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Sermon Notes

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Jesus, the Suffering Servant: Part 1

Isaiah 52:13-53:3

Introduction: The Great Metropolis of Scripture

On March 15, 1859, the greatest preacher in England during the 19th century, Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon entitled, “Christ Precious to Sinners”

Told a story:

A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done he went to the old minister, and said, "What do you think of my sermon?" "A very poor sermon indeed," said he. "A poor sermon?" said the young man, "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." "Why, did you not think my explanation of the text a very good one?" "Oh, yes," said the old preacher, "very good indeed." "Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn't you think the metaphors were appropriate and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes, they were very good as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, "there was no Christ in it." "Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know young man that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?" "Yes," said the young man. "Ah!" said the old divine "and so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. And my dear brother, your business in when you get to a text, to say, 'Now what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And," said he, "I have never yet found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one; I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savour of Christ in it."

Sometimes it's hard to find a way to get to Christ from this or that passage... but as we come to Isaiah 53, in many ways we are downtown in the very heart of the City of Scripture, the very throbbing center of the Great Metropolis of Scripture, in its prophetic testimony to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 “For what I received, I passed on to you as of first important, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures...”

It is vital for us as Christians to embrace the centrality of PROPHECY when it comes to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our salvation is based on the unshakable rock of fulfilled prophecy

This should not surprise us at all as we’ve been studying Isaiah...

- 1) God has been proclaiming again and again His unique ability to foretell the future

Isaiah 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'

Isaiah 44:26 The Lord carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers

- 2) No prophesy of Scripture is as important as this one
 - a. This was the central point of it all
 - b. This was WHY God raised up Abraham, and from Abraham the Jewish nation
 - c. This was WHY God restored the Jewish nation back to the Promised Land after the exile to Babylon
 - d. The whole point of the Bible was this: SALVATION FOR SINNERS even to the ends of the earth
 - e. In Isaiah 53, we come to the most brilliantly shining star in the cosmos of the written word of God... the clearest prophecy of the death and resurrection of Jesus, of His substitutionary atonement for our sins

- 3) Christ’s forty-day seminary

[The two disciples on the Road to Emmaus] ***Luke 24:25-27 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.***

- 4) Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Acts 8:32-35 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS

***SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH.³³"IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH."*...**

The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him

- 5) Modern tendency to find other explanations
 - a. Isaiah 53 is about Israel... or the remnant of Israel... suffering and persecuted in the world, returning from exile
 - b. Isaiah 53 is some individual—Isaiah himself, or Jeremiah, or another of the prophets, or some mysterious unknown person (which makes no sense, since the prophecy said his glory would be known to the ends of the earth)
 - c. Isaiah 53 CANNOT be Israel as a nation:
 - i. The chapter says the Suffering Servant is INNOCENT, guiltless... and that is absolutely untrue of Israel
 - ii. Isaiah uses language usually reserved for talking about the nation as a whole in reference to who the Suffering Servant saves

Isaiah 53:8 For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished

How can Israel die for Israel???

Israel was looking for a REDEEMER... one who would PAY A PRICE to rescue Israel from sin... Isaiah 53 says who paid the price for Israel!

- 6) Clear evidence of the supernatural origin of the Bible
 - a. Dead Sea scrolls discovered in November of 1946... more and more scrolls found over the next nine years... but among the very first to be found was the ISAIAH SCROLL
 - b. This scroll has been dated by the Carbon 14 dating technique to about 350-400 years before Christ was born!! Clear proof of the miracle of Scripture and of Christianity
 - c. Isaiah 53 has been scientifically proven to have been written 3-4 centuries before Jesus! And it clearly predicts the atoning death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ

d. **REJOICE!!!** This chapter is **INCREDIBLY GOOD NEWS!!!**

Strategy for climbing the Mt. Everest of prophecy

This week: quick overview of the whole chapter... division of the chapter into five subsections of three verses each

Clear isolation of substitutionary atonement as the theological centerpiece of this chapter

Carefully going through the first two subsections

Application of the verses to our lives

Next week:

Review of the first three subsections

Carefully going through the last three subsections

Application

Outline:

Christ Repulsive, But Redemptive, then Exalted (52:13-15)

Christ the “Arm of the Lord,” But Human and Despised (53:1-3)

Christ Rejected, But Our Atoning Substitute (53:4-6)

Christ Innocent, But Willing to Be Slaughtered (53:7-9)

Christ Crushed So We Could Be Justified (53:10-12)

Central doctrine of Isaiah 52-53: Substitutionary atonement... Christ **DIED IN OUR PLACE** that sinners like us might be justified

