

Isaiah 53: Jehovah's Suffering Servant

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Jehovah's Suffering Servant

Isaiah 52:13-15

Introduction

“Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.”

May the Lord bless the reading of His Word.

There are many who believe that Isaiah 53 actually begins at verse 13 of chapter 52 (see Isaiah 52:13). This assumption is not without good reason. It was not until the year 1207 A.D. that the Bible, as we know it, was divided into chapters. This was done by a very famous archbishop, Steven Langton. He was the man who prepared the Magna Carta. It was not until 350 years after this man had divided the books up into chapters that a printer called Robert Stevens came along and began to divide the Scriptures up into verses. And that is how we have our Bible divided into chapters and verses today.

Now I take it, and say with good authority, that while most of God's servants believe it is the divinely inspired Word of God, we do not believe that the divisions that have been made by those two well-meaning men are inspired. And there are times that we can obviously see,

as we read, that the divisions of the chapters and the verses are just not correct. Now here is an example of what I've just been saying, because as we read the Scriptures we can see that these verses really belong to chapter 53.

Behold, My Servant

The subject that is under our consideration this morning is "Jehovah's Servant," or should I say, "Jehovah's Suffering Servant." I want to draw your attention to three words in Isaiah 52:13: "Behold, my servant." God is directing our attention this morning to the striking picture of His suffering Servant that follows ("My Servant").

In the Book of Isaiah, there are four different pictures of the Servant of God; that is the Perfect Servant and the Suffering Servant of our Lord Jesus. It is not my intention, however, to bring these things to your notice. I want to confine myself to the section in which our Lord says, "Behold, my servant."

Now, there is a twofold view given in the Scripture regarding Christ as God's Servant. On the one hand, He is presented to us as being weak or meek, despised, rejected and slain. On the other hand, He is presented to us as a mighty conqueror taking vengeance on the nations of the world and also, in His infinite wisdom and strength, restoring Israel to her pristine glory. In the former class, where He is despised and rejected, meek and slain, it would refer to His first advent. The latter class describes Him as being the Mighty Conqueror and would refer to the Second Advent still to come, which we commonly call the Second Advent.

Now Isaiah 52:13-15 portrays the first and the second advents of our Lord Jesus. I want to remind your hearts before we get into our subject proper, how wonderful it is to think that Christ is coming. The Scripture says that when He comes He shall reign or He shall deal prudently. This simply means that when our Lord Jesus Christ comes the second time, He will reign wisely and He will reign well. To use the words of the revised rendering, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes the second time, He shall prosper.

The Exaltation of Christ

The interpretation previously suggested fits in very well with what the prophet says in Isaiah 53:10. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Before we go on to consider the humiliation of our Lord and the suffering He endured, not only at the hands of cruel men, but at the hands of Almighty God, I want to remind you that the Blessed One who was humiliated so, is now seated in glory at God's right hand and one day soon, very soon, He will come forth to the air to rapture His Church.

Then, after a period of at least seven years, He is coming again in glory and in power to redeem the godly remnant of Israel. At the time, every eye shall see Him; they that pierced Him shall see Him, and all the nations of the earth shall wail because of Him (see Revelation 1:7). That will be the crowning day.

Our Lord is now rejected, and by the world disowned; by the many still neglected, but by the few enthroned.

Then, however, He'll come in power - the hour is drawing nigh.

Oh, the crowning day is coming, by and by!

And isn't it wonderful to think that we, who are His people, will share His glory? And we will rejoice as we've never rejoiced before and appreciate as we have never appreciated before - the glories, the beauties and the worth of that One whom we are privileged to call our Savior.

Now, while Isaiah 52:13-15 deals with His ultimate exaltation, here is what it says: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." This will not take place now, nor has it in the past; this exaltation is reserved for the future, and Isaiah 52:15 is also still future:

"So shall he sprinkle (or startle) many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which they had not been told they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall consider."

