

GOOD FRIDAY SERMON – PASTOR GREG
7.04.2023

GOOD FRIDAY. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2600 years ago the people of Israel were in disbelief and overcome with grief and suffering- their nation was no more, their Temple was no more and their king had been taken in chains to victorious Babylon. Where was God? Surely they cried out the words of Psalm 22: *My God, my God why have you forsaken us?* But God had not forsaken them- they had forsaken God. But God still promised hope and with that hope a future: HE would raise up someone to save them- a Messiah and the broken people of Israel began to put their trust in one who would be mighty in battle, destroy the enemies, restore the King and their nation would once again be powerful and successful. We all like success and we winners. Will the Broncos win the flag? Will our governments make Australia great once again? Will our children and grandchildren be better off than we are? Don't we all want our building here to be overflowing and successful? We all want to be winners.

But the promise that God gave to His people through the prophet Isaiah had mixed messages. At Christmas we heard of a shoot coming up from the stump of Jesse and the Spirit of the LORD will rest upon him and with his breath he will slay the wicked (Isaiah 7, 9, 11). But then there are prophecies which speak of One who would be a servant and one who would suffer:

Isaiah 42:1-4: *Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets.* Not quite the picture of a mighty Russel Crowe delivering the final blow is it?

Is 49:1-5: *Before I was born the LORD called me...He said to me, "you are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendour". But I said, "I have laboured to no purpose, I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. I am despised and abhorred by the nations.* Where is Mel Gibson when you want him?

Of course we know it is Jesus who is the Suffering Servant and we know his story but let us again hear a few words from our OT reading:

Is 50:6: *I offered my back to those who beat me...I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.*

Is 52, 53: *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering.*

He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.

He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we have been healed.

What are our transgressions? What are our iniquities? Why did we need healing?

We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us to his own way. Our confession of sins reveals this terrible truth: We confess that we are born in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have failed to do. We have not loved you with our whole heart and we have not loved our neighbours ourselves. We deserve your eternal punishment.

But eternal punishment is not what God wants for us and so He sent His one and only Son who willingly and knowingly paid the price to set us free: *the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of man and made intercession for the transgressors.*

He died so that we might live. The Eternal Son of God became one with us- for us and so we too will not die eternally but we will live-eternally through faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.