I. Outline of the Chapter(s)

A. Christ Repulsive, But Redemptive, then Exalted (52:13-15)

1. Christ presented as one who will be successful, then raised, lifted up, highly exalted (vs. 12)
2. Yet we are also told he will be **APPALLING TO LOOK AT...** disfigured so badly that he will be barely recognizable as a human being

3. The disfigurement of the Servant of the Lord is the way by which He will **SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS**... this word “sprinkle” we will discuss, but it means cleansing them from sin, making them pure in God’s sight
4. This is the very one who will be proclaimed even to **Kings**, and they will shut their mouths because of Him...
5. The distant Gentile **Kings** will hear about Him, and they will believe

B. Christ the “Arm of the Lord,” But Human and Despised (53:1-3)

1. The next two subsections simply trace out the biography of Jesus Christ
2. But it begins with an assertion that this message must be believed, this suffering Servant must be revealed by God or you’ll never see Him
3. He is revealed as the **ARM OF THE LORD**... the mighty One who will work deliverance, redemption, salvation for His people
4. **BUT THEN** He is portrayed as human... he “grew up” before the Lord...
5. Not only is He human, He is unimpressive, weak, unattractive, nothing in His appearance that would make people follow Him, still less worship Him
6. He is despised and rejected... people were horrified by His appearance, and He was held in low esteem

C. Christ Rejected, But Our Atoning Substitute (53:4-6)

1. The theological center of the Bible... substitutionary atonement
2. Christ takes up **OUR** pain, He carries **OUR** sin, and **DIES** for it
3. He was **PIERCED** for our transgressions, **CRUSHED** for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him and by His wounds, we are healed
4. Jesus thus gives **HEALTH** to diseased people, and **PEACE** to wicked rebels formerly at war with God
5. But He does this at the cost of His own life

Isaiah 53:6 “All we, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

D. Christ Innocent, But Willing to Be Slaughtered (53:7-9)

1. Isaiah unfolds a shocking truth: the limitations and end of the animal sacrificial system

2. The essence of sin was **WILLFULNESS**... we willingly rebelled; we were not forced to sin, we **CHOOSE** sin; an animal cannot atone for that willful sin because it has no choice but to die
3. Christ, by His willingness to die in our place is able to atone for our sins...
4. So this suffering man, was exactly like the sheep led to the slaughter in that he died... the killers led, and Jesus meekly followed
5. **BUT** unlike the sheep that were led to the slaughter, Jesus knew exactly what He was doing, and that's precisely **HOW** He atoned for us
6. He was completely innocent... no violence in His actions, no wickedness in His speech... a **PERFECT MAN**, sinless... but dead in our place
7. Prophetic Details: He died by **PIERCING** and was **BURIED** in a **RICH MAN'S TOMB**

E. Christ Crushed So We Could Be Justified (53:10-12)

1. It was **GOD'S WILL** to crush Him and cause Him to suffer... all of this was done according to an amazing and eternal plan crafted by God from before the foundation of the world
2. God delighted to crush His Son and cause Him to suffer... not because He loved His Son's suffering but so that we could be justified... so we could stand forgiven in God's sight
3. Verse 11 says it all: Christ's resurrection completes our salvation, and by His finished work many are **JUSTIFIED**... made right with God
4. How amazing is all of this?! We are the sheep going constantly astray, we are the wicked rebels, made sick by our sin and at war with God; before all nations, God bares His holy arm in the form of His frail, unimpressive looking Son whom we despised and rejected... this One carried our infinitely heavy load, died under the infinitely fierce wrath of God, and was buried in a rich man's tomb; this same One rose from the dead and now enjoys looking at His spiritual children day after day in every nation on earth

II. Christ Repulsive, But Redemptive, then Exalted (52:13-15)

A. Isaiah 52:13 is the Beginning of Isaiah 53...

1. This is chapter division **MALPRACTICE!**
2. John Calvin called it a dismembering!
3. So we'll make Isaiah 52:13 the beginning of Isaiah 53

B. The Fourth Servant Song

Isaiah 52:13 “Behold, my Servant...”

