

Jesus, Our Offering (Isaiah 53)

- The sacrificial system of the Old Testament had 5 different types of offerings designed for specific occasions or occurrences
- In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said,

“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.”

- So if Jesus came to accomplish the purpose of sacrifice it makes sense that He would fulfill all the types of sacrifice.
- Today, using the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, commonly titled “the suffering servant,” we’ll see how He did just that.
- But, since the divisions and punctuation were added well after the writing I won’t begin in the 53rd chapter but, rather, at the end of the 52nd chapter.
- **Let’s read, beginning at chapter 52, verse 13.**

13 See, my servant will prosper; he will be highly exalted. 14 But many were amazed when they saw him. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man. 15 And he will startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence. For they will see what they had not been told; they will understand what they had not heard about.

• **Here we see Jesus as a burnt offering.**

- The burnt offering, or *olah*, literally means an “offering of ascent.”
- It is an offering for the general atonement of sin, and an expression of devotion to God.
- The Levitical instructions demanded the complete destruction of the animal being offered
 - This was a representation of the complete sacrifice of self to the greater being and self of God.
- Look how Isaiah describes the suffering servant, Jesus: “*He will be highly exalted...*”
 - That doesn’t sound so bad, does it?
 - **But consider John 12, where Jesus says,**

“31 The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. 32 And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” 33 He said this to indicate how he was going to die.”

▪ **Remember the serpent from Numbers 21?**

“6 So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many were bitten and died. 7 Then the people came to Moses and cried out, “We have

sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take away the snakes.” So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the Lord told him, “Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it to a pole. All who are bitten will live if they simply look at it!” 9 So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to a pole. Then anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the bronze snake and be healed!”

- That serpent was a **type**, a foreshadowing, of Jesus.
 - This thing was lifted up on a pole and the people who looked to it were healed.
 - Jesus was lifted up on a cross, and those who look to Him are eternally healed.
- So when Isaiah says, “*He will be highly exalted*” he is echoing Moses in Numbers and foreshadowing Jesus in the gospels.
- Again Isaiah echoes the instructions for the burnt offering to be completely destroyed:

“But many were amazed when they saw him. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.”

- As our burnt offering Jesus was beaten nearly to death, had a crown of thorns pressed into his scalp, had his beard pulled out, was nailed to a cross through his hands and feet, and was stabbed in the side with a spear.
 - His physical body was completely destroyed.
- And He did this for... whom? **Everyone**.
 - Verse 15 says He will startle **many nations**.
 - Other versions say he will **sprinkle** many nations.
 - But rather than parsing through verbs I think the adjective is much more important: **many**
 - Jesus is a burnt offering for **everyone**.
 - And that’s not just an offering for many countries, or races.
 - That’s also an offering for every culture, every economic standing, every sexual orientation, every political affiliation, every **everything** and **everyone**.
 - Please don’t think that’s a statement of affirmation. It’s not.
 - It’s a statement of **opportunity**.
 - The blood of Jesus is available for **anyone** and **everyone** who chooses to follow Him.
- **Jesus is, indeed, our burnt offering.**

· Now let’s read Isaiah 53, verses 1-3

*Who has believed our message? To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?
2 My servant grew up in the Lord’s presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. 3 He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows,*

acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

· In this passage we see Jesus as our **meal offering**, or *minhah*.

- The meal offering represents the fulfillment of the second great commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- It symbolizes a man's wholehearted commitment to his fellow man and is associated with the last six of the Ten Commandments.
- The meal offering is the only one that doesn't involve blood, and as such it represents **life** and harvest.

· It's reminiscent of Jesus in John 4 where He said,

"You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. 36 The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!"

