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Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53:3

Prayer: *Father God, we do praise you and thank you for the gift of your Son. And Lord, we are and have been spending a lot of time looking into just the aspect of the cross and the aspect of what it is that gift of your Son was all about. And so Father again as we are here in the servant songs of Isaiah, I pray that we would have the unction of your Holy Spirit, that we would have your presence, that we would have the ability to open up your word and learn anew just what a gift it is you've given us in your Son. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The Drudge Report this week featured an article, it was from Space.com and it said this, it was about alien life. This is from Palo Alto, California. It said: "The first detection of intelligent extraterrestrial life will likely come within the next quarter-century, a prominent alien hunter predicts. By 2040 or so, astronomers will have scanned enough star systems to give themselves a great shot of discovering alien-produced electromagnetic signals, said Seth Shostak of the SETI (Search for

Extraterrestrial Intelligence) Institute in Mountain View, California."

For years now, we have been desperately scanning the sky looking for signs that we're not alone, looking for any signs of extraterrestrial life. Of the hundreds of billions of stars that are out there, chances are that some of them contain alien life, I mean, that is how the thinking goes. The numbers of stars are so vast that it stretches credulity to imagine that we're all alone in the universe. In fact, many people believe that our planet has been visited by alien life. I happen to be one of those who believe that. In fact I'm certain of it. See, over 2,000 years ago heaven itself opened up and God himself, the ultimate alien, came to this planet. It's astounding to me that people will spend millions and millions of dollars vainly searching the heavens for some hint or some clue that we are not alone. We haven't been left with just a clue or two, we've been given an entire book detailing who this extraterrestrial was and why he came. The book is the Bible, and in it we learn about Jesus the Christ, the Anointed One. We learn that he came to this planet to balance the scales of justice in the favor of the people he came to redeem, and it was his perfect justice that demanded it.

You see, we all understand that a great crime tips the scales of

justice in such a way that justice itself cries out for those scales to be re-balanced. And we have cliches that express this. I mean, "You live by the sword, you die by the sword." "You do the crime, you do the time." "An eye for an eye." "A tooth for a tooth." All of these proverbs have to do with the debt to justice that doing bad things incurs. And you know, most people have no problem whatsoever envisioning rebalancing the scales by sending to hell someone like Hitler or Stalin. But what if instead of Hitler or Stalin we substitute a Mr. Smith or a Mrs. Jones? And instead of mass murder, we substitute lusting and petty gossip? Would we still have a case of injustice crying out for balance? Now, we might all agree that the balance of justice is not nearly so tipped in these cases. But can we still admit that the balance is tipped even if it is ever so slightly? Now, what if the judge who was gauging this balance, what if the judge is perfect? And what if the standard is perfection itself?

Now, to put this into context, instead of thinking of big sins versus little sins and how much sin is worthy of my consideration, think of sins as germs and perfection as a sterile field. Okay? I mean, if I was told that a medicine that I needed to take was 99.99 percent pure and only a tiny fraction of it had bubonic plague in it, I think I'd have a hard time still taking it. It wouldn't matter how tiny the percentage was. You see, when it comes to a

sterile field, one single molecule is all that you need to destroy all of it. Well, the exact same thing is true with regard to sin, and here is where folks make the most grievous mistake. You see, most folks tend to think well, I'm not perfect but I'm certainly not Hitler. The problem is, God's demand of all of us is absolute perfection. You see, we define sin as this moral failure. God defines sin as anything less than transcendent flawlessness. And believe it or not, he holds us accountable to it. *Romans 3:23* says: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* Now that's a standard of righteousness that is way, way higher than Olympic. It's a demand that we be as righteous as God himself. You see, the bad news is that this is a perfection that absolutely no one is capable of providing. God knows and God understands that, and that's why the second part of that verse is the good news. *Romans 3:23* says: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* You see, nobody argues that giant sins don't really cry out for justice, but for some reason we think that minor sins or for that matter any sin that we might be caught up in is certainly not enough to tip the balance of justice against us. Well, this is where we are precisely mistaken. You see, if God is perfect and his standards for his creatures are perfection itself, then it doesn't really matter if your sin is monstrously huge or infinitesimally small, whether you murdered 6

million Jews or whether you stole a paper clip. You see, either one is enough to destroy the perfection that God requires of all of his creation.