1. Again, the word “Behold” implies an unveiling of something glorious that has been hidden up till now
2. “My Servant” = the Servant of the Lord
 - a. This is the fourth of four Servant Songs in Isaiah
 - b. First one in Isaiah 42:1-4 presents the Servant of the Lord as one with a mission to the nations, who will definitely fulfill that mission... he is the Gentle King==the bruised reed He will not break and the smoldering wick He will not snuff out... He will use gentleness to build a worldwide kingdom
 - c. Isaiah 49:1-7 He is presented as a Savior not only for the Jews but a light for the Gentiles; however, He is also presented as one who has to overcome great difficulties in accomplishing His mission
 - d. Isaiah 50:4-9 He speaks for Himself and describes His willingness to be abused for the will of the Lord; He did not hide His face from mocking and spitting, and He did not stop people from beating His back... YET no reason was given for this abuse, this suffering
 - e. Isaiah 53 finally tells us why the Servant is suffering

C. The Servant Will Prosper and Be Exalted (vs. 13)

Isaiah 52:13 “Behold, my Servant will prosper greatly; he shall rise, and be exalted, and be lifted up exceedingly”

1. Just like Isaiah 42, this predicts the success of the Servant... He’s going to SUCCEED, He’s going to do well
2. The Hebrew word translated “prosper greatly” is often used of David or other heroes whose success is linked to their WISDOM... to dealing prudently
3. Because of His wisdom, He will be exalted to exceeding heights...
4. Isaiah uses THREE VERBS to talk about how highly Jesus will be exalted
5. The text will describe the great humiliation of Jesus... how degraded, how appalling was his appearance; but he will not stay humiliated... He will be exalted as Paul said “to the highest place”

Philippians 2:9-11 “Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow

in heaven and earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

No one is more highly exalted than Jesus Christ... just as there was no one more humbled and rejected than Jesus

Jesus is at the right hand of Almighty God, with 100 million angels serving him, with blazing holy seraphim veiling their faces, unable to look at His perfect glory

From this initial assertion of Jesus' final victory and exaltation, the next many verses unfold his lowliness, degradation, and humiliation

D. The Stunning Degradation of the Servant of the Lord (vs. 14)

Isaiah 52:14 “Just as there were many who were astonished at YOU...his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

1. Here we have the watching world looking on in HORROR...
2. Jesus' appearance would be completely degraded, even to the point of being barely recognizable as a HUMAN BEING
3. The onlookers will not wonder, “Is this the Servant,” but rather “Is this even human?”
4. This was certainly fulfilled at the very end of Jesus' life... when the flogging had shredded His back, and the beatings He took around the face had puffed it up with horrible bruises and lacerations, and the crown of thorns had been smashed into His scalp, causing a flow of blood to cover His face, and the nails had pulverized his hands and feet and the convulsive effort to breathe while being crucified had made his final moments a hideous dance of death for survival... TOTAL PHYSICAL DEGRADATION

E. The Reason for the Disfigurement: Atonement (vs. 15)

Isaiah 52:15 “even so will he sprinkle many nations”

1. Parallel construction: just as He was disfigured, SO will He sprinkle the nations
2. In other words, the exact horror that had led to His degradation was the very same way He would sprinkle the nations... the two were intimately tied together!
3. BY HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS, Jesus Christ will sprinkle the nations
4. What does “sprinkle” mean?

- a. Levitical priesthood would often sprinkle blood—the blood of the sacrifice—to cleanse it from ritual defilement... from sinful IMPURITY
- b. This sprinkling language is the language of spiritual cleansing

Leviticus 14:2, 7 “This shall be the law of the leprous person for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest... and the priest shall sacrifice a bird and he shall sprinkle the blood seven times on the one to be cleansed of the leprous disease and he shall be pronounced clean”

- c. We are like lepers in the sight of God, and we must be sprinkled with the cleansing blood of Christ’s atonement
5. “Many nations”: these are the elect from every tribe, language, people and nation... sprinkled with the cleansing blood of Christ

Revelation 5:9 “...you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

F. The Worship of Kings

1. Kings will hear about Jesus (from missionaries) and they will shut their mouths in astonishment about him

Isaiah 52:15 “... kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Jesus is the glorious king of kings... and when those kings who are elect hear this gospel, they will rise in speechless awe, and fall down in reverent worship

III. Christ the “Arm of the Lord,” But Human and Despised (53:1-3)

A. This Message Hard to Believe... But It Must Be Believed!

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

1. Again, there is the clear idea of a MESSAGE, a REPORT, WORDS that are being delivered by messengers, even to the ends of the earth
2. “Faith comes by hearing the report about Christ” (Romans 10:17)
3. Justification comes by FAITH IN THE WORD
4. “Our” message = God + Isaiah, first; then the church’s proclaimed message
5. This message will be very difficult to accept, difficult to believe

6. Only as Christ is revealed by God the Father through the Spirit will anyone believe this message!
7. On the basis of HUMAN OBSERVATION, no one will see Jesus properly... everyone will get it wrong, who just looks with normal eyes at this Suffering Servant

