

I Believe in Jesus Christ and Him Crucified

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Lent: I Believe Series

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INTERACTING WITH THE SERMON

SYNOPSIS OF THE SERMON

Suffering is one of the great mysteries that causes Christians and non-Christians alike to call the love of God into question. How could God be a loving God and still allow this to happen to me? Or this to happen to someone I love? The great objection to faith in the 21st century is simply the enormity of suffering that this world and we as citizens of this world undergo. We Christians worship a God, who in his love, experienced firsthand what it is like to live as a mortal human in a world that has been horribly marred by sin. The sufferings of Christ do not explain our suffering, but it does reveal to us a God who was willing to allow himself to be subjected to all the pain and suffering that this broken and marred creation experiences. We Christians do not worship a God who stands far off, a God who is so high and lofty that he is untouched and unphased by the brutality of this world. Instead, we worship a God who's character upholds both love and justice so much that he entered history through Jesus Christ and chose to suffer a horrible death as an atonement for our sins.

Jesus was the perfect human– He had a perfect relationship with God the Father; He was full of the Holy Spirit; He understood and demonstrated the power of God through many healings, signs, and wonders; although tempted, He never sinned; and when the shouts and demands of an angry mob, led by His own people were for Him to be crucified, He demonstrated the ultimate form of service and strength by not resisting. This is what it means to be a perfect human as Jesus was perfect – strength employed in service to others. This is a fundamental part of what it means to follow Jesus– that we as Christians would employ our strengths to lift up and serve someone else. Not to use our strengths to put someone down, or get our own way, or improve our own position. Instead, we are called to use our strengths to serve, to lift up, or to bless others. Ultimately, when Jesus chose to use His strength in the world by suffering on a cross, He was choosing to serve, lift up, and bless the world.



In 5 minutes or less, briefly give a synopsis of this week's sermon. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.

GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

These questions can be used as ice-breakers in the beginning OR interwoven between the questions below to draw the group into the discussion.

1. What were some unexpected truths you learned from this week's sermon? Did you discover any misconceptions you've always believed about Jesus? Discuss.
2. Who is a person in your lifetime that you believed to possess great strength in character? What qualities of strength did they possess and how did they demonstrate these qualities?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Read – Isaiah 53

- 1 Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*
- 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.*
- 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*
- 4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.*
- 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*
- 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*
- 7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;*



*he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

*8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.*

*9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

*10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.*

*11 After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.*

*12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Context: Isaiah is a focal point for prophetic imagery of the messianic promise and noteworthy in the biblical canon for its impact on the New Testament which contains over 400 quotations from the book of Isaiah. In the chapters surrounding Isaiah 53, the prophetic literature announces the end of God's punishment and His promise to intervene and restore the exiles. Thus, a major theme in Isaiah is "Yahweh as Savior" with the idea of salvation being connected to redemption, deliverance, righteousness, and justice. By the time of Jesus, the Jewish people were expecting a Savior to come who was to appear as the messianic (anointed) king according to God's ancient promise to the House of David (2 Samuel 7:11-16). The Jews came to expect an ultimate Messiah who would deliver them and establish his righteous kingdom. On the contrary, Jesus' ministry was not to involve at this time any form of political manifestation. The people anticipated a political leader while the direction of Jesus ministry lay in such a way that moved towards that of a suffering servant. Therefore, the masses did not fully understand the implications of the messiah having to fulfill His role as Savior by God



becoming man and humbling himself to the point of becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross (Phil 2:8). We pick up in the next passage – Mark 8: 27–28, where Jesus has just healed a blind man and people everywhere are beginning to acknowledge the unparalleled power that Jesus possesses. Jesus was not outright about His identity to the public during His ministry because He was waiting for it to be revealed at the right time. However, Jesus often revealed more to His disciples than He did to the public. In the following passage, Jesus has a private conversation with His disciples where His identity and mission are discussed.

Read – Mark 8: 27–38

27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” **28** They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” **29** “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.” **30** Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. **32** He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. **33** But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **35** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. **36** What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? **37** Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? **38** If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

- Instead of only asking His disciples what they thought, why does Jesus first ask what others are saying?
- Do people answer this question much differently today? Jesus as a prophet? A great teacher? A good man?
- In verse 29 Peter proclaims Jesus as the “Messiah.” How does Jesus respond to Peter's confession and why?



- In verse 31 Jesus predicts His own suffering and death. How must this have sounded to the disciples?
- To understand why Jesus suffered and died on the cross, we must first trace back our question to the character of God himself: an unchanging character of love and justice (John 3:16 and Rom 3:26). Therefore, the love and justice of God were the ultimate cause of Jesus on the cross. Was there any other way for God to save human beings than by sending His Son to die in our place?
- In verse 31 Jesus says that He must suffer “many things” which we now know to be a.) physical pain and death b.) the pain of bearing sin c.) abandonment from the Father (Matt 27:46) and d.) Bearing the wrath of God. How were all these forms of suffering by Jesus necessary in order for Him to act as Savior to the world?
- In verses 34–38 Jesus proceeds by saying that His followers must also suffer if they choose to follow Him. What did it mean for His disciples to deny self and carry the cross? What paradox does Jesus give in verse 35?
- What might it look like to “lose your life for the sake of [Jesus] and for the sake of the gospel” as a follower of Jesus in 21st Century, Columbus, Ohio as a member of Vineyard Columbus?
- Jesus warns those who are ashamed of Him and His words. What would it look like if all 12,000 attenders of Vineyard Columbus had no shame of Jesus and His words? What implications would it have on the City of Columbus? Be specific.

MINISTRY APPLICATION

Below you'll see some options for ministry time with your group. We always encourage you to reserve time in your group to pray for one another and wait on the Holy Spirit.

- Often it is hard for us to deny ourselves of what we feel we deserve in life. We may feel entitled to accolades and acknowledgement for our good deeds, acts of service, and hard work. These feelings, although natural, are counter to Jesus' teachings of the suffering servant who follows Him by carrying a cross. Ask the Holy Spirit where He wants you to trust Him more for your self-worth and look forward to the words, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matt 25:23).



- In our passage, Jesus warns those who are ashamed of Him and His words. Imagine what you would look like if you rid yourself of shame for Jesus and His salvation. What would you be doing differently if you were freed from embarrassment completely? Tell someone what freedom from shame would look like for you and have them pray that you would receive freedom.
- If you are experiencing suffering and struggling to feel that God sees you or that He is with you, please ask someone to pray for you. God wants to give you His loving presence.