I want to leave the future aspect of the coming of our Lord and His ultimate exaltation to a future date. What I want to engage your minds in at this time is Isaiah 52:14, which talks about His humiliation. "As many as were astounded, or astonished, at thee;" or to put it just a little more plainly, because the language of that verse is difficult, "many were astonished at thee." In His lifetime, many were astonished at Him. Even today, there are among His people those who are astonished at Him. One of the things that make them astonished is that His visage was so marred. It was marred more than any other man, and His form more than the sons of men.

The Humiliation of Christ

Philippians 2 would be the Scripture that would bring us very close to the humiliation of our Lord Jesus, "Who

being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." I am amongst those who believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is God; not only the Son of God, but is God. There are many people today who do not believe this, but thank God that the Scriptures declare that our Lord Jesus is God.

Paul says that, "He was in the form of God and thought it not a thing to be grasped after to be equal with God." Thank God for the eternal deity of His Son and thank God that Christ is equal with the Father and with the Spirit. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, my Jesus; what a wonderful Savior to me! This One who was God, divested Himself of His glory, emptied Himself into a body of human flesh, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

The Mystery of Our Lord

My wife, Lily, reminded me this morning as we were just sitting contemplating the Scriptures, that they despised the Lord because, "He made Himself to be the Son of God." He never made Himself to be the Son of God, because He was the Son of God, but He made Himself of no reputation. He took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became "obedient unto death." Now if Paul had stopped there, we could have understood it, but he didn't; he said He not only died, but He died a shameful death, "even the death of a cross."

Here, in this most profound portion of God's Word, we have the fact of perfect God. He was God, and then He became perfect Man. Oh, what a combination, and oh, the beautiful blend of humanity and deity that we can

see in this perfect servant of God. This was the One, my dear friends, of whom the prophet spoke when he said, "His visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." These are profound words. I don't even know if I have yet grasped the full meaning that is involved in these words. It is a mystery.

For instance, Paul says in writing to young Timothy, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." Let us think of this for a moment, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." Do our finite minds comprehend his infinite truth? That little seed, an embryo, that was placed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, was God - yes, God! That little baby that developed and that little baby that was born was God. That little baby that was laid in an animal's feeding trough was God, manifest in flesh - a mystery, an unfathomable mystery.

Great is the mystery of godliness, and do you know, great is the mystery of the marring of the visage and form of the Lord Jesus. His visage was so marred, more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. What does this actually mean? Oh, that we could grasp some of it and appreciate it!

The Suffering of Christ

There is a verse in Peter where it speaks about our Lord Jesus saying, "Unto you which believe He is precious." Now I understand, from those better informed than I, that what that means is this: that unto you who believe He is the preciousness, He is the very essence of preciousness; nothing is more precious, because Christ is the preciousness of God. The same thought is carried in this verse, "His visage was so marred more than any

man and his form more than the sons of men.” This speaks of perfect disfigurement.

The other day I was called into the hospital, a local hospital, to visit some young people who had been involved in a car accident. I saw a young boy there, eighteen years of age, and he was disfigured. He was disfigured if anyone was disfigured, but he was not the most disfigured man who had ever lived. The thought here is that our Lord Jesus Christ was the embodiment of disfigurement itself.

No one was ever disfigured the way our Lord Jesus was disfigured. In fact, His face and His whole appearance were so mutilated. The literal rendering of this verse is terrible: “So marred from the form of man was His aspect and His appearance was not that of a son of man.” When man was finished, our Lord Jesus was not recognizable as a man...as a human being.

Oh, it is a mystery, that our Lord Jesus allowed Himself to be taken and treated so. This mystery deepens, brethren and sisters, when I think of the words of our Savior. He says to His Father, “A body has Thou prepared me, a body has Thou prepared me.” That body He lived in was given to Him by God. It was a prepared body. And it makes it all the sadder to me when I think that the body that was prepared for Him and given to Him by His Father, God, was marred and scarred beyond recognition.