B. Christ is the “Arm of the Lord”

1. This is the shocker... Christ is clearly HUMAN, and we will get into that more and more as we unfold the chapter; but he is called here the “arm of the Lord”
2. He is who God sent to save us in our wretchedness, sinfulness, disease, suffering, warfare, rebellion, and death
3. The arm of the Lord was the focus in Isaiah 52... the last chapter:

Isaiah 52:10 The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

4. But what we got was not some awesome display of military power, but a quiet, humble, healer... gentle with sinners, but claiming to be GOD IN THE FLESH
5. This was the very stumbling block of Christ; the arm of the Lord has to be REVEALED or no one will see it
6. He will be human; and that was something Jesus’ enemies could not accept:

John 10:33 "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

Mark 14:61-62 The High Priest charged him under oath, "Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of the Most High God!" Jesus said "I am" And the High Priest tore his robes and shouted "BLASPHEMY!"

7. Without the “Arm of the Lord” being revealed, you will never see Jesus as God; only by the Father’s will through the Spirit does this happen:

Matthew 16:16-17 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

1 Corinthians 12:3 "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."

C. The Unimpressive Origin and Appearance of Christ

Isaiah 53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

1. This brings us to the humanity of Christ; he sprang up out of the STUMP OF THE TREE OF JESSE (Isaiah 11)... the Jewish nation was an enslaved people, dominated by Rome; no Davidic King had reigned since the exile to Babylon... so out of DRY GROUND, seemingly impossible circumstances, the Christ grew up... the Son of David
2. He was conceived supernaturally, with a human mother (Mary) but no human father; God was His Father; but He was born in the ordinary way... a very normal, ordinary appearance into the world
3. He grew up as all babies do, in the ordinary way; he “grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52), but He was simply human
4. If you looked at this baby, at this twelve year-old boy, you would have a very hard time seeing Him as the Son of God... He had NOTHING IN HIS APPEARANCE that told us of His true nature
5. On the Mount of Transfiguration, He displayed very briefly some of His heavenly glory... for in heaven He dwells in unapproachable light
6. But He took on a human body... a true, human body... with all of its weaknesses—though His Father never slumbers or sleeps, Jesus got tired and had to rest; though His Father has no need of food or water to survive, Jesus needed both
7. The very ordinariness of Jesus’ appearance made His claim to be God a HUGE STUMBLING BLOCK

Matthew 13:55 “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary? Aren’t his brothers and sisters with us?” And they took offense at him.

8. Jesus’ ordinary appearance was part of God’s wise plan... only as the Father REVEALED the Arm of the Lord could He be seen! And then, you could only see BY FAITH!!
9. If you had lived back then, you would not have believed in Jesus even if you saw Lazarus raised from the dead or seen Jesus walk on water or speak to the wind and the waves so they obeyed him. None of the miracles or words or deeds of Jesus would have converted you UNLESS the Father had revealed Christ to your heart

10. Jesus was designed to be very ORDINARY LOOKING... He was not especially handsome or tall or powerfully built... NOTHING IN HIS APPEARANCE that we should desire Him

D. The Servant Despised and Rejected (vs. 3)

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

1. Far from being ATTRACTED to Jesus by looking at Him, His own people “despised and rejected Him”
2. The word “despised” does not so much mean “hated” here (although Jesus WAS hated) but rather “held in contempt, mocked, dismissed”
3. His own people listened to Him, saw His works, and despised Him... thought very little of Him, and in the courtroom of their hearts, they REJECTED HIM
4. Just as many of our neighbors or co-workers do now, just as perhaps some of you visitors listening to me now have done up till today—despised Jesus and rejected Him, held Him in low esteem
5. Jesus is also called a “man of sorrows” here... AMAZING title for the Son of God, the Lord of Glory
 - a. God is a being of PERFECT HAPPINESS all the time

Psalms 16:11 ... in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- b. Jesus laid down the perfect happiness of heaven and took on a mantle of misery, a cloak of suffering, a robe of pain... He did this out of infinite love for wretched sinners like us
- c. He was WELL ACQUAINTED with pain
 - i) By His perfect compassion, He felt acutely the miseries of the people He came to save
 - ii) His heart was moved with compassion again and again...
 - iii) He sucked miseries out of life the way a hiker sucks rattlesnake poison out of a bite in the leg of a friend
 - iv) His education in suffering would reach infinite levels at the cross
6. He was one from whom men hide their faces... [again, at the horror of the cross, one could scarcely look at Jesus!!]

