

October 1, 2006

“Revive Us, O Lord.” (Part 3: “What is the Message of Revival?”)

Isaiah 52: 13 -53:12

Based on *The Heart of Revival* by Nicky Gumbel

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What is Revival?: The outpouring of God’s Spirit, renewing, refreshing, reviving faith and changing individuals, churches, and society.

What is the Heart of Revival?: The love of God. God loves us unconditionally, wholeheartedly, and continually. Love is His motive for wanting to revive us.

(Today) What is the Message of Revival?

Isa 52:13-53:12 NLT

See, my servant will prosper; he will be highly exalted. 14 Many were amazed when they saw him--beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know he was a person. 15 And he will again startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence. For they will see what they had not previously been told about; they will understand what they had not heard about.

Isaiah 53

Who has believed our message? To whom will the LORD reveal his saving power? 2 My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. 3 He was despised and rejected--a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

4 Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! 5 But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! 6 All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.

7 He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 8 From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people realized that he was dying for their sins--that he was suffering their punishment? 9 He had done no wrong, and he never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

10 But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and fill him with grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have a multitude of children, many heirs. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's plan will prosper in his hands. 11 When he sees all that

is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. 12 I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.

When I was a new Christian I met a man who was a Jewish –Believer (Jewish-Christian). This was something new to me and I was intrigued that a Jewish man believed in Jesus - believe that Jesus was the Messiah the Jews were promised and waiting for. I asked him how his faith in Jesus came about. He told me that Christian friends would witness to him about Jesus all the time. He didn't mind, as a matter of fact, he rather enjoyed getting into debates with them. One night someone read this passage to him, then asked, "Do you know who this is talking about?" He said, "Yes, it's obvious that it is talking about Jesus." Then he was handed the Bible his friend read from and was shocked to see that the passage was from Isaiah in the OT. It was this section of Isaiah that caused him to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and he received him as His Savior.

This chapter from the OT is the one most often quoted in the NT. One scholar (Joachim Jeremias) wrote that, "No other passage from the OT was as important to the Church as Isaiah 53."

In Acts 8 an Ethiopian financial official of great authority was reading from Isaiah out loud while sitting in his chariot. Philip heard him and asked if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian said he needed instruction and guidance and asked Philip to help him. He read this passage and asked who Isaiah was talking about. Then Philip, using this Scripture, told him the good news about Jesus.

In this passage we find the message of revival in five contrasts:

1. First Contrast: Apparent Failure and Actual success (52:13-15)

See, my servant will prosper; he will be highly exalted. 14 Many were amazed when they saw him--beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know he was a person. 15 And he will again startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence. For they will see what they had not previously been told about; they will understand what they had not heard about.

God is talking about His servant, whom we now know is His Son. He has always been the Son of God, yet He humbled Himself and came to earth to become a servant of all. V13 indicated that the servant will be highly exalted. The prophet seems to get a glimpse of the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Jesus. Isaiah also foretells Jesus' scourging and death. (v14) "Many were amazed when they saw Him – beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know He was a person." NIV: "His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness..." (I think of the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, and how realistic and horrible the torture and death of Jesus was portrayed – The bruising of His face and the thorns in His head, His body ripped up from the scourging, His hands and feet pierced

and stabbed in His side with a spear.) His friends deserted Him and others mocked Him. They said, “He could save others, but He couldn’t save Himself.” The death of Jesus appeared as His weakness and failure, instead He was finally elevated back to glory. V15 tells us (AMP): “So shall He startle and sprinkle many nations...” The Israelites would sprinkle the blood of sacrificed animals in a ritual of purification and cleansing from sin. In the same way, the death of Jesus was a sacrifice made in order to cleanse and purify us from sin. The big difference is that the sacrifice of Jesus removed our sin forever, something the blood of animals could not do. Heb 9:13-14 NIV: “The blood of goats and bulls... sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ... cleanse our consciences... so that we may serve the living God!”

So here in these verses we see a contrast between suffering and honor, sadness and joy - of apparent failure and actual success. With God apparent failure may actually be success. Those who humble themselves will be exalted.

2. Second Contrast: Our View and God’s View (53: 1-3)

Who has believed our message? To whom will the LORD reveal his saving power? 2 My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. 3 He was despised and rejected--a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

The people of Israel thought that God’s Messiah would be a great political and kingly figure. When they saw Jesus’ suffering they misunderstood. “*Who has believed our message? To whom will the LORD reveal his saving power*” So often, even the people of God do not recognize the power of the Lord. In these verses we see a contrast between man’s view and God’s view. God sees His Servant/His Son “*like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground.*” But how did man see him? “*There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.*” The Bible does not give us a description of what Jesus looked like, but this verse tells us He was not especially attractive. Neither was He very impressive. “*He was despised and rejected--a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.*” He was despised and rejected and when He was crucified, people looked away. They were ashamed and embarrassed. Jesus is still often rejected by people He came to save. What a stark contrast between their view and God’s.

