**Isaiah 53:10-12** 10Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and allow him to suffer. Because you made his life a guilt offering, he will see offspring. He will prolong his days, and the Lord’s gracious plan will succeed in his hand. 11After his soul experiences anguish, he will see the light of life. He will provide satisfaction. Through their knowledge of him, my just servant will justify the many, for he himself carried their guilt. 12Therefore I will give him an allotment among the great, and with the strong he will share plunder, because he poured out his life to death, and he let himself be counted with rebellious sinners. He himself carried the sin of many, and he intercedes for the rebels.

One of the principals of our Lutheran faith is the idea: Scripture interprets Scripture. The text before us presents a great example of exactly what that is all about. We have before us the great text of Isaiah and the “Suffering Servant” verses. Now, if there is no other information, you can virtually interpret or understand those verses in any way you want. But here is the lesson that God’s Word gives us.

In the book of Acts is the history of Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Phillip was directed by the Holy Spirit to be on this road and then directed to be by the chariot that was on the road. It turns out the Ethiopian man was reading from the book of Isaiah, you guessed it, Isaiah 53, specifically 53, verses 7-8. Here is what the Ethiopian man asks: **“Who is the prophet talking about—himself or someone else?”**

And here is the response to that question. **“Then Philip began to speak. Starting with that very passage of Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus.”**

That is “Scripture interprets Scripture!” You don’t guess, speculate or make up something that you think fits. You consult with God’s Word. You ask, “What does God say of this?” Exactly what the Ethiopian did. What does he learn? That the section of God’s Word he was reading, the entire chapter of Isaiah 53 actually, is about Jesus. You cannot decide to interpret it differently. You can’t ignore these words and the information they give. It is clear that God’s Word says that this prophecy of Isaiah is about Jesus. This is what Jesus will do and accomplish. To do anything else but what God’s Word says is to deny and cast aside the truth of God and his Word. Really it is to deny the very marvel of God.

Or we could take the words of 1 Peter 2:22-25. You cannot read the words of 1Peter and not grasp that he is paraphrasing and using the lesson of Isaiah 53 in speaking of Jesus. Peter, under inspiration says, **“He did not commit a sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was insulted, he did not insult in return. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself carried our sins in his body on the tree so that we would be dead to sins and alive to righteousness. By his wounds you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray.”**

There are so many examples of how “Scripture interprets Scripture.” In a nutshell the premise says that you can’t interpret a section of Scripture contrary to what the rest of Scripture says. So you can’t say that Jesus is going to come and rule the earth for a 1,000 years when Scripture clearly says he is not going to be an earthly ruler. You can’t say Mary is a co-mediatrix when Scripture says that Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. You can’t deny the existence of hell when Scripture, including quoting Jesus, clearly teaches that it is real. What you teach must be in alignment with everything that Scripture says.

Let’s you and I then look at these section of Isaiah’s great prophecy concerning the Lord’s servant. Our theme will be: **JESUS, OUR SAVIOR.**

Now I will tell you that Isaiah’s words concerning this servant of the Lord are very repetitious. As you look at just the verses before us it is clear you can see a few thoughts that are simply repeated and then repeated again. In other words, God wants to make sure you hear the lessons. God is emphasizing for us exactly what is important. Should I try to boil down the important lessons found here I would tell you that they are as follows: God’s servant dies on your behalf. God’s servant lives despite his death. God’s servant is your Savior. Let’s look closer at each one of those lessons found in our words.

The first lesson I summed up with the words: God’s servant dies on your behalf. Now consider these verses from our section. Verse 10: **“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and allow him to suffer.”** Verse 11, **“…his soul experiences anguish…for he himself carried their guilt.”** Verse 12, **“He poured out his life to death and let himself be counted with the rebellious sinners.”**

What do we learn in these verses of Jesus? Let’s put it all together. The Lord’s servant is going to be counted with rebellious sinners. The Lord’s servant is going to experience anguish, suffering and death. The Lord’s servant is going to do this because God our Father desired it, because by all of this the servant of the Lord is going to carry our guilt.

I can tell you this, there is only one person in the entire history of the world that fits these words. Jesus is the Lord’s servant, born of a virgin, born under the law to redeem those under the law. Jesus, along with genuine criminals, goes to the cross not by accident or chance, but rather because the plan of God is that his servant, his Son, is going to suffer and die for the sins of the entire world. His suffering, anguish, and death will pay for sins.

Dear people, these are the words of Isaiah. The accepted date for Isaiah’s life and beginning ministry is 740 B.C. That’s right, 740 years before Jesus is ever born and 770 years before Jesus began his ministry. And yet Isaiah’s words capture exactly what happened and more important, why! Let’s look further.

