

## **ISAIAH 53: WHAT A SAVIOUR!**

*[Chelmsford Maundy Thursday 2013]*

‘*A penny for your thoughts*’, we sometimes say to a friend, when we want to know what they are thinking. I would have given more than a penny to have known what Jesus was thinking in the last few days of his earthly life.

What precisely went through his mind as Jesus sat down with his disciples to eat the meal that we now know as the Last Supper?

As Jesus hung on the Cross, what thoughts went flashing through his brain?

If Luke’s account of the Last Supper is any guide, then it would appear his thoughts revolved around Isaiah 53, that great chapter that deals the suffering servant:

- **“I am among you as one who serves”** (Lk 22.27) said Jesus to his disciples as they sought to jockey for position.
- **“The scripture which says, ‘He shared the fate of criminals’ must come true about me, because what was written about me is coming true”** (Lk 22.37) said Jesus as he gave his disciples farewell instructions.

Yes, it was with the model of the Suffering Servant, that Jesus went to the Cross.

Here in Isaiah 53 found his calling – his calling to be the Saviour of the world

And what a terrible calling that was.

### **1. TO SAVE JESUS HAD TO EXPERIENCE THE PAIN OF REJECTION**

**“We despised him and rejected him”** (Isaiah 53.3).

The one who comes to the rescue was no mega-star.

The hero of Calvary was no strong, handsome hulk

There was something pathetic about God’s Servant

**“He had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of him. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing that would draw us to him”** (53.2)

As a result **“we ignored him as if he were nothing”** (53.3)

Just imagine the pain of the Saviour

You go to the Cross for the sake of others – and yet nobody seems to understand or care

What a terrible calling to be the Saviour of the world

### **2 TO SAVE JESUS HAD TO ENDURE THE AGONY OF CRUCIFIXION**

**V5: “Because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, by the blows he received”**

What a dreadful way to die. His face was slapped, his head was hit, his back was whipped – a crown of thorns was forced upon him – nails were nailed through his hands and feet – his body was hoisted onto a cross of wood.

It is not for nothing that the word that describes the most terrible of pain is a word derived from the cross: *'excruciating'*

Yes, Jesus experienced the agony of physical torture – for our sake.

Yes, it was because of our sins that he was wounded, because the evil we did that he was beaten. All this was par for the course, if he would be our Saviour

### 3. TO SAVE JESUS HAD TO SUBMIT TO THE WILL OF GOD

V7: **“He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; he never said a word. Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, he never said a word”**

In an English court of law it is often assumed that a defendant who refuses to go into the dock to defend himself has something to hide. But the silence of Jesus was of a totally different order.

Jesus refused to defend himself – like the suffering servant of old, he said nothing.

He spoke no word of accusation, he spoke no word of self-pity.

He did not rail against those who would crucify him – nor did he rail against God for taking him this way.

Instead he quietly submitted himself to the will of God

Yes, if Jesus were to be our Saviour, then he had to remain pure and spotless to the last

### 4. TO SAVE JESUS HAD TO GIVE HIS LIFE

V12: **“He willingly gave his life and shared the fate of evil men. He took the place of many sinners and prayed that they might be forgiven”**

The Cross was not suffering for suffering's sake – it was suffering for salvation's sake

His death, says the Lord in Isaiah 53.6 **“was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness”**

In a way which defies understanding, Jesus took upon himself the sin of the world – he took upon himself your sin and my sin – that we might be put right with God.

For us to live, Jesus had to die

To save others meant he could not save himself.#

Jesus knew that to save meant he had to give his life.

What an extraordinary calling was his – and what an amazing Saviour is he.