You may think this is -- this is nuts. This is overkill, I mean, this is -- this couldn't possibly be fair. But look at it from God's perspective. If God is perfection itself and if for mercy's sake he decides that there's a certain level of imperfection he's willing to wink at, well then essentially his perfection doesn't exist at all, because perfection, just like medical sterility, is an all-or-nothing affair, and it doesn't matter if the germ is big or little, whether it's mild or severe, whether it's deadly or just annoying, it's either there or it's not there. Perfection as well is either there or it's not. And because in our case none of us is perfect, therefore none of us is worthy of heaven. That's the bad news.

The good news is that we, according to *Romans 3:23: Are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. Now to accomplish that, God himself had to become a man, live the same kind of life that we live with the exception being he had to live it perfectly, and then he offered up that life as an exchange, as a substitute for our imperfect lives. *Romans 5:8* says: *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still*

sinners, Christ died for us. Well, in order to do that, God the perfect extraterrestrial, well he had to visit our planet. And he came not as our example, not as our teacher, but as our sacrifice. And the reason why we spend lots of time looking into what Christ has done for us at the cross is because the details of that are far too easy to overlook. You see, it is extraordinarily easy to gloss over what it cost God to rescue us through the sacrifice of his Son. You know, almost every one of us knows *John 3:16*: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" But here's the problem: We really don't know the details of what that is talking about. You see, it's remarkably easy to just glibly gloss over what it cost God to rescue us by reducing it all to a cliché: Jesus died on a cross for my sins. Yeah, we get that. We know that. That's an absolute fact. But in order to do that any justice, we have to fix our eyes on the cross and the one who died there, because the more we learn, the more we understand who that person is and just what it is he did, the more obedience to and worship of Jesus becomes the most normal and natural thing we could do. So that's why we study the servant songs of Isaiah. These songs are prophetic poems that God placed in the Old Testament that speak to, through, and of Jesus the Messiah some 800 years before he was even born. God the Father wants every aspect of who God the Son is, he wants it to be known and understood and respected and

loved. He wants Jesus to be loved for who he is and for it is he did. You know, when Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, he was there with Peter, James, and John, this was shortly before he went to the cross, as he was up there on the mountain, he started to take on some of the glory that belonged to him, some of the glory that he owned before he had first visited earth. *Matthew 17:2* says: *And he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.* The scripture says that Peter here literally started babbling at the sight: *"Because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid."* But then it says: *And a cloud came, and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved son, hear him!"* And so hearing the Son and knowing the Son and loving the Son, that's what matters to the Father. Again, that's why we study the servant songs, that we may better know the Son.

Now, we've reached the very last of the servant songs. We've reached Isaiah 53, and you might say we are -- we're at the peak of the mountain and again it's studying that in the middle of the Old Testament, fully eight centuries before Jesus would even be born, we have this astounding vision of what Jesus would do for us not just on the cross but through every aspect of his life here on earth. It starts with *Isaiah 53:1-2: Who has believed our*

report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

Well, we looked at this last week, we looked at this opening statement: *Who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? Who gets what God is up to here? We revisit the history of Christ's birth. For 400 years is the book of Malachi, God has gone silent, there's no prophecies, there's no revelation, just this profound silence from heaven that lasts 400 years. And then suddenly there's a tender plant. Suddenly a root out of dry ground appears. And God asks: Who has believed our report? And the answer back then was with the exception of a few shepherds, nobody. And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? God is literally rolling up his sleeves revealing his arm as it were, to begin the work of ransoming and rescuing his sheep. Isaiah goes on to say in verse 2: For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. Again, last week I pointed out the chances are decent that Jesus was about five foot one, 110 pounds and that he had a face that you would never look at twice. The amazing fact is that Jesus alone had the ability to make himself*

the most physically attractive person the earth has ever known, and of course that would have opened up to him all kinds of advantages, it would have opened to him all kinds of doors that are only open to highly attractive people. But that's precisely why Jesus opted instead to have a body that had *no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.* Jesus could have come as king. He could have come as ruler of the heavens. Instead in every way: *He made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* He chose the pathway of a servant.