On the Way to Calvary

Let us look at some of the experiences of our Lord just prior to His crucifixion: This morning during our first meeting, one of the brethren mentioned it in prayer - the

solemnity of Christ when He gathered his disciples together to celebrate the Passover. I don't know if you have ever thought about this. The Lord intimately knew the symbolic meaning of the Passover. He not only looked back, but He also looked forward into the immediate future and He saw Himself as the Passover; despite the symbolism, however, He celebrated the Passover with His disciples. I'm not sure if immediately following that or sometime later, He took a loaf of bread from the table and said to them, "This bread is a symbol of my body." Now, the Lord knew the Scriptures better than any living man at that time and three times over He said to His disciples, "I will go to Jerusalem and I will suffer all that the prophets have spoken concerning Me." And He took the bread, broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying, "This is my body."

Can you imagine the thoughts that were going through our Lord's mind when He did this? Even before Calvary, brethren and sisters, the Lord was no stranger to Calvary. In fact, would it startle any of you if I were to say that Calvary was enacted in Heaven long before the foundation of the world was laid? Peter said, "He was a lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world." Therefore, the Lord knew what was about to befall Him.

Then He took the cup. In the cup there was the wine and He said, "This is my blood, drink ye all of it." "My blood," the Savior said. He could see Himself hanging on the Cross, and His blood flowing from His veins, and He said, "This is my body and this is my blood."

In the Garden of Gethsemane

Let us go to Mark 14 to illustrate the suffering of our Lord:

“And they came to a place which was called Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, ‘Sit ye here, while I shall pray.’ And He took with Him Peter, James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and to be very depressed.”

Now I want you to try and picture in your mind our Lord’s suffering as a man. He is suffering as a man, and as He contemplated the Cross he began to be greatly amazed and to be very depressed. There evidently were obvious changes. Peter, James and John saw those changes. As He looked them He said, “My souls is exceeding sorrowful unto death.”

I suppose that many of us, for many years at least, have always thought of the sufferings of our Lord Jesus as physical. If that has been our concept, it’s a very limited concept. Our Lord Jesus’ sufferings were not only physical, but they were spiritual. And here He says, “It is my soul that’s being poured out, it is my soul that is exceeding sorrowful unto death. Then He left them and went forward a little into the garden and fell on the ground.

Now, I understand that the word used describes Him falling repeatedly on the ground. Our Lord Jesus was so crushed, in His soul and in His spirit, that it affected His physical condition and when He left those three favored disciples and went a little further into the garden, He staggered and He fell repeatedly on the ground and He prayed, saying, “Father, if it be possible that the hour might pass from Me.” These are startling words.

Here was our Lord in the crisis; the hour that He had come for is almost upon Him. As a man, He shrank from it and He looked up into the face of His Father and these

sublime words came to His soul, "Abba Father, all things are possible to Thee; take away this cup from Me, nevertheless not My will, but what Thou wilt." When I was growing up over in Scotland, we many times sang that beautiful hymn we often sing here. "Abba, Father, we approach Thee in the Savior's name so dear." I used to think that "Abba Father" was just one word, but it is Abba, comma, Father - two different words altogether.

Finally, He was appealing to God, His Father, and saying, "Father if it were possible." He changed His attitude and using an endearing term said, "Abba." Oh, the appeal that was in the words of the Lord. Oh, the intimacy that exists between His Father and He. And He cried, "Abba, Father."

Have any of you, mothers and fathers, had the ordeal of standing beside the hospital bed of one of your little ones, wracked in fever, eyes burning, and cheeks aflame? Then looking into your face, they haven't said, "Father" or "Mother." Instead, they've said, "Daddy and Mommy, help me," but you couldn't help them. You couldn't help them even though your heart was thrilled as they said, "Daddy" or "Mommy." Your heart was broken, because you couldn't help them. That is exactly how God felt and the position that God was in when Christ said, "Abba, Father, help me." I am glad He didn't help Him, because God could not have helped us if He had.

After our Lord had gone through that terrible, terrible experience, He left the garden where He was and went out to His disciples. Oh, how He needed the support. He needed comfort, and what did He find? They were sleeping. They didn't care. They didn't understand. Even

the man who said, "Though all men forsake You, yet will not I forsake You, if all men run and leave You, I'll give my life for You." And here he is, lying asleep.

