

- That reads like something from the New Testament. The Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians or maybe Hebrews...
- *Some years ago (before Spotify) I had a CD "Easter Readings" by Max McClain. I remember listing to it every day on my drive to work. If I got distracted at all, I couldn't tell if the reading was in Isaiah or Luke – That is when I was really struck by the truth to this prophecy.*

Introduction

- I was planning on teaching Isaiah 55 next week.
- But several unrelated conversations took place where I was asked, "Is suffering necessary?"
 - So, I started asking some folks in passing and there were different attitudes about it.
 - ❖ Absolutely, everyone suffers in some way or another in their life.
 - ❖ To .. we American's don't even know what suffering is.
 - If I run a thought experiment is it possible to live a life without suffering
 - ❖ But, thought experiments sooooo often fall short of reality.
 - ❖ In Christian theology there is: the loss of Eden and the looming inevitability of death
 - So in that sense – yes, everyone suffers spiritually and psychologically desiring the redemption of Eden -and- *necessarily with that forgiveness from **cause** of death.*
 - If they recognize it or not
- While contemplating this my attention was drawn to this scripture
- The most remarkable prophecy known [PERIOD]. **Isaiah 53**

Prophecy

- Prophetic voice > Pre Christ > perfectly describing the *passion* of Christ
- The voice of the narrator in this part of the book is can get strange
 - Kind of like Psalm 110, which Jesus uses as an example [[Mt 22:44](#), [Mk 12:36](#), [L 20:42–43](#)]
 - The narrator of the Psalm is David, but then turns into God the father's voice.
- Similarly in the surrounding chapters
 - Donnie already gave the example of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 – he is reading Isaiah 53:7-8 and tells Philip he doesn't understand.

"Is the prophet writing of himself or another man?"
 - The vantage point of the prophetic voice of Isaiah – positioned after the exile
 - ❖ Which cause some interesting re-verberations...

- But, it is the voice of God (LORD [YHWH]) speaking about **His servant**
- Other sections are speaking of an obedient remnant as a servant.
 - linked with the ideas of servants of God (deliverers) (prophets),
 - ❖ *like* Moses or Elijah/Elisha or King David.
 - God speaks through the author stating “You are my servant Israel, I have chosen you... I do this for the sake of my servant Jacob...”
 - It goes back and forth from the *obedient servants* (as Israel) and THE (suffering) servant.
 - ❖ It is supposed to give us that map ...
- But it is pretty easy to tell there is a significant tone change in this poem. (similar to Ps. 110)
- A poem about a THE servant. The ‘**greater than**’ Moses that Hebrews 3 talks about
 - The **greater than** Jonah that Jesus mentions (M 12:41, L 11:32)

History

- Donnie already talked about the Dating of Dead sea scrolls [1QIsa]
 - ❖ *[Google Lens Translate] “We will return to the terrible God and I will not be afraid, friends on the internet - and among other things, and I love you, I don’t care.”*
 - Underwent all sorts of dating methods ... least old results are 356 - 103 BC
 - There is very little room for argument here in the archeology world.
 - No matter how you try and slice it, being true to the evidence, this is > Predates Christ >!
- God does not respond to history – What I mean by that is –
 - There is not a cause & effect relationship (God acting because of history)
 - God has knowledge of history before it becomes - - - history.
 - God has foreknowledge
 - ❖ Jeremiah 1:5 “**Before** I formed you in the womb I knew you, **before** you were born I consecrated you”
 - ❖ The first link in the golden chain of salvation (Romans 8:29) God ‘**foreknew**’
 - Set your destiny, Called you to it, Justified you, and will Glorify you.
- When I said earlier, “**Isaiah 53** is the most remarkable prophecy known [PERIOD],” maybe I should have said [EXCLAMATION MARK]. There is nothing like it in human existence.
- Oh – sure, there are prophecies that are remarkable and should not be ignored.
 - Including other cultures. (Circling Ravan – Spokane/CDA shaman) – **pale** reading from **leaves**.
- But Isaiah 53 carries physical, scientific, historical, cultural, spiritual, evidence.

- God does not respond to history – History is the human response to God
- Before we get deep in the text, I do think it is important to frame suffering – like the several folks I canvased, they were in different places when thinking about suffering. And, a clear philosopher defines their terms.

What is suffering?

- Variations in what someone understands as suffering.
 - Physical (obviously)
 - Psychological (Emotional)
 - ❖ The grieve loss of relationship
 - ❖ Purpose and meaning
 - Financial suffrage – enormous stress
 - Social/Cultural (dignity of others – dignity of self) *existential dignity*
 - These all can be Self-caused – or – totally unjust, or unbalanced.
- I realized suffering is relative to your experience/culture/society you are in
 - (one person's suffering is not another's)
- *Example: Simone de Beauvoir's & Simone Weil (University of sah bonne)* [Sorbonne]
[Simones]
 - Weil is concerned about the basic needs and the dignity of being human
 - de Beauvoir is absorbed by the over all meaning and purpose of life
 - ❖ Both are legitimate consternations. Both cause people great suffering.
- Looking at the broad view of what suffering is ... Eventually we gotta ask: is there something more about suffering – a greater purpose?
 - And this lead to even more intimate and challenging questions.
- In some way, everyone is suffering the loss of Eden and the looming inevitability of death
 - Servant section follows the oracles against nations.
 - Awake – Awake (51:9)(51:17) (51:1) – Here He is! (Isa 48:16)
 - ❖ Isa 53:1 “the root of Jesse” - -

Read Text!