Isaiah goes on to say in *Isaiah 53:3: He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.* We know why he was despised, we know why he was rejected because the Bible makes it clear. Jesus was the light. Jesus was the light coming into the darkness. *John 3:19 says: And this is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.* Now if you doubt, if you doubt that this is the case even today, just do a quick little experiment and you'll find out that in 2,000 years, nothing has changed. Just bring up the name of Jesus Christ, not as a curse, not as an

exclamation, not as a joke, just bring up the name of Jesus Christ as God in the flesh, worthy of worship, and you will instantly feel the pressure of light versus darkness. You see, every one of us knows deep inside that we're not right with God, that we in some way or another are in love with the darkness as well and that we, too, resent the light. Jesus said in *John 8:12*: "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*" Truth be told, most people prefer darkness and they despise and reject the light. Hence they despise and reject Jesus.

Isaiah 53:3: *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.* Well, there's no doubt that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. There's no doubt that it was sorrow that marked his 33 years on earth. In fact, there's no place in all of scripture where it is recorded ever that Jesus was laughing. I mean, there's some wry observations that he makes, there's some mildly sarcastic comments, but nowhere in scripture will you find a description of Jesus as happy or laughing, and the reason is obvious. You see, from some point in Jesus' adolescence until the very day of his crucifixion, Jesus faced every single day of his life as a condemned man awaiting his execution. And not only did he carry the burden of that every single day but he knew in exquisite detail every single

aspect of his arrest, his torture, his abandonment, and his execution. He also knew that he was completely innocent. Not only that he was innocent but that he was the only person who ever walked the earth who was transcendentally and flawlessly innocent. And it was his life, not as a prophet or as a teacher but as a sacrifice, that would be used to tip the scales of justice in our favor. So no, you don't find many light-hearted and happy moments in the life of Jesus. Instead what you will find throughout the Bible is multiple references to what Jesus had instead of happiness, and that is joy. At the end of Jesus' ministry, he lifted up a prayer to his heavenly Father. This is what he said in *John 17:13*, he said: *"But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."* *John 16:22*, he said: *"So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy from you."* And *Hebrews 12:2* says this: *Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

You see, joy is what drove Jesus. But joy's not the same thing as happiness. Joy is a settled state of contentment based on the knowledge that God is good and that God is sovereign and that God is in control. And it is that joy that allowed Jesus even though

he despised its shame to look right through the cross to what it would accomplish. And because Jesus was filled with this joy, his vision was constantly turned outward towards us instead of inward towards his own circumstance. That's what I'd like to focus on this morning. You see, Jesus was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, but much of it, much of it was grief and sorrow aimed outward. It was sorrow borrowed, it was sorrow expressed, and it was sorrow demonstrated.

First, it was sorrow borrowed. You know we humans, we have a tendency to view ourselves as the center of God's universe. We're not. At the center of God's universe is God, not man. And so it's easy for us to think that somehow we supply Jesus' reason for being. We say Jesus came to earth to save us from our sin, that's true, but it truly misses the point. You know, if the only reason Jesus came to earth was to save us from our sin, then Jesus himself violated the first commandment: *You shall have no other gods before Me.* He violated that commandment by placing our value over the value of his relationship with his Father which was shattered by the cross. No, Jesus came into this world to glorify his Father by ransoming and rescuing his sheep, not because he needed someone or something to rescue, not because he was seeking some sort of community with us out of need, and not because he was looking for someone or something to love. You see, Jesus always had the love

of the Father and the Spirit in the Trinity. For all of eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have been in community marked by love, marked by mutual service. Jesus came into the world to give the love of that community to us, not to receive love from us as some sort of need on his part.

Tim Keller in his book *The Reason For God* says this, he says: "The life of the Trinity is characterized not by self-centeredness but by mutually self-giving love. Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight, and adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, and rejoices in the other. That creates a dynamic, pulsating dance of joy and love." Keller goes on to ask well then, why did Jesus come to earth? And he says: "What was Jesus getting out of it? Remember, he already had the community of joy, glory, and love and that means that when he came into the world and died on the cross to deal with our sins, he was circling and serving us."

So when Isaiah says Jesus was a *man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, the most significant statement is not what he says but what he doesn't say, and that is the sorrow and grief that Jesus experienced was not so much his sorrow and his grief, it was ours. Jesus left his existence of absolute bliss, love, and glory to enter into a world of pain, hatred, and darkness. The grief and

sorrow that he was acquainted with was grief and sorrow that he borrowed and owned from us.