We now come to the center of chapter 53, but it is not only the center of the chapter it is central. Not only is it central to chapter 53, it is central to all of the Bible. It is central to life – to your life. All of life hinges on this verse.

3. Third Contrast: Our Sin and His Suffering (53: 4-6)

Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! 5 But he was

wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! 6 All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all. Why did the servant have to die? In biblical times people believed that a person suffered because they were being punished by God - as it says in v4b, "*And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins!*" Although there is a link between suffering and sin, it is not necessarily our sin that leads to our suffering. Here, the servant, Jesus, is indeed suffering but not for His own sin. Rather, this is the supreme example of the innocent suffering on behalf of the guilty. (v5) "*But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!*" His suffering was physical: He was wounded, crushed, beaten, and whipped. His suffering was emotional: (v4b) "*it was our sorrows that weighed him down.*" His suffering was also spiritual: (v5a) "*But he was wounded and crushed **for our sins.***"

So we see the contrast of our sin but *His* suffering. Jesus died instead of us, and His sufferings brought us peace and healing.

(Illustration) Jesus loved us so much that He died instead of us. (v6) "*All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.*" Jesus was exiled from God for us.

4. Forth Contrast: The Guilty and the Innocent (53: 7-9)

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 8 From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people realized that he was dying for their sins--that he was suffering their punishment? 9 He had done no wrong, and he never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

Jesus died voluntarily, it was undeserved, but He knew the importance of what He was doing. Look how accurate this prophecy is. (v7) "*He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.*" Peter wrote this about Jesus (1 Peter 2:23 NIV) "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

(from THE MESSAGE): "They called him (Jesus) every name in the book and he said nothing back. He suffered in silence, content to let God set things right."

When a man was crucified the only weapon he had to fight back with was his mouth. From the cross victims would curse and swear, like the thieves that were crucified with Jesus. Jesus' silence in the face of intense suffering amazed those who watched. Just as the prophet predicted, the servant of God, the Messiah, "...*was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word.*"

(v8) *“From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people realized that he was dying for their sins--that he was suffering their punishment? (Matt 27:26 - So Pilate ...ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to crucify him.) Jesus was put to death, but He was innocent, He died for our sins and suffered the punishment we deserved.*

(v9 – an unusual combination) *“He had done no wrong, and he never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.”* He did no wrong yet died and was buried like a criminal. But was put in a rich man's grave. Those who were crucified would normally be thrown into the Valley of Hinnom. It was used as the garbage dump for the city of Jerusalem. Not just garbage but dead animals and criminals were burned here. Fires continually smoldered, and smoke from the burning debris rose day and night. Hinnom thus became a graphic symbol of the place of eternal punishment called HELL. But the servant of God the Messiah would be put in a rich man's grave. Again we see the accuracy of this prophecy, for Jesus was put in a tomb owned by a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. (Matt 27:57-60) *“As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who was one of Jesus' followers, 58 went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. 59 Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long linen cloth. 60 He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock.”*

5. Fifth Contrast: Tragedy and Triumph (53: 10-12)

But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and fill him with grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have a multitude of children, many heirs. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's plan will prosper in his hands. 11 When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. 12 I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.

What looked like a defeat was in fact a victory. It was all part of God's plan. (v10a) *“But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and fill him with grief.”* So what makes this death a victory?

- a. (v10b) *“ Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have a multitude of children, many heirs.”* Millions would receive new life through His death.
- b. (v10c) *“He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's plan will prosper in his hands.”* The prophet foresees the resurrection of Jesus.
- c. (v11a) *“When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied.”* Jesus accomplished the work He set out to do. This is why on the cross He cried: “It is finished” (John 19:30). His death would allow us to know God and live in peace with God.
- d. (v11b) *“And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.”* Righteous is about having a right relationship with God (and with our

fellow human beings). The exile is over, our relationship with God is restored. Our sin has been dealt with by the work of Jesus. Our guilt is removed, death has been conquered because Jesus (v11c) *“will bear all their sins.”*

- e. (v12) *“I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.”* Jesus will be honored for He is mighty and great. Jesus lived in humility, but was raised in glory *“because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.”*

The message of revival is one of good news. It is a message of the suffering servant, Jesus, His death and resurrection. Without Jesus we would be lost. Revival comes when we understand what He has done, receive the benefits of what He has done, and respond by giving up our lives to His service.