After the Lord had awakened them, He went back into the garden again and Mark says that He prayed the same prayer and went through the same experiences. And He came back for comfort, for help, and support, and He found them sleeping again. And He went into the Garden for the third time and perhaps at this point in the story is what happened as accounted for by the physician, Luke. Luke says, "His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Oh, oh, the anguish! Not only physical anguish, but oh, the anguish of the soul that was our Lord Jesus Christ's portion!

"Gethsemane can I forget, or there thy conflict see;
Thine agony and bloodlike sweat, and not remember
Thee."

Then when He went back to His disciples the third time, He said, "It's over now. I've gotten the victory. I'm ready now for the cross." Then He says, "Behold, the hand of him who betrays me is at hand." And Judas came to that blessed Son of God and kissed Him and he kissed Him again, and he kissed Him repeatedly in an outward show of affection and love. Then they bound Jesus and led Him away.

The Pains of the Cross

There are some writers and artists who would have us think that our Lord Jesus was dragged or pushed along. That is not so. Isaiah says, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Led - isn't that beautiful? Led, as a lamb to

the slaughter. And then it was that the brutalities began to come His way. He was beaten. The soldiers buffeted Him, they mobbed Him, and they scoffed Him. He suffered every indignity that it was possible to heap upon Him. He was lashed, and the Roman jailer with the Roman lash speared the flesh from off His back. And there came into focus the words of the prophet, seven hundred years before, "I gave my back to the smiters, I gave my back to the smiters. They made long their furrows on my back." And then the prophet said, "They plucked off the hair, they plucked off the hair."

Now, we've all had the experience of having a hair growing in a very inopportune place and we take a pair of tweezers and we pull that hair out—that's not the thought here. Our Lord had a beard and they took that beard in their hands and pulled it off His face and left him mutilated and bleeding, and into these wounds they poured their vile spittle. That's the picture that the prophet is bringing before us here.

Is there any wonder why the Psalmist in the 22nd Psalm wrote such meaningful words concerning our Lord, "I am a worm and no man?" This means, "I am a worm and not a man," if we put it in our own language today. That was how our Lord Jesus felt and that was what He was saying according to the Psalmist - He was no longer a man. He was a worm...rejected.

For those of us who do a little gardening: when we turn over the soil and uncover the form of a worm, how repulsed are we at that loathsome little creature? We wouldn't touch it for a pension. It is one of the lowest forms of life on the planet. The Lord Jesus prophetically

said, "I have become a reproach of men." He became a worm, as far as men were concerned.

Conclusion

Now can you see the eyes of Him about whom we are speaking? Can you picture the fact that He was marred more than any other? Can you see the form that was so marred that it was not even recognizable as a human being? With this picture in our mind let me remind you of a scripture in the Old Testament. It says, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." (Lamentations 1:12)

Does this touch your heart? My dear brother, my dear sister, I believe that you'll never be the same again, so far as God is concerned, after having listened to the sufferings, or part of the sufferings, of our Lord Jesus. It will have an effect upon you that our Lord Jesus loved you so—loved me so—

His the wounds, the curse, the gall;

His the stripes, He bore them all;

His the dying, cry of pain;

When our sins, He did sustain.

And if there should be an unsaved one in our midst this morning, let me remind you -

When I survey the wondrous cross,

On which the Prince of Glory died;

My richest gain I count but loss,

And pour contempt on all my pride.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did ere such love and sorrow meet.
Or thorns compose so rich a crown.
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine.
Shall have my heart, my life, my all.

Paper on Isaiah 53

Introduction

There are many who believe that Isaiah 53 begins in the previous chapter at Isaiah 52:13. The assumption is not without good reason. It was not until the year 1207 A.D. that the Bible was divided up into chapters. A very famous English archbishop, Steven Langton, did this. He was the man who prepared the "Magna Carta." Three hundred and fifty years later, this printer, called Robert Stevens, divided the chapters into verses. This is why we have the Bible in its present form. All of God's true servants believe in the inspired Word of God, but they do not believe that the divisions made by these two well-meaning men were inspired. Our present reading is an example of this. Surely Isaiah 52:13-15 is introductory to and belongs to chapter 53.

The Suffering Servant

The subject we wish to consider in these verses is Jehovah's Servant or "Jehovah's Suffering Servant."

