



Isaiah was written about seven centuries before Christ, warning the people of Israel that they were on a path leading to God's judgment. But judgment isn't the end of the story. There is also comfort in the promise that God will have compassion, and ultimately rescue His people through His Servant. Isaiah also offers us the opportunity to ask the questions: What path are WE on? What is the way forward?

Week Eight: THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Text: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

After predicting the chaos and judgement that falls on those who stop respecting God, Isaiah shares hope and comfort. In precise detail, he predicts the coming of God's suffering Servant who will rescue people from the consequences they have earned, by taking their punishment for Himself. The prophecies are amazing in how clearly they point to Jesus 700 years before His birth. But let us not miss the point: We are all, individually, deeply flawed and unable to save ourselves. But God send Jesus on a rescue mission to bring people us into a relationship with Him. The prophecy was given so that we wouldn't fail to recognize Him.

Discussion Questions: *The following are based on the "My Application" Questions found in the bulletin this week. Leader urge your group members to attend worship—or watch the sermon online—and to spend time considering and answering those questions before coming to the group. This will produce a richer discussion time.*

- Read through Isaiah 52:13-53:12. As you think about this prophecy and the fulfillment of Jesus, why is prophecy so helpful for our confidence in the Bible?
- Which of the verses in the above passage are most meaningful to you and why?
- In Isaiah 53:6, God describes us as sheep who wander away from their shepherd. What are some areas of your life where you tend to wander from God's will for your life?
- Think about what Jesus experienced to provide you forgiveness and a new life. How does His suffering motivate you to live for Him? What areas of your life do you need to surrender to Him?

Application:

For many of us, the irresistible pull of consumerism in the world around us is what draws us away from God's best in our lives. Like sheep looking for a new patch of grass, we find ourselves wandering far from our Shepherd and away from His care and protection, without knowing how we got there.

This Fall, we will address this directly with a sermon series entitled Defying Gravity. In conjunction, Hill Country will be offering Financial Peace University classes through our Small Groups and other venues. Please don't miss the opportunity to share this life-changing experience with your church family.

1. As a small group, commit to participating in FPU together.
2. Consider opening your group to others who aren't currently in a small group.
3. Help create additional FPU groups by sending one of your group members to lead a "new" group. Leader training opportunities are still available. Contact the Church for details.

Memory Verse:

*"We all, 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."*

Isaiah 53:6

Prayer Time:

Take time to reflect on the truth of our memory verse in your own life. In what way have you gone astray? Where did going your own way take you? Without Jesus, where *would* it have taken you? Remember you could not—cannot—save yourself.

- If you have accepted Jesus' gift of salvation and forgiveness, let this remind you of the indescribable gift you have received. Thank God for His mercy and grace!
- If you have not accepted that gift, consider doing so now, with your small group community around to celebrate with you!