Let me put this another way. You know, when I read about what's going on in South Sudan or Somalia or Haiti, I feel sorrow, and I grieve over them. But if I move to Sudan, Somalia, or Haiti and become a permanent citizen there in order to make their plight my plight, I borrow a grief and sorrow that were not mine to begin with and I start to make them mine. Well, that's how Jesus became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, because Jesus left heaven itself and he came to earth, and in doing that, he borrowed a grief and a sorrow that belonged to Adam and his offspring and he made that grief and that sorrow his own. He was deeply sorrowful, and he was deeply grieved, not for himself so much as for us. You know, as he was bearing his cross to Calvary at the end, Jesus was confronted with a group of Godly women who were weeping for him, and immediately he told them that their weeping was misplaced. He said: *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."* See, Jesus knew precisely where he was headed, I mean, only hours later he would say to the thief of the cross: *"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."* You see, Jesus knew where he was headed but he also knew where we were headed, and that's where his sorrow, that's where his grieving came from. Jesus came not only to borrow our

grief and sorrow but to show us how we are to do the same.

So question one, do you and I, do we borrow and own the grief of those who are around us? Do we identify those without Christ as those without hope, and do we enter into the same grief that he entered into over them? Because Jesus had this deep sense of joy that God was a good God, that he was sovereign, and that God causes all things to work together for good to those who are called according to his purpose, because he had that, he didn't allow his grief and sorrow to overwhelm him, so he could simultaneously embrace our sorrow and make it his own.

Secondly, not only did he own our sorrow, but he also expressed it. When Jesus approached the tomb of Lazarus, he saw the grief and the sorrow in the face of Lazarus' sister. *John 11:33* says this, it says: *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"* You know, most of us look at that, we know verse 35 is the shortest verse in the Bible, often used in that context. You know, it may be the shortest verse in the Bible but it tells us an awful lot about Jesus. Jesus wept, it really means more he wailed. Even though he knew this would only be temporary

and Lazarus would soon rejoin his family, Jesus wept. He wept because not only had he borrowed our sorrow and grief, he had owned them, and he owned them to the extent that they were his sorrow and his grief as well, and even though he knew that Lazarus would soon come forth in the grave, he wept at the death he knew was the fate of every son and daughter of Adam. When Jesus was at the height of his triumph entering into Jerusalem, he did something that profoundly baffled his followers. Luke 19:41 says this, it says: *And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."* Now this is the greatest moment of Jesus' triumph, and in that moment he couldn't contain his grief over the dreadful fate of the future of Jerusalem, because he had borrowed and owned it all. You know, he could have just as easily thought Jerusalem, you will reject, you will mock, you will slaughter the very one who has come to save you, so it serves you right. But he didn't. Instead there, grief and sorrow became his grief and sorrow so much so that he had to express it.

Well, that leads to question two. Question two is: Are we willing to borrow and own another one's grief, and if so, are we willing to express it? See, there's no more powerful a witness than entering into the process of expressing someone else's grief and sorrow. That's why *Romans 12:15* says: *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.* I've shared this before but I want to share it again. It's a very powerful experience I once had with my dentist. You know for years and years I went to a local dentist here in town, just a wonderful, wonderful man and a wonderful dentist but he wasn't a believer. And so I used the opportunity being stuck in a chair with him for a long time to share the gospel with him frequently, and he was very interested in spiritual things and he was very willing to hear me out and he even read some of the books that we exchanged, he brought me some of his flaky books and I brought him some gospel books, and we both read them and commented on them, but he was having a struggle with his back and he asked me to pray for him. I told him I'd be happy to pray for him. One day weeks later I got a phone call from his wife, and she said that he was in tremendous pain and he wanted to know if I would be willing to pray for him. Well, I said I'd be happy to, I said, look, I'd be happy to go down there, I said, I'll come down there right now if you'd like. She said, oh, that would be great. I got to his house and his wife led me into his room, and he was in such pain that he was panting almost like a dog. I don't think

