

THE SERVANT SUFFERS

Isaiah 50

Isaiah 52

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- Why do we sometimes think we won't experience suffering if God is on our side, especially if God has chosen us and has given us his strength and power?
- Retell the story of salvation in Christ either to yourself or someone else. Pay particular attention to what you say. What aspects of the story get you excited? Are there parts of the story that make you uncomfortable or that you find difficult to talk about? What parts did you spend a lot of time on? Is there anything you left out?

Jesus Christ is an interesting Savior. His life experience can leave some of us scratching our heads. He sometimes appears so weak. How is this strong? Was it absolutely necessary for him to suffer so much? Couldn't God have come up with a more heroic way to defeat sin and Satan? Reflecting on Christ's suffering, and how it fulfills Isaiah's prophecy, we see just how thorough God was in his plan for our salvation. But we do not dwell in the suffering; with Jesus we move through the suffering to rejoicing in the good news it brings.

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- When you think about how Jesus was treated, what perspective might that give to the sad, depraved actions of humanity you observe in our world today? What hope does the outcome of Jesus' story give you for the mission of God's chosen servant in the world today?
- Why does it matter that Jesus' suffering was lifelong and took many forms (spiritual, emotional, temptation), and was not just the physical suffering in the last 48 hours before his death? What meaning does this have for us as we try to live faithful lives here on earth?
- In segment 2, Dave Bast wonders about his own life and in what role in the story of Jesus' crucifixion his treatment of other people, also made in God's image, would place him. Examine your own life, and how you have treat your fellow image bearers of God, whether they are like you or different from you. What role do you believe your actions would cast you in? Why?
- How do you keep from getting stuck in the suffering parts of the salvation story, so that you can rejoice and declare the good news of salvation? How about in your own story?

Related Passages

- **Matthew 26:36-46**
- **Matthew 27:27-31**

- John 19:1-3
- Hebrews 2:14-18
- Hebrews 4:14-16

Conclusion

Read the following excerpt from Heidelberg Catechism, and reflect on the concise explanation of Christ's suffering found in it. Then allow it to prepare your heart and mind for the upcoming observances of the events of Christ's life which we remember during Holy Week.

Q. What do you understand by the word "suffered"?

*A. That during his whole life on earth,
but especially at the end,
Christ sustained
in body and soul
the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race.¹
This he did in order that,
by his suffering as the only atoning sacrifice,²
he might deliver us, body and soul,
from eternal condemnation,³
and gain for us
God's grace,
righteousness,
and eternal life.⁴*

¹ [Isa. 53](#); [1 Pet. 2:24](#); [3:18](#)

² [Rom. 3:25](#); [Heb. 10:14](#); [1 John 2:2](#); [4:10](#)

³ [Rom. 8:1-4](#); [Gal. 3:13](#)

⁴ [John 3:16](#); [Rom. 3:24-26](#)

--Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 37

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/the-servant-suffers>

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