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Note the three words in Isaiah 52:13, "Behold, my Servant." In these words, God, through the prophet, is directing our attention to gaze earnestly upon "His

Suffering Servant.” In Isaiah there are at least four portraits of Christ as the, Servant of God. It is not my intention to discuss these at this time. I want to confine our thoughts to the words of the prophet in Isaiah 52:13, “Behold, my Servant.”

There is a twofold view given in the Scripture regarding Christ as “God’s Servant.” On the one hand, He is presented as being weak or meek, and being despised, rejected and slain. On the other hand, He is presented to us as a Mighty Conqueror taking vengeance on the nations of the world, and also, in His infinite wisdom and strength, restoring Israel to her pristine glory. The former events would refer to His first advent, the latter to His second advent.

Isaiah 52:13-15 tells us of both of these advents. It is thrilling to think that Christ is exalted and will return. When He comes, He will reign over the earth for 1,000 years. He will reign prudently or wisely. He will reign well. He shall be exalted, extolled and made very high. This description fits the prophet’s utterance in chapter 53:10, “the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”

Christ, Humbled and Exalted

Before we go on to consider the humiliation and sufferings of the Lord, not only at the hands of cruel men, but at the hand of Almighty God, it is fitting to remind ourselves that, the Blessed One who was humiliated so, is now seated in glory on God’s right hand. One day soon, He will come in the air, and rapture His Church; then after a period of at least seven years, He will come to the earth in power and glory to redeem the godly remnant of Israel and the redeemed of the

Tribulation. At this time, “every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him; and all the nations of the earth shall wail because of Him.” See Revelation 1:7. That will be the crowning day for the Lord.

The hymn-writer said:

“Our Lord is now rejected, and by the world disowned,
By the many still neglected, but by the few enthroned.
But then He’ll come in power; the hour is drawing nigh,
The crowning day is coming by and by.”

It is wonderful to think that we, who are His people, will share His glory; we will appreciate and rejoice, as never before, in the glories, excellencies, and worth of the One whom we are privileged to call Savior.

It is clearly seen that Isaiah 52:13-15 deal with Christ’s ultimate exaltation. “Behold, My servant shall deal prudently. He shall be exalted, extolled, and be very high.” This final exaltation is reserved for the future. The truth expressed also in Isaiah 52:15 is still future:

“So shall He sprinkle (or startle) many nations; the king shall shut their mouth at Him: for that which they had not been told they shall see; and that which they had not heard they shall consider.”

I want to leave the future aspect of the coming of the Lord and His ultimate exaltation to a future chapter. What I want to engage our minds with at this time is Isaiah 52:14, which speaks about His humiliation. “As many as were astounded at Thee,” or “astonished at Thee.” During His lifetime, many were astonished at Him. He was a mystery; no one, not even His disciples understood Him. Even today, there are those of His own

people who are astonished at Him, especially when they consider that, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."

Let us now consider His humiliation: Philippians 2 brings us very close to the fact of the Lord's humiliation. First of all, Paul describes Him in His unexcelled glory, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." I believe in the deity of Christ. The Scriptures declare that Christ was God. Our verse says that, "He was in the form of God, and thought it not a thing to be grasped after to be equal with God." The inference here is that He was God, co-equal and co-eternal. Thank God for the clear teaching on the eternal sonship and deity of Christ.

This One, who is God, divested Himself of His personal glory, and "emptied Himself into a body of human flesh, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The Lord was rejected because "He made Himself the Son of God." The Lord did not "make Himself" the Son of God. He was the Son of God. He did "make Himself of no reputation, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." Not just a natural death, a most unnatural one—"the death of the cross." In this profound portion of the Word we have the fact that though He was perfect God, He became perfect man. What a beautiful blend of deity and humanity we see in God's perfect Servant.

This was the One of whom the prophet spoke, "His visage was marred more than any man's, and His form more than the son's men." (Isaiah 52:14) These are profound words. How can we finite beings grasp this

meaning? It is a mystery how our Lord was mutilated so. Oh, that we could appreciate it!