The next lesson found in these words is, God’s servant lives despite his death. Again, let’s look at what this section declares. Verse 10, **“Because you made his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring. He will prolong his days.”** Verse 11, **“After his soul experiences anguish, he will see the light of life.”** And verse 12, a bit more subtle, **“Therefore, I will give him an allotment with the great, and with the strong he will share plunder.”**

Again, as you look at these words it is clear that Jesus is the only one in the entire history of the world who fits. Remember these verses tell us the servant dies or as in the verse I quote here, we are told that the servant is going to be a guilt offering. As far as I know, all guilt offerings brought before the Lord in the Old Testament system were killed and their blood sprinkled about symbolizing sins forgiven. Jesus is that guilt offering. He dies for the sake of sins and yet as our verses clearly indicate something wonderful and unique will happen after this death takes place. What happens is that the servant is brought back to life. What happens is that the servant becomes eternal and everlasting, the servant becomes great and powerful and even shares his plunder, his winnings with those around him.

Yep, this is Jesus. I can only begin to imagine the anguish of the disciples of Jesus as finally Jesus breathed his last and died on the cross. It was not pretend. The Roman soldiers commissioned to take him down from the cross, needing to verify his death did what any knowing soldier would do, they thrust a spear into the side of Jesus, aiming right for the heart. You don’t fake death through that. Then they laid him in the grave, the grave of the rich man who let’s Jesus be buried in his new tomb. This tomb will not hold Jesus. On the third day, exactly as promised by the Word of God, Jesus miraculously and powerfully comes back to life. The ladies are witnesses. The disciples are witnesses. We are told a whole group of 500 people were witnesses to the living Jesus. Finally even the Apostle Paul, years later, would become a witness to the living Jesus. Jesus Christ truly has come back to life.

It is this resurrection of Jesus that really seals it all as true. The one absolutely marvelous sign of the Son of God and our Savior is that resurrection. You see, others can claim to be the Christ, the messenger of God. Others can claim to be able to atone for your sins and to find you the favor of the Father whom they say they intimately know. People can claim miracles about almost anything they want and many people of this world will believe them. But God says, “Here is the show stopper, here is the one thing to seal the deal.” The Christ will suffer and die and on the third day the Christ will come back to life.

Just so you know, in my lifetime I can tell you these things. The Swami that the Beatles of Rock and Roll fame followed was a man who declared himself the Christ. He died. He is still dead. Jim Jones of Guiana fame, claimed that he was the Christ. He died. He is still dead. The same for David Koresh of Waco, TX fame. He died. Yep, he is still dead! Dear people, Jesus died. And Jesus came back to life. His resurrection was actually attested to by hundreds. Jesus appeared again and again for 40 days after Easter to clearly let us all know He is alive. And then, only after sufficient and verifiable witnesses were established, did Jesus ascend into heaven to begin his eternal rule over all things for the Father. Jesus died and came back to life for eternity. That is a fact.

And if you would, for those of you who might be reading or watching this message, let me reiterate one absolute truth you must pay attention to. If your church denies the actual and physical resurrection of Jesus, RUN! Find another church, find a church that teaches God’s truth and wonder and not the falsehoods of man. I say all of this simply because of what 1 Corinthians 15 says and let me quote, **“Now if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how is it that some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is pointless, and your faith is pointless too.”** Without the teaching of the factual and physical resurrection of Jesus you have nothing. Jesus is nothing. The Bible is nothing. Your faith and church is nothing. But be careful for this section also reminds us very strongly, **“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead!”**

Add to this marvel that Jesus has been raised in exact accord with the promises and prophecies of the Bible. Isaiah, great prophet of God, tells us to watch for the resurrection and then to know that this one brought back to life is indeed “The servant of the Lord.”

That brings us then to the last point and lesson of the servant. I called it, The Servant is your Savior. We can see this truth in the words of Isaiah. Verse 10, **“Because you made his life a guilt offering…the Lord’s gracious plan will succeed in his hand.”** Verse 11, **“He will see the light of life. He will provide satisfaction. Through their knowledge of him, my just servant will justify many.”** Verse 12, **“He himself carried the sin of many, and he intercedes for the rebels.”**

Again it is clear that what is prophesied here is exactly what is taught about Jesus. We are told Jesus went to the cross for our sins. 2 Cor. 5:21 tells us, **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** 1 John 1:7 tells us, **“The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”** Gal. 3:13: **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”** Or Col. 2:13, **“When you were dead in sins…God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.”** We could go on and on with passages just like this. Passages that tell you what Jesus did for you. Passages that proclaim him Lord and Christ and Savior from all sin.

But the most wonderful thing about Jesus is that we are told that just because we believe in Jesus we are forgiven and given eternal life and salvation. This is the wonder of Jesus that is almost too good to be true. And yet look at what Isaiah said, **“Through their knowledge of him, my just servant will justify many.”** There it is. Just grasping the wonder of Jesus, grasping that he is God’s Son who paid the price for your sins, just that simple grasp of Jesus is enough for you to be declared “justified.” That means that before God we are counted as innocent. There are no charges of sin or rebellion against us. We are forgiven and we are thus counted as righteous and holy before the Lord. Not because of anything we do but rather because of what Jesus has done. How true it is that Jesus has justified many. All who believe in Jesus are truly and wonderfully saved.

There you go. That is Scripture interpreting Scripture. That is how you work at grasping and understanding the wonder of God. You let God tell you what he has said. Everything we need to know is found revealed and unsealed in God’s Holy Word. May you rejoice in our God and Lord who has sent his Son to be our Savior! Amen.