced for my transgressions?"

He was carried and bore my iniquities?

Do you have peace with God because Jesus took on your punishment?

When we mediate on the cross, part of us needs to say—this was all my fault; I own this.

But on the other hand, to say “God planned it”, I believe it.

If you’ve not believed it—I urge you to come and place your faith in Jesus today.

Stop trying to fix or ignore the problem of your sin....

Turn to Jesus for forgiveness, healing and peace.

When we look at God’s plan to fix the problem, his saving work—*it was a success*.

A success perfectly done according to the will of the Lord

GOD SECURES US IN HIS CHURCH (Eph. 5:23-27)

- This is typically the go-to part of scripture that deals with roles in the marriage—I’ve used it countless times for pre-marital and marriage counseling.
- But we also get another truth; another picture of how God deals with the problem of sin.

He secures us in the church.

- When the Bible says—Christ gave himself up, it’s saying the same things that Is. 53 does.

That Plan A for God was to send his Son to lay down his life, love his bride, die for a people he loves...then gather them together into a church.

There are a lot of directions we could go here—but one is sufficient (V26). One purpose “that he might sanctify her”.

Paraphrase—that He might deal with the problem of her sin.

Did you ever think of your connection to the church that way? There is a purpose: “That he might sanctify you”. That He’s secured you in this church, 3RBC, to sanctify you?

Conclusion:

Our family once hosted for lunch, a large family that traveled the country doing bluegrass gospel concerts for churches. They had 13 kids. With 13 kids you need a bus. So at lunch I asked about the bus. The dad replied, “O you mean the sanctification bus.”

- › It hit me: the church is like the sanctification bus.
 - Spending a lot of time together with an imperfect family—that Jesus loves and died for.
 - It has the potential of making us more holy over time—especially through the trials and difficulties.

In that sense, each church—and each commitment—is like getting on the bus.

--Space may be tight, people might get in our space, offend us, sin against us, we against them.

--Traveling to the next destination might take longer than expected.

- › But if you are part of the family, you get on the bus. You stay on the bus.

It’s in the sanctification bus that we learn how to “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...being imitators of God and walking in love as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us.”