

Good Friday - April 18

But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5-6 NRSV Read Isaiah 52: 13- 53: 12 for context.

Although the suffering servant passages in Isaiah were not written about Jesus, they have become a lens through which Christians have come to understand suffering and redemption. On Good Friday, as we take time to reflect of Jesus' suffering and brutal death, Isaiah's poetry helps us to consider the character of the suffering servant and the character of God.

The suffering servant passages shift our understanding of suffering as retributive, to suffering as having the power to be redemptive. The servant who suffers is despised, struck down, and weak and yet he will be lifted up and take his place among the great. It emphasizes the great reversal of all expectations. As those who witnessed Jesus' death and resurrection were trying to make sense of the experience, the suffering servant text in Isaiah laid the groundwork for them to understand how Jesus, who was brought low through his death, was now exalted in his resurrection.

God refused to let the suffering of the servant be the last word. In the mysterious ways of God, Jesus' suffering becomes the vehicle for our redemption. Jesus' death was not for naught. It has the power to save us. As we grieve the death of Jesus, we rejoice in what God has done through Him. We celebrate that death was not the end. There is more to the story.

Pastor Carrie Schwab

Prayer: God, who knows our suffering, continue to bring about redemption and restoration in our lives as you break the power of sin and death and bring about transformation in our world. Amen.