

Suffering Servant:

Outline:

- The scriptures tonight were from Isaiah who describes God's promised deliverer as the "Suffering Servant"
- We rightly focus on his suffering tonight of all nights of the year, because it was on this night he went to the cross and paid the ultimate price for the sins of the world.

I. Why did Jesus need to Suffer and Die

- A. Perhaps you have asked yourself why did Jesus have to suffer and die?
- B. The answer lies in understanding that God cannot abide the sin that has entered his creation. The perfection of his creation has been marred with our sin. God cannot simply look the other way and give us a pass each time we sin, it would violate his very nature.
- C. Paul reminds us in the book of Romans that we are all responsible for the death of Christ:
As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The

poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:10-18 NIV)

- D. Yet, God's love for us also compels him to find a way to rescue our souls from the hell that is awaiting us.
- E. Paul continues: **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:23-26 NIV)**
- F. Tonight we remember our sin, our guilt, our separation from God, and that God choose to pour out the punishment for that sinfulness upon Jesus, the Suffering servant instead of us. For all who will put their faith in Jesus may be forgiven even this moment by God the father.

II. He is the willing Servant

- A. So we are right to focus on the suffering of Jesus and mourn our sinfulness that required

Him to become our sacrifice. We also must consider the other part of Jesus' character that Isaiah describes. The picture is painted of a Suffering **Servant**. Jesus choose to be our servant and willing sacrificed himself for our sins.

- B. I want to take you back to the passover meal shortly before the betrayal that led to Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion: "It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. **Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.** The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under **his power**, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; **so** he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him." (John 13:1-5 NIV)
- C. Here at the beginning of Christ's most crucial hours he pauses to express to his dearest friends an expression of his love.

- D. With a towel and a basin of water Jesus illustrates what is about to happen on the cross. Isaiah says he will "Sprinkle" many nations. The articles of the tabernacle in the Old testament were purified for use by being sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed lamb. A Priest would take a brush made of hyssop reeds, dip it into the basin of blood, and sprinkle the objects with the cleansing blood.
- E. David saw this as a metaphor for the sins in his own life, "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." (Psalms 51:7 NIV)
- F. The writer of Hebrews says pointedly, How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9:14 NIV)
- G. ...Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a **servant**, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross"(Philippians 2:5-8 NIV)

I. The Broken Vessel

- A. God's perfect son, died for you and me. He choose to serve us, to wash us clean, so that we might in turn serve others.
- B. That's what Jesus was telling his disciples that just as he was willing to serve others so we should learn to serve one another.
- C. You could think of Jesus as a vessel that carried the love of God to the world and we too are called to be vessels that carry the love of Christ to others. On the cross God's vessel was broken, from his side the blood that saved us was spilled.
- D. We too are vessels. Although we are not perfect, like Jesus, our finish is cracked we have been broken by life's rough journey. We are sick and defiled by sin, hurt and dying. And like a broken pot we see no purpose for our life, only to be left on the trash heap with all the other broken vessels.
- E. But when we come to faith in Christ. When we allow the light of God's Spirit to come into our lives. Something beautiful is allowed to happen. From the cracks and holes the light of God's love shines.
- F. Through our imperfections as we serve others they are able to see God's light shining through.

G. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," **made his light shine in our hearts** to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have **this treasure in jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:6-10 NIV)

- Is your life a living testimony of the love of Jesus. The one who loved us so much he died and yet lives again!
- Tonight we join together, a community of believers, and partake of the Lord's Supper. This is a time for us to remember the price that was paid for our sins to focus our attention on Jesus death. His body broken, his blood shed for our sins.
- I also would encourage you to pause at the cross tonight and take a piece of broken pottery that symbolizes both the sacrifice of the suffering servant and our call to be share God's love with others as we serve and shine the light of Christ.