

EASTER SUNDAY

ISAIAH 53:11

AN EXHILARATING VICTORY



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

It's easy to turn Good Friday into Bad Friday. We can meditate so much on Christ's sufferings and our sins that caused them, that we end up feeling extra guilty rather than extra-Gospelly. We feel so bad that Jesus had to suffer for us that we end up feeling bad and suffering ourselves. We spend so much time in the dark that we don't want to see the light. That mutates Good Friday into Bad Friday. How do we see the light of the cross in the darkness of the cross? How do we increase our spiritual satisfaction during Easter? Isaiah 53:10-12 points us to the answer.

BACKGROUND

In the clearest Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament, Isaiah 53 predicts he will be a Suffering Servant:

- Christ's Rejection (53:1-3)
- Christ's Redemption (53:4-6)
- Christ's Resignation (7-9)
- Christ's Reward (10-12)



How do we increase our spiritual satisfaction during Easter?
By seeing Christ's satisfaction.



1. JESUS SATISFIED JUSTICE

Spiritual Pain

We can center on Christ's physical sufferings so much that his bodily sufferings become our exclusive interest. Isaiah 53:11 re-directs our eyes from his body to his soul (11). There, we see deeper anguish, pain, misery, grief, agony, trouble, etc.

Isaiah doesn't ignore Christ's physical sufferings. He speaks of Christ stricken, smitten, afflicted (3), pierced, crushed, chastised, wounded (5), oppressed, slaughtered (7), and cut off (8). But as the chapter progresses, the emphasis shifts from the sufferings of Christ's body to the sufferings of Christ's soul (10, 11, 12).

What was Christ's spiritual pain? What agonized his soul? What caused so much anguish of soul (11)? Being and feeling hated.

Hate Pain

Being loved is the greatest human experience; being hated is the worst. Have you ever gone through that? Maybe at school, or in your family, or in your marriage, or in war? It's horrendous, isn't it? Someone dedicates themselves to destroy you.

Some people couldn't care if they're hated; they even revel in it and make careers out of it. Jesus was not like that. He had the most sensitive soul ever and felt hate more deeply than anyone ever did, because he was loved by God more than anyone else and loved others more than anyone else.

Jesus was hated by his enemies, without a cause. He was hated by his 'friends' (John 1:11). He felt hated by his Father (Matt. 27:46). The greatest lover experienced the greatest hatred and this was Christ's greatest torment. This was soul-choking, soul-draining, soul-searing, soul-burning torture to the Lord of Love.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

God was the target of his suffering. Christ's sufferings were not a tragic accident, but a targeted agony. He offered his soul sufferings to satisfy God's justice, to extinguish, exhaust, and empty it. This was a penal atonement, a shedding of blood that paid the full penalty to justice.

We were the source of his suffering. We did not personally inflict the sufferings of Christ (those around the cross did), but we were the personal cause of them. No pain would have been laid on him without our sins being laid on him (6).

THE SOUL OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING
WAS THE SUFFERING OF HIS SOUL.



Christ satisfied justice.
Was he satisfied with this?



2. JESUS WAS SATISFIED

Certain success sustains serious suffering. For example, it's really hard to study and make all the sacrifices required in study, if you think you're going to fail. If you doubt the suffering will pay off, you won't pay the price.

On the other hand, it's so much easier to study when we are sure we will succeed. We'll pay the price to get the prize. That's why, I'm more than happy to put hours into studying for sermons, because God said: so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11). Certain success sustains study suffering.

Let's take that principle into the sufferings of Christ and ask: How much did certain success sustain Christ's serious suffering?

His Total Success

Out of the anguish of his soul...(11)

Isaiah predicted that even in the midst of his worst suffering, Jesus would see his total success. Like an athlete who visualizes her Olympic gold medal every day to keep her training hard and pushing through the pain, so Jesus kept his future triumph in front of him in his darkest and most painful moments.

He saw sinners being saved. In the previous verse, Isaiah forecast that when Christ's soul makes an offering for guilt, **he shall see his offspring** (10). He saw how his death would create new life, his suffering would save his children from suffering. In the following verse, Isaiah prophesied that **by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities** (11). By making known what he suffered, many would be justified and forgiven. He saw sinners being successfully saved.