IV. Applications

A. “Who Has Believed Our Message... and to Whom Has the Arm of the Lord Been Revealed?”

1. Has God the Father revealed Christ to you this morning?
2. Do you “see Him” in your mind’s eye with eyes of faith?
3. Are you able to look past the centuries of history and the challenge of dealing with words in a book and words preached from a pulpit and SEE JESUS portrayed plainly as crucified this morning?
4. Do you see how gloriously exalted He is now, at the right hand of the Father?
5. Do you know yourself to be a sinner, in need of the Arm of the Lord to descend in Christ and save you?
6. Oh, sinner... flee to Christ NOW! Hear this message and respond in faith!
7. Jesus is our substitute, our atoning sacrifice... for all who will cast themselves on Him in the abandon of faith

B. Marvel at the Miracle of Scripture!

1. The Dead Sea scrolls are physical evidence of the supernatural origin of the Bible
2. The first scroll they found was the Isaiah scroll
3. They tested it and proved that it was written 300 years or more before Christ
4. That scroll contains these amazing words that we have studied this morning and that we will study again next week
5. They CLEARLY reveal the detail and more significantly, the reason for Christ’s life, death, and resurrection
6. This is a miracle of specific prophecy... the account of His blood sacrifice, his being PIERCED, his being buried in a rich man’s tomb, His resurrection
7. Also the clear theology of atonement... the fulfillment of the animal sacrificial system... how the Bible makes no sense at all if Christ did not die
8. Trust in this BOOK!! I hold in my hand a MIRACLE that cannot be explained away

C. Exalt Christ Higher Than You Do

1. Isaiah 52:13 uses three Hebrew words to speak of Christ's exaltation... "raised, lifted up, highly exalted..."
2. It's as though nothing is high enough! No honor is great enough! No praise is sufficient for what Christ has done
3. But we can labor on our worship for Christ! We can labor and love him and worship Him and stretch our understanding of Him and pour out our affection on Him

D. Meditate on Christ's Immeasurable Suffering for You in this Chapter

1. Think about how much He suffered on the cross... how his appearance was so brutalized that He could barely be recognized as human
2. Mystics of the Middle Ages did a lot of bizarre meditations on the wounds of Christ... their specific nature... I am not advocating that
3. Just cling closely to the words of Isaiah 52-53 that speak of the extremity of Christ's sufferings
4. Meditate on that as the measurement of Christ's love for you...
 - a. If you are going through suffering yourself right now, and you are tempted to think God doesn't love you, see in the wounds of cross the way to stop that kind of thinking dead in its tracks

Joseph Hart, "Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy"

**View Him prostrate in the garden;
On the ground your Maker lies;
On the bloody tree behold Him;
Sinner, will this not suffice?**

What a question!!! Sinner will this not suffice = isn't this ENOUGH for you? Enough for your guilty conscience? Enough for your extreme trial and misery? Enough to satisfy you that Christ loves you with a love that cannot be measured?

Keep in mind that the apostle John saw Jesus in heaven "looking like a Lamb that was slain"... Doubting Thomas saw the nail marks in his hands... Christ has chosen to retain the physical evidence, the emblems of His suffering!!

Let a healthy meditation of the sufferings of Christ in Isaiah 53 calm you and assure you of Christ's love for you

E. "Lord, Who Has Believed Our Message...?"

1. Feed your faith be the Word of God

2. Strengthen your heart's vision of Christ crucified, resurrected, and highly exalted BY FEEDING DAILY ON THE SCRIPTURES

F. Do Not Judge the Progress of Christ's Kingdom by Outward Appearances

1. Just as Christ had no external beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him... so it is with the church
2. The church is externally very unimpressive... small in almost every major city in the world... less than 20% even in the most evangelized nations on earth
3. The church seems often like its failing... weak, frail, unimpressive...
4. But don't judge too hastily... the Lord is doing a powerful work in His church in every generation, and on that final day, she will rise like He did—radiant and glorious

G. Therefore, Don't Seek to Grow the Church by Worldly Methods

1. Don't seek for the "big splash" to build a hasty congregation
2. Consistent, careful, passionate preaching of Christ crucified will build the church!!

H. Finally... Feel the Ministry of Christ as a "Man of Sorrows and Familiar with Suffering..." and Imitate Him

1. Christ knows your pain and misery, and He is intensely compassionate
2. He wants to suck the poison of sin, and weakness, and disease, and death from His children all over the world
3. Cast all your sorrows on Him... He is "familiar with grief"... He knows it well
4. IMITATE HIM... Jesus left the joy and comfort and pleasure and beauty of heaven to become a "Man of Sorrows"... lets follow Him in that downward journey of suffering to bless others... embracing the poor and needy; embracing the lost through mission trips, sacrificing now so we can share in His glory and joy later