- Isaiah says the suffering servant, "*grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot...*"
- This is what we just experienced last month: **Emmanuel**, God with us.
 - God planted Jesus in the soil, placed Him on earth, to become the **first fruits**.
 - He is the first harvester and we follow in His steps; we follow His example; we are imitators of Christ, we are **Christians**.
 - And if we are Christians we **must** be **committed** to the harvest.
 - Many of us are **involved**, but are we **committed**?
 - (Tell them the difference between involved and committed.)
- Isaiah uses a very telling phrase in verse three: "*... a man of sorrows...*"
 - We've been over, many times, the importance of the incarnation of Christ.
 - His perfect sacrifice hinges on His humanity.
 - But Isaiah uses even more interesting language prior to that.
 - He says, "*There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.*"
- I want to show you some pictures from a simple Google image search for "Jesus Christ."
 - These are 4 of the first ones that came up. (pictures of Jesus)
 - Do you notice anything unusual?
 - (Yea, they're pretty white. And He's a good looking dude.)
- Now let me show you one that might be a bit more accurate.
 - It's hard to look at, isn't it?
- We have a tendency to try and make Jesus look like **us**
- Jesus, rather, wants us to look like **Him**.
 - He wants us to be wholeheartedly committed to Him, knowing that **that** commitment will feed our commitment to **others**.
 - He wants us to do unto others

- He wants us to love our neighbor as ourselves.
- **And, in that, Jesus is our meal offering.**

• Let's continue reading verses 4 through 6:

*4 Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! 5 But he was pierced for **our** rebellion, crushed for **our** sins. He was beaten so **we** could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. 6 All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.*

• In these verses we find Jesus is our **peace offering**.

- The peace offering, the *shelamim*, is **about going to God, recognizing the bounty he has given us**, thanking him for it, and enjoying his company.
- You may see in the word *shelamim* the etymology of the word *shalom*.
- It was the only sacrifice the worshipper could eat.
- Jim Flanigan wrote, "In the Peace Offering **a satisfied God and forgiven people meet together in a holy communion.**"
- But let's not miss the irony of the **violence** involved in the peace offering.
 - Like all the other offerings except the grain offering, something had to die for this sacrifice.
 - Isaiah says Jesus was **pierced** and **crushed** for our sins.
 - He was **beaten** so we could be whole.
 - He was **whipped** so we could be healed.
 - Would you do that?
 - Would you be pierced, crushed, beaten and whipped, to bring peace to another?
 - **Romans 5 says,**

"Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."

- We'd like to think we'd do that for our children, or our spouse, or maybe our entire family, but would we do it for people we didn't even know? People who hadn't even been born yet? People who would ridicule us? Laugh at us? Reject us?
- So why, why would a holy God visit all that violence on His Son?
 - **The NIV says it better in verse 5 than the NLT here: "the punishment that brought us **peace** was upon Him."**
 - This was the great exchange:

- Sorrow for joy
- Piercing for healing
- Crushing for restoration
- Great weight for freedom
- Violence for... **peace**
- Ephesians 2:14 says,

*“For Christ himself **has brought peace to us**. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.”*

- **Jesus is our peace offering**

- **Let's read vv. 7-9**

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. ⁸ Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people. He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

- **Here we see Jesus as our **sin offering**, or *chattath*.**

- Here's what John Ritenbaugh says about the sin offering:

Concerning the sin and trespass offerings, "atonement" is used in the way we normally understand it: as a covering, payment, expiation, or propitiation made for sin. It is as though the offerer is charged just as the police charge a person with a crime. In this case, though, the offerer is charged with sin, and something must expiate it. The sin and trespass offerings, then, indicate the payment of a legal obligation to an authority, one that meets the legal requirement of that authority. To expiate sin, the payment must be in blood; a life must be given. The Authority is God, as His law has been broken.

- **We might more accurately call this a **purification offering**.**

- We've talked before about the idea that a perfect, holy God cannot have sin in His presence.
- This is a terrible quandary for us since we are sinful but would very much like to stand in God's presence.
- When I say, "sinful," I mean as much by nature as by action.

- We're born with a sinful **nature**.
 - Adam was nice enough to help us out there...
- So, as Ritenbaugh said, we are "under arrest" so to speak.
 - A law, a rule, a standard has been broken and there **must** be restitution – **justice** – for that crime.
- The interesting thing about the sin offering is, it was offered for **unintentional or unknown** sins.
 - We've all done that.
 - We've all made that mistake that we didn't even realize until later when it was revealed to us.
 - *Often times it's revealed to us months or even years later by our wives...*
 - But sin is sin, and it must be accounted for.
- Isaiah says Jesus was, "*struck down for the rebellion of **my** people.*"
 - **Our** people.
 - **Us**.
- The animal used for the sin offering was a young bull, without flaw or defect.
 - I'm not a farmer, but if you think about it, this would be probably the most valuable animal on the farm.
 - It had great work potential.
 - It was immensely valuable.
 - Isaiah, speaking about Jesus, said, "*He had done no wrong, and never deceived anyone.*"
 - **That** young, perfect animal was the animal necessary for a purification sacrifice.
 - Our perfect, sinless, flawless Jesus was the necessary sacrifice for our sins.
- **Our perfect, sinless, flawless Jesus is our sin offering.**

- Finally, let's read vv 10-12.