These verses speak of a perfect disfiguration—if there is such a thing. No one was ever disfigured the way our Lord was disfigured. It was absolute. His face and His whole appearance were so mutilated that when men were finished beating Him, He was not recognizable as a man. It is a great mystery that the Lord Jesus allowed Himself to be treated so.

This mystery deepens when we consider the words of our Savior, “A body Thou hast prepared Me.” The body He lived in was given to Him by God. It was a prepared body. And it makes it all the sadder to think that the body that was prepared for Him, and given to Him by His Father, was marred and scarred beyond recognition. The disfiguration is further emphasized when contrasted with His transfiguration on the mount. There we see His glory; here we see His abject humiliation.

The Suffering of Christ

Let us now look at some of the actual experiences of our Lord prior to His crucifixion. Consider the pathos that must have gripped His heart as He gathered with His disciples to celebrate the Passover. The Lord knew exactly the symbolic meaning of this feast. He not only looked backward to its institution, but also looked forward and saw Himself as the true Passover Lamb. His must have been a harrowing experience.

After celebrating the Passover, He took a loaf of bread from the table and said to His disciples, “This bread is a symbol of my body.” The Lord knew the Scriptures better than any living man. He had said to His disciples at least three times previously, “I am going to Jerusalem,

and will suffer all that the prophets have spoken concerning Me.” After returning thanks, He broke the bread and gave it to His disciples, and said, “This is my body.”

Can you imagine the thoughts that were going through the Lord’s mind when He did this? Even before Calvary, He was no stranger to the awfulness of it. In fact, Calvary was enacted in Heaven long before the foundations of the world were laid. Peter said, “He was a lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world.” Therefore the Lord knew what was about to befall Him. Then He took the cup in which was the wine, and He said, “This is my blood, drink ye all of it.” “My blood [...] My body,” the Savior said. He could see Himself hanging on a cross, the blood flowing from His veins.

To further emphasize the Lord’s deep suffering before the cross, look at Mark 14:32-34:

“And they came to a place which was called Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, ‘Sit ye here, while I shall pray,’ and He took with Him Peter, James and John and began to be greatly amazed, and to be very depressed.”

Try and picture in your mind our Lord’s suffering as a man as He contemplated the Cross. “He began to be greatly troubled and to be very distressed.” Due to the overwhelming pressure of immediate events, there evidently were obvious physical changes in our Lord’s appearance. Peter, James and John saw these changes. Though enveloped in horror and anguish He looked at them and said, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death.” Our Lord’s sufferings were not only physical, but

also spiritual and soul sufferings. Note: He says here, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death."

At this point, He left them and went a little further into the Garden, where He fell on the ground. The word "fell" carries with it the thought of "falling repeatedly" on the ground. The Lord was so crushed in His soul and in His spirit, that His physical frame and strength were inadequate to support Him. Can you visualize the Lord staggering into the Garden, falling repeatedly, and while in that prostrate position praying, "if it were possible, that the hour might pass from Him?" These are startling words. Here was our Lord in the supreme crisis of His purpose on earth. The hour that He had come for is almost upon Him. As a man, He shrank from it, and He looked up into the face of His Father and pleaded, "Abba, Father all things are possible unto Thee. Take away this cup from Me; Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." - Mark 14:36

The titles that the Lord used in addressing God are interesting. Firstly, the Lord appealed to God as His Father, saying, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." He is appealing from the strongest human relationship, that of a son to a father, and evoking the help of omnipotence saying, "all things are possible to Thee." Then, our Lord uses the very intimate term "Abba." This is an endearing word that infants used. It would equate with our word "Daddy." When uttered, it conveys the idea of unreasoning trust. There was never an appeal like this made to a father, and furthermore, one met with such an instant response. Abba, though omnipotent, was powerless on this occasion. God's heart must have been well nigh broken as He anticipated His Son being plunged into the vortex of His wrath.