- **Isa 52:14** | punched in the face | scourged | crown of thorns .
- ❖ Died within hours – most of the time days

Read Text!

- Astonishing – Immense suffering
 - to intercede for us – carry our illness, our sins
- So that, I (you) may have a path out of suffering – He received the suffering

Romans 5:12 – 21

- **One man**
- Think about this in terms of our history. One disturbed person can cause such great suffering.
 - Hitler 17M. | Stalin 20M. | Pol Pot (Khmer Rouge - 1975) 1M |
 - Idi Amin (Uganda genocide 70s) | Amir Timur (14th c.) 17 M. |
- One person can cause great suffering
 - Because we are all sheep gone astray – we fall prey to a herd mentality
 - ❖ Remember The Banality of Evil by Hannah Arendt (*a – rent*)
- **One** who loved so much can undo all the suffering - offer so much forgiveness.
 - “So shall He sprinkle the nations”
 - Jesus joined creation – willingly, knowing the cost and the purpose.
 - ❖ History is our response to God
 - “That you – my King, would die for me” - - - Crazy Love
- Jesus is the **supreme paradox**
 - He is opposite (of what we think we need), yet exact (what we need)
 - He takes a thing we all avoid – we despise
 - And he turns it into the most glorious act that can be preformed
 - ❖ Not just up till then, - No for all our history – for all time – for all creation

My Answer?

- Yes, suffering is necessary.
 - But, more importantly - How we suffer is crucial to that.
- Notice, we emulate sacrificial suffering in all our stories - as the most moral and noble act.
 - Prometheus, Sisyphus – If you are looking to the ancients
 - Tale of Two Cities, Frodo, Harry Potter, Katniss Everdeen, Neo from the Matrix...
- Martin Luther: struggled immensely with this. He called it the Alien works of God
 - “...strange is His deed; and His work – alien is His work!” It is as if he were saying:
‘Although He is the God of life and salvation and this is His proper work, yet, in order to accomplish this, He kills and destroys. These works are alien to Him, but through them He accomplishes His proper work. **For He kills our will that His may be established in us.**’

- Karl Barth: More like Christ – More human (Because Jesus was fully human - perfectly)
 - The more I act on my own will the more I am controlled by my sinful nature
 - ❖ Acting instinctually – just another beast

How do I suffer?

- Poorly – I recognized in all this reflection and introspect – I draw into myself
 - Isolate - **or** - for sympathy? “Woe is me...”
- But Jesus does the opposite.
 - Suffering with hope? – through the pain comes the salvation of the world
 - Suffer with others in mind?
 - Can I suffer with Love?
- Theology of the cross
 - Take my suffering and go to the foot of the cross
 - ❖ What ever it may be, Physical, or Mental
 - ❖ Attention, Affection, Affirmation, Acceptance, Satisfaction, Significance, Security
 - ❖ lay it out in front of my suffering king and creator.
 - Compare my will, my motives, my emotions with the most glorious loving act known.
 - ❖ Jesus suffered too. He has resurrected and walks alongside you and suffers with you.
 - Then – act for the glory of Jesus
 - ❖ If we can’t surrender ourselves and trust Him with our obedience
 - ❖ Then, how can He heal us? How can he transform us to be fully alive?

PRAY

Etymology of *passion*

- Jesus showed us Glory in suffering
- You have heard of the *passion* of Christ – not just the movie, but the title.
 - *When the movie came out I was a bit confused, assumed it was that Christs passion (His motivation, His enthusiasm, His Love) was to sacrifice for us.*
 - No, the word has changed that much over the centuries.
 - ❖ The Latin word *passio* means to suffer. The passion of Christ has always been the suffering of Christ.
 - ❖ We still see the root in words like compassion (suffer with)
 - The term took on a medical meaning – to have a fit, seizure, extreme agitation
 - In the 15c the term was being used to describe extreme sexual or romantic agitation
 - By the 17c it was commonly being used describe deep emotions.
- What I find so ironic there – is that both of those definitions fit.
 - It is Christ suffering (His passion)
 - And it is Jesus great devotion and expression of love

Purpose of it all

- Surrounding the “suffering servant songs” of 42, 49, 50 & 53 is the national and individual call to obedient servant hood.
- God speaks through the author stating “You are my servant Israel, I have chosen you... I do this for the sake of my servant Jacob...”
- It goes back and forth from the *obedient servants* (as Israel) and THE servant (suffering).
 - It is supposed to give us that map ...

It is about sacrificing self for the glory of God.

Servant – obedient in suffrage and passion