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# Sermon Notes

September 24, 2023

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Suffered Under Pontius Pilate

Isaiah 53:1-12

### Born to Suffer

- ❖ The Apostles' Creed segues immediately from Jesus' birth to His sacrificial, substitutionary atonement
  - the manger lies in the shadow of the cross
  - the trajectory and emphasis of the NT
  - Jesus' rebuke of His disciples after His resurrection (Luke 24:25-26)
- ❖ Jesus suffered in many different ways prior to His crucifixion
  - those sufferings were part of Jesus' normal, human experience
  - those sufferings were necessary as part of what makes it possible for Jesus to be a High Priest who is able to *sympathize with our weaknesses* (Hebrews 4:15)

### The Suffering Servant

- ❖ Why do we confess: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate"?
  - Christ's death took place at a specific, historically verifiable moment in time

- Pilate's own words (*I find no fault in this man*) testify to Jesus' innocence
- the mention of Pontius Pilate points to the fulfillment of various prophecies (Psalm 2:2)
- ❖ Isaiah reveals one facet of the coming Messiah's identity as the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)
- ❖ Isaiah paints two essential pictures for us right alongside each other:
  - the heart of God
  - the heart of the human problem
- ❖ There is nothing that is apparently impressive or outstanding about this servant
  - a root out of dry ground
  - not much in the "looks department"
  - by all human standards, this servant fails to impress
- ❖ Jesus is not only **disrespected**, Jesus is **despised and rejected**
  - Jesus comes to bear guilt, carry sorrows, and be afflicted, cursed and crushed
  - can you believe it?
  - 7 centuries after Isaiah writes these words, Jesus suffers, dies and is raised from the dead and yet the gospel of Jesus Christ continues to be despised and rejected
- ❖ Paul summarizes the self-deluding fantasy that people have about what a real savior looks like (1 Cor 1:22-23)

- by God's design, the gospel is foolishness to everyone whose pride causes him/her to put their faith/trust in the wisdom of the world
- to those who depend on human observation and outward appearance, a suffering Savior is a nonstarter

### A Universal Problem

- ❖ The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart
- ❖ Isaiah paints a realistic (but not too "pretty") picture of us
  - "our griefs", "our sorrows", "our transgressions", "our iniquities"
  - *all we like sheep have gone astray*
  - *we have turned-- every one-- to his own way* (53:6)
- ❖ Jesus, this servant who suffers, suffers for **US**
  - Jesus suffers not because we ask/want/encourage Him to do so
  - Jesus is oppressed and afflicted, Jesus bears our griefs and carries our sorrows **while we are His enemies** (*cf.* Romans 5:8,10)
  - Jesus is OUR substitute, taking our place and our penalty

### Who Willed Jesus to Die?

- ❖ *It was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief* (53:10)
  - who is responsible for Jesus' death?

- though humans are involved and bear their own, personal responsibility, Jesus' death is not the result of human design
  - ♦ the death of Jesus is GOD'S plan
  - ♦ Jesus did not devise His own plan of salvation or come to earth on His own initiative
  - ♦ Acts 2:22-23, Jesus is *killed by the hands of lawless men* BUT, it is *the definite plan and foreknowledge of God* that results in Jesus' death
  - ♦ the cowardly, hand washing Pilate and the hands of lawless men who crucify Christ are secondary causes in the grand plan of God

- ❖ Why?
  - because of God's love for you
  - if you doubt God's love for you, look to the cross
- ❖ The heart of God and the heart of the human problem intersect at the cross of Jesus
- ❖ Do you believe God loves you enough to send His Son as a substitute for your sin?
- ❖ Do you believe God loves you enough to crush His own Son for your sake?
  - you will never answer two more important questions in your life than those
  - it is not your suffering that defines you, it is Christ's suffering that defines you
- Jesus endured pain voluntarily, for you
- Dane Ortlund: "Your pain is meant to propel you toward the Suffering Servant whom God crushed and put to grief for His glory and your good."