



Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12
‘The gospel of God and the suffering servant’
Week 4

This is one of the most well-known and well-loved passages in the Old Testament, if not the whole Bible. The chapter divisions in this part of the Bible disguise how this passage is a well crafted poem with five stanzas, each occupying three verses in our English translations. It follows a structure that can be summarized in the following way:

<i>Stanza 1</i>	<i>52:13-15</i>	<i>The servant’s victory through suffering</i>
<i>Stanza 2</i>	<i>53:1-3</i>	<i>The factual realities of the servant’s suffering and death</i>
<i>Stanza 3</i>	<i>53:4-6</i>	<i>The meaning of the servant’s suffering and death</i>
<i>Stanza 4</i>	<i>53:7-9</i>	<i>The factual realities of the servant’s suffering and death</i>
<i>Stanza5</i>	<i>53:10-12</i>	<i>The servant’s victory through suffering</i>

Arranged in this way you can see how the song climaxes in the central stanza revealing the heart of the matter as the meaning of the servant’s suffering and death is explained. The focal point of the poem, at the mid-point of the mid-point is verse 5:

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities;

the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

One of the reasons this passage is so well-known and well-loved is because it so clearly points to the saving work of the Lord Jesus. While it was written centuries before the coming of the Christ, the precision with which Jesus fulfills this prophecy is astounding. At point after point Jesus, in his suffering, death and resurrection, makes perfect the words of this song.

Read Acts 8:26-35

Phillip uses the very words of Isaiah 53 to explain the good news about Jesus. In this study we will begin to imagine what exactly Phillip might have said. We will look at Isaiah through the lens of the New Testament. We will get a greater handle on why Jesus taught that he **must** suffer and be rejected and be killed and rise again.

Perhaps the best way for a group to approach this study is to divide each of the five stanzas among the members and research the links to the New Testament. **Examine quotations and allusions to discover how Jesus fulfills these promises.** If you have a cross-reference or study Bible you can follow the links. ***If you have neither of these, you can pick up a photocopy at church.*** When you have completed your research, share your findings with one another.

Isaiah 52:13-15

Isaiah 53:1-3

Isaiah 53:4-6

Isaiah 53:7-9

Isaiah 52:10-12

Apply this passage in Isaiah to answering the following questions:

- **Why did Jesus have to suffer?**
- **How does Jesus make people righteous?**
- **How should we respond to what Jesus went through?**
- **How does the suffering of Jesus give us hope in dark times?**

If you have time you may like to do the following together:

Based on your discoveries of the links between Jesus and Isaiah 53, discuss how you might use this part of the Bible to explain to a modern Jew why you believe that Jesus is the promised Servant of Isaiah 53.

As we have reflected on the significance of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection *for us* it is appropriate that we respond in thanks and praise. Spend time in prayer and praise together.

Your group might like to remember this wonderful event of salvation by sharing in the 'Lord's supper' together. Just because we've shared this at church doesn't stop us from celebrating together with the members of our life group.