He also saw his own soul glorified. Yes, he would suffer much soul anguish but **he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand** (10). Yes, death was coming, but so was life after death. Yes, **it was God's will to bruise him** (10), but it was also God's will to exalt him. In verse 12 we're given a view of his post-battle glory as he divides the spoils he had taken from the enemy and his post-battle power as he intercedes for sinners (12) He saw his suffering soul exalted. How did Jesus react to these views of his successful suffering?



His Total Satisfaction

Some athletes speak of an awful anti-climax when they win their gold medal or championship. They find it's not enough to satisfy them, and therefore want another, then another, then another, and so on. As one famous British sportsman put it, "I thought I had achieved my highest dream and found I had grasped a shadow."

That wasn't Christ's experience. He was totally satisfied, satiated, filled, and fulfilled. This is more than contentment, it's excitement, exhilaration, and elation.

When did he experience this? Fully at the resurrection, but I believe also partly at and on the cross. Notice Isaiah said, **out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied** (11). That means even when he was satisfying God's justice with his suffering, he was being satisfied with his success. As the Apostle Paul put it: **Who [Jesus] for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God** (Heb. 12:2).

At no point was there any doubt in his mind that he would accomplish his mission. He was satisfied because he was satisfying divine justice, saving sinners, and securing his own glory. This was his comfort, his motivation, at every point of his life and the darkest point of his death.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Our certain salvation was the source of his satisfaction. Jesus sustained himself in his worst suffering with the thought of your salvation. This success exhilarated and excited him.

His certain resurrection was the source of his satisfaction. Jesus never doubted the ultimate outcome of his suffering. He tasted exhilarating victory in what looked like his worst defeat.

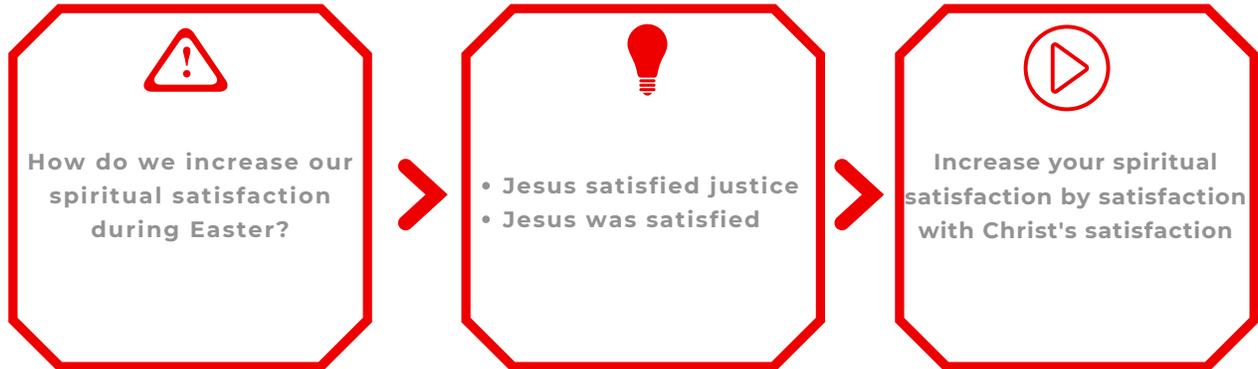
JESUS WAS SATISFIED
BECAUSE JUSTICE WAS SATISFIED.



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the Story



SUMMARY



PRAYER: Lord Jesus you are perfect Satisfier and perfectly Satisfied, and I find perfect satisfaction in your Satisfaction. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What other bible passages underline Christ's spiritual sufferings?
2. Why was it so important for Christ to suffer in his soul?
3. Describe your experience of being hated and the pain it caused you.
4. Give an example of justice being satisfied.
5. Describe your most exhilarating victory? How does that compare with Christ's?
6. How many kinds of satisfaction are referred to in this sermon? What's the connection between them and your satisfaction?

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