

Small Group Guide

THE PROMISE OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The Church at Brook Hills

Matt Mason

December 15, 2013

Isaiah 53:1-12

Use this resource as a tool to help Christ-followers move forward in their spiritual growth. To do this well requires that the Small Group Leader is building a relationship with the individuals in the small group and has identified where the people are in their relationship with God. Are they Christ-followers? Are they growing in Christ? If so, in what areas do they need to grow further? As disciple-makers, Small Group Leaders shepherd people to know the truth of Scripture, to understand why it matters, and to apply it to their lives. Small Group Leaders come alongside those whom they disciple to discover how loving God, loving each other, and loving those not yet in the Kingdom should shape how they live. The structure of this resource coincides with moving people from knowledge (Main Truth) to understanding (Why It Matters) to application (Now What Do We Do?). Utilize this Small Group Guide as a flexible teaching tool to inform your time together and not as a rigid task list.

GETTING STARTED

Welcome – Incorporate time for greeting one another, enjoying any refreshments, and making announcements. If guests are visiting, make introductions and help them feel welcomed. Ask for their contact information, so you can follow up with them.

Looking Back – Provide an opportunity for small group members to share what God is teaching them, how they are applying what they are learning, and how He has given them opportunities to share the gospel with others. This can be done as a whole group or in smaller groups. Do the people know each other well enough to share more than surface level information? How can time together be used to foster deeper relationships among those in the small group? Also, what are the struggles and needs of the people in the small group? How can the people in the small group sacrificially serve each other?

Looking Up – Hold prayer as fundamental to small group time rather than supplemental to it. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God in prayer. Submit yourself to Him, confessing sin. Petition God for personal needs and other requests. Pray for the disciple-making efforts of those in the group and for the salvation of the lost in each other's families, spheres of influence, and in the world. The Weekly Prayer Focus below can also be incorporated in the group's prayer time.

Weekly Prayer Focus (from Our Worship Guide)

- *Pray for Our Lives: Praise God for sovereignly orchestrating His plan for salvation. Ask for Him to embolden us to stand as witnesses of the gospel. Pray for His strength to endure our own sufferings as we identify with Christ. Pray for many around the world to hear the story of Jesus' coming at Christmas and sacrifice on the cross and come to confess that He is truly the Son of God. Pray for God to use the truth of His birth, life, death, and resurrection to bring many to Christ. Ultimately, pray we will all maximize our opportunity to share the gospel over the next few weeks as our culture embraces the celebration of Christmas.*
- *Pray for Our City: This week we are praying for outreach initiatives to senior adults living at the Somerby at St. Vincent's One Nineteen retirement community, led by Brook Hills member Bert Cornelius and his wife Midge who live on the property and minister to their fellow residents. We are also praying for 45th Street Baptist Church Birmingham and Andra Sparks, Pastor.*

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- *Pray for Our World: This week we are praying for the three families we will be sending out as Mid-Termers from The Church at Brook Hills this winter. Mid-Term is when someone goes into another context to make disciples for 2 months to 2 years. Join us this week as we pray for David and Laura D., John and Julie K., and Rhodes and Jessica R.*

MAIN TRUTH

Message Outline

The Promise of His Death and Resurrection

Isaiah 53:1-12

- *Messiah, in the Eye of the Beholder*

Christ's Suffering: The Servant-Lamb

- *The OT Sacrificial System*

Limitation: His Birth (53:2)

- Jesus willingly embraced our frame with all its limitations. [Isaiah 53:2; Philippians 2:7; John 4:6; Mark 11:12; Luke 2:52]

Rejection: His Life (53:3-4)

- Jesus volunteered to pour himself out in ministry to people who would reject him. (Isaiah 53:3; John 1:11; Mark 3:21; Luke 4:28-29; Matthew 23:37; Hebrews 10:1-7)

Substitution: His Death (53:5-10a, 12b)

“He who hung the earth is hanging; He who fixed the heavens has been fixed;
He who fastened the universe has been fastened to a tree...

O unprecedented murder! Unprecedented crime!

The Sovereign has been made unrecognizable by his naked body,

And is not even allowed a garment to keep him from view.

That is why the lights of heaven turned away,

And the day was darkened.”

-Melito, Bishop of Sardis (2nd century)

- Jesus drank the cup of wrath (Isaiah 51:17; John 18:11) which we deserved so that we might drink the cup of blessing. (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:25)

Christ's Triumph: The Risen Lord

Vindication: His Resurrection (53:10b-12a)

- Jesus' resurrection was a demonstration that His message was true (Acts 17:31; Romans 1:4), that His death did in fact secure our forgiveness (1 Corinthians 15:17, 20-22), that we who believe have life in him (Ephesians 2:5; Romans 6:1-4), and that our final resurrection is certain (1 Corinthians 15:20).

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Message Summary

As we quickly approach Christmas Day, we examine the purpose for why Christ came – to die and to rise from the dead in order to provide salvation for sinners. Isaiah 53 foretold the anguish that the Messiah would experience in His rejection by men, His humiliation, and His unjust death. But this passage also highlights God’s purpose for the Servant’s suffering – substitution, and it points to the triumph and exaltation of the Suffering Servant as He receives the reward for His suffering. Through Christ’s resurrection, we know that His message is true, that forgiveness is possible for those who trust in Him, and that our final resurrection is certain.