But it was the Lord's good plan to crush him and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord's good plan will prosper in his hands. ¹¹ When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. ¹² I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

- Finally we see Jesus as our **trespass offering or asham**.

- This may sound like a sin (or purification) offering, but there are significant differences:
 - The sin offering deals with sin against God; the trespass offering emphasizes sin against God and man.

- The sin offering deals with the nature of sin; the trespass offering emphasizes the acts of sin.
- The sin offering deals with the guilt of the sinner; the trespass offering emphasizes injury against both God and man.
- The sin offering deals with atonement (expiation of guilt); the trespass offering emphasizes the satisfaction and reparation for the wrong committed.
- This was the final offering offered, and it dealt primarily with sin in three areas:
 - Sin against self
 - Contamination by touching
 - Careless talk
- We'd like to think that from time to time we make "mistakes."
 - We "drop the ball."
 - We "don't think things through."
- But the truth is, we **sin**.
 - We think it through, weigh out the consequences, and then we **sin**
 - The primary areas involved in the trespass offering are telling, aren't they?
 - Sin against self: we are, sometimes, incredibly self-destructive in our ways.
 - It can be as simple as eating stuff that's bad for us
 - It can be as terrible as taking our own life, and everything in between
 - What it boils down to is, as often as not, we are our own worst enemies
 - Now, imagine seeing your child acting that way.
 - Would it break your heart? Of course it would.
 - Well, to state the obvious, we are God's children, and it **breaks His heart** to see us destroying His most precious creation: **us**
 - Another area is contamination by touching.
 - Consider what Haggai was instructed to ask the priests:

'If one of you is carrying some meat from a holy sacrifice in his robes and his robe happens to brush against some bread or stew, wine or olive oil, or any other kind of food, will it also become holy?' The priests replied, "No." ¹³ Then Haggai asked, *"If someone becomes ceremonially unclean by touching a dead person and then touches any of these foods, will the food be defiled?"* And the priests answered, "Yes."

- Do you see what happened there?
 - The clean immediately becomes unclean, but the unclean **never** becomes clean.
 - With one notable exception: **Jesus**.
 - He was **completely** clean, perfect, spotless, and God, in His infinite wisdom sent the spotless Lamb to touch us, the unclean.

- And in this one instance, once-for-all, the unclean becomes clean.
 - Can I get an “Amen” for that?
 - So, a trespass offering for sin against self, for contamination through touching, and then for **careless talk**.
 - Well thank goodness none of us need to worry about that one, huh?
 - I honestly don’t think I need to say a thing here.
 - We all **know** the truth.
 - It’s just whether we’ll **live** the truth.
- Let’s close looking at what Isaiah says.
 - In verse 10 he says, “*Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants.*”
 - You, if you are following Jesus, are one of those descendants.
 - You are a joint heir, a receiver of the promise, a **child of God**, and you will live **forever**.
 - Jesus’ death as a sin offering brings us **life**.
 - In verse 11 Isaiah writes, “*because of his [Jesus] experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.*”
 - **You** are counted righteous
 - **You** are, as 1 Corinthians says, “*bought with a price.*”
 - **You** are justified.
 - The checkbook of your life, which was once so wildly out of whack, is **balanced, justified**.
 - And in verse 12, “*He [Jesus] was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.*”
 - I often see these ads for “He Gets Us.”
 - Their theology isn’t always great, but the message remains: He gets us.
 - 1 Corinthians says, “*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.*”
 - **And the end of Hebrews 4 says,**

*“¹⁴ So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. **There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.**”*

- **Jesus came to earth**, experienced what we experienced, and with an unimaginable love, become our burnt offering, our grain offering, our peace offering, our sin offering and our trespass offering.
 - He covered **everything**, just as His blood still today covers **everything**.
 - If that's something you don't have in your life now, but you'd like to, or even just hear more about it, there will be folks up front here after the service. Find one of us, and let's talk.