You may be better able to understand this if you have stood beside the bed of one of your little ones, wracked in fever, eyes burning, cheeks aflame and as they have looked appealingly into your face, they gasp out with complete abandon, "Daddy, help me." However, you couldn't help them, even though your heart was stirred and burning tears fell profusely. "Help me, Daddy!" Even though your heart was well nigh broken, you could not help them. That is exactly how God felt when Christ appealed in the most intimate term, "Abba, Father let this hour pass from Me." "Take away this cup from Me." We should be eternally grateful to God, our Father, that He didn't help Him, because if He had delivered Christ, we would have been eternally lost.

After the Lord had gone through that terrible experience, He made His way back to His disciples. How He needed the support and comfort of His own at this time. But alas, He found them sleeping! They were unconcerned. They did not appreciate His awful struggle. They did not understand. Even Peter, who a few hours previously had vehemently declared, "Though all men forsake You, yet will not I forsake You." The Lord needed him at this time, but he, along with James and John, was lying asleep.

After the Lord had wakened them, He went back into the Garden. Mark says that He prayed the same prayer, and went through the same experiences. Once again he came back to His disciples for comfort, help, and support, and He found them sleeping again. He then went into the Garden for the third time and possibly at this point He had the experience as recorded by Luke the physician. "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Oh, the anguish of

the Lord, not only physical, but also of the soul. Can any one of us fathom or understand the depths of the suffering of “God’s Suffering Servant?”

In my duty as a medical orderly, while a P.O.W. with the Japanese, I saw many men die. Some were too weak to protest their going. Others fought to their last breath. Some struggled bravely, calling desperately for help. Beads of sweat stood out on their foreheads - their bodies were drenched in perspiration. Despite their fierce struggles I never saw any of them sweat drops of blood. Christ’s suffering cannot be measured in terms of human pain. Blessed Savior!

When He went back to His disciples the third time He said to them, “Sleep on now and take your rest. The hour is come; behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand.” Mark 14:41-42

Immediately after Jesus had spoken these words to His disciples Judas came leading a large group armed with swords and clubs. Between them they had arranged a sign. “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He; take Him and lead Him away safely.” As the multitude approached, Judas made straight for Jesus and said, “Master, master,” and kissed Him. The thought here is that Judas kissed the Lord repeatedly. What an open show of affection - what a hypocrite. This is the only time that we read of Christ being kissed on the cheek, and to think it was by a traitor.

At this point, they took Him and led Him away. He may have been buffeted on the way, but He was not as one unwilling, pushed or dragged. “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter” (see Isaiah 53:7). From this point on He

was the object of derision. He was mocked and jeered at. He was brutally beaten. The soldiers mocked Him, mobbed Him and scoffed at Him. He suffered every indignity that was possible to heap upon Him. The merciless Roman soldier lashed him; with his whip he tore the flesh from the back of the Lord. With this terrible treatment there came into focus the words of the prophet hundreds of years before, "I gave my back to the smiters." The prophet also said that the Suffering Servant would give His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and that He would not hide His face from shame and spitting (see Isaiah 50:6).

These predictions are awesome! Cruel soldiers grasped handfuls of our Lord's beard and pulled it from His face, leaving it mutilated and bleeding. Into these open wounds they poured their vile spittle. That's the picture the Spirit is bringing before us here. Is there any wonder why the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 22 such meaningful words concerning our Lord, "I am a worm and not a man?" The Psalmist depicts the Lord as feeling like a worm, loathed, despised and rejected. The worm is one of the lowest forms of life on our planet. We are repulsed by its looks, and certainly would never think of touching it. The Lord Jesus became a reproach of men. He was utterly rejected and despised.

Now, getting back to our text, can you see with the eye of faith, the "face that was marred more than any man's?" Can you see the "form that was so marred that it was not recognizable as a human being?" With this picture in your mind, let me remind you of the Scripture which says, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my

sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day
of his fierce anger." Lam. 1:12

Dear brother and sister, do the sufferings of Christ touch
your heart?

How greatly Jesus must have loved you!

"His, the wounds, the curse, the gall;

His, the stripes, He bore them all;

His, the dying cry of pain;

When our sins He did sustain."

As the Spirit humbles our heart and anoints our eyes,
may our hearts respond in complete surrender.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were an offering far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine,

Shall have my heart, my life, my all."