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

For those in the group who have been doing either the Brook Hills Advent Guide (*The Expected One*) or any other type of guide, have them share what they have learned, what questions they have, or what this experience has been like either for them personally or for their family if they are using it to aid with family worship.

Isaiah 53 contains prophecy regarding the “Suffering Servant” who would come. As we examine Isaiah’s words about this Coming One, we can easily get caught up in the prophecies and how Christ fulfilled them, but be careful about examining the text and not considering how these texts should affect our thoughts, affections, and decisions. Let us not be so focused on the historical context that we forget to praise Christ for His death and resurrection and to contemplate how we should live in light of these truths. If anyone in the group has questions about how to study Scripture for life change, particularly passages containing prophecy, take time to discuss how to do this.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 contains five stanzas of three verses each that foretell about the Messiah. The first line of the stanza gives the thesis or point of that particular stanza, and the first stanza (Isa. 52:13-15) provides the summary of the entire passage and explains the result of the Servant’s suffering. The One who was humbled and who suffered as Isaiah 53:1-9 describes would be exalted and lifted up. All people on earth will see His exaltation at the Second Coming and will recognize that Jesus Christ truly is the Messiah.

The Servant’s suffering results in fruit and in glory. What seemed like failure in the eyes of the world was success to God. How so? Read Isaiah 53:10. What does this verse tell us about God’s involvement in the suffering of the Messiah? What is success in God’s economy? How does God’s perception of success differ from the world’s definition? While we may not know how God will use our pain for His glory, we can trust that He will do so. How can we have such confidence in Him, particularly in times of suffering?

Isaiah 53:4-9 specifically addresses the Messiah’s substitution and how His sacrifice would be for the sake of others. While some suffer because of their sin or because of the consequences of others’ sins, Christ suffered and died because of love. He voluntarily laid down His life, and, although innocent, He was willing to take the blame for sinners. Read John 13:34-35; 15:12-14; 1 John 3:16-18. What implications does Christ’s sacrificial love have for those who follow Him?

This passage and this particular sermon emphasis in our Advent series focus on the Messiah’s death and resurrection. This truth about Christ is why celebrating His birth is even important, for without His sacrifice for sin and His resurrection from the grave, His birth would not be important. In our conversations with family, neighbors, friends, and even strangers this holiday season, how can we intentionally weave threads of the gospel into our conversations? How would you explain to someone *why* you celebrate Christmas and *what* you celebrate during this season? How can we be intentional in demonstrating with our lives, our time, and our bank accounts that Christ is our focus – not presents, Santa, holiday parties, Christmas concerts, or time with family? Do we spend more time talking about such earthly things during the holidays than we do Christ?

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Do we get so busy with the holiday hustle and bustle that we rush through personal time with God or skip it altogether? Because Christmas activities alter our schedules and routines, we must often plan ahead and think through when we will spend with God each day. Looking ahead at this week, when and where will you have this time? For those who are married or who have children, how can you encourage each other to make this a priority over the next couple of weeks? How can this small group help each other in these efforts?

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Sin distorts our perception and blinds us to the truth. How was this true with Christ and with the promises of Isaiah 53? How have you seen this play out in your life and in the lives of those around you? How should this knowledge inform our prayers?
- How were believers in the Old Testament saved? See Hebrews 10:1-4 and Romans 4.
- What did the Old Testament sacrifices accomplish? What was their purpose? What did the sacrificial system teach the people about the character of God, the sinfulness of man, and God's provision for salvation? How did the sacrificial system prepare the people for the first coming of Christ?
- How does Jesus' birth as a human demonstrate His humility? Why was His birth and His humanity humbling? How should we respond to such humility by Christ?
- What prevents us from being humble? In which relationships, situations, or environments do you struggle the most with pride? Why? How do we humble ourselves for the sake of others? How do we cultivate humility in our lives?
- Why was it essential that the Messiah be fully human? Read Hebrews 2:14-18.
- Jesus is acquainted with grief, loneliness, betrayal, and rejection. What moments in His life prompted such emotions? How does this affect how you view Christ? How does it affect your relationship with Him when *you* feel such emotions? Why did God the Father allow the Son to experience such emotional pain? What implications does this have for us with regard to why God permits suffering and emotional pain in our lives?
- Jesus volunteered to pour Himself out in ministry to people who would reject Him, and He experienced rejection from religious leaders, His own family, and even the Twelve. What sustained Christ despite such rejection? How does this relate to us and to how we live and respond to rejection?
- Examine Isaiah 53 for each reference of substitution language (what the Suffering Servant would do for us). How would you explain Christ's substitution to someone who is lost? Why do we need a substitute? How does Christ's substitution give us hope?
- What is the "cup of wrath" that Jesus drank? How would you describe God's wrath to someone? What is He wrathful about? How did Christ's death satisfy the wrath of God? Why did the Father forsake the Son on the cross?
- Explain the necessity and significance of Christ's resurrection. How does Jesus' resurrection demonstrate that His message is true? What hope do we have because of Christ's resurrection?