I've ever seen anybody in so much agony. And so I sat on the bed and I took his hand in mine and I started to pray, and as I prayed, I just burst into tears. And so I prayed for his healing through my tears. See, I am certain, I am positive that was a God thing because I'm not normally given to tears in those circumstances. But God gave me to some extent the ability to borrow and own his pain and to literally weep with those who weep. And you know, I don't know if he's saved yet, he's still around, I see him occasionally, he's moved down to Florida, but years later he was still introducing me to people by telling them, "This is the guy that cried over me." Do you think that doesn't mean something to people? You know, God enabled me for a moment to become a man of sorrows acquainted with grief for somebody else who was in pain. That's what Jesus wants for all of us. You see, the more I understand the grief that Jesus borrowed and owned, the more like Jesus I will become.

And Jesus borrowed and owned our sorrows and our griefs, and secondly he expressed that grief and that sorrow sometimes with loud, wailing cries. And thirdly, he didn't just express his grief, he demonstrated it. You see, first it was other's sorrow borrowed, then it was other's sorrow expressed, then it was other's sorrow demonstrated. Jesus didn't wait for things to happen when he ministered to others in grief and sorrow, instead he made things

happen. He once approached the house of a man whose daughter had died, Mark 5:38 says this, it says: *They came to the house of a ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Actually the Greek here technically says, "and they laughed him down." What it means literally is they laughed in his face, thought he was a joke. It says: But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. See, Jesus demonstrated his heart for others in grief and sorrow even in the midst of a withering barrage of derisive laughter. He was showing us how to do that as well.*

You know, 28 years ago we lost our daughter Joanna in child birth. Something went horribly wrong during the delivery, and it was obviously one of our very worst days but strangely enough, the presence of Christ throughout that entire ordeal was so intensely real that I also look back on it as one of our best days, if that

can be even thought of. What happened afterwards became a very important learning experience for both Janice and myself. You see, we found that the very first thing that happens when you're in a situation like that is that people who are around you, they don't really know what to do. They don't know what to say, and they're exquisitely uncomfortable and they're concerned they might say the wrong thing and often times because of that fear, they wind up doing nothing. They wind up avoiding the fear of causing pain by simply avoiding the person who is in pain. And so the first thing that we learned is that the worst thing you can do for a person in pain is to avoid them or ignore them. Better to make a well-intentioned mistake trying to be helpful than to let your fear of making a mistake make you avoid the person in pain. We also learned that there were a number of different approaches that people who wanted to help us with our pain took, and some of them were very helpful and some of them were not. Let me give you an example. Let me just share with you some of my thoughts about what was helpful and what was not just in terms of conversations with people we had who were only trying to help.

Some folks had the "can you top this" approach. You know, folks would tell us about something more awful that happened to somebody that they knew in the hope that that would somehow make us feel better. It didn't. Still though, we appreciated the effort. And

then there was the "spiritual" approach. Folks were very quick to point out to us that Joanna was now in heaven with the Lord and would not be suffering here on earth, and we knew that as well, but at the moment, that was not something that we wanted to hear. Still we knew it was an honest effort to offer comfort. What really, really made a difference at a time like that was something as simple as people being willing to enter into our pain with us. And that, many people did. You know, when folks are nervous about what they should say to someone who's undergoing a deep trial, I tell them, "Why don't you just say, 'I ache with you,' or say something like, 'I'm sure your pain is overwhelming right now' or 'I can't imagine what you're going through but I'm praying that God will comfort you in this.'" Sometimes the best thing you can do is to say nothing, just weep with that person or simply give them a hug.

I think the best example in scripture of how to mourn with somebody is what Job's friends did the very first week they were with him before they turned on him. *Job 2:11* says this: *Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come show him sympathy and comfort him. And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they*

raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great. See, they simply entered into Job's pain and they weren't afraid to express it. Jesus entered into our sorrows and our grief by allowing his emotions to flow as well, and that's not a bad idea for us.

The other thing that we saw Jesus do for people who are grieving is that he demonstrated, he took action. He walked into that room where that little girl was, ignoring the crowd that was literally laughing in his face. Let me translate that into how that worked for us in our grieving. You know, a phrase that was often used in that situation, and I know because I've used it myself is the phrase: "If there's anything I can do for you, please let me know." Let me suggest a different approach. Don't leave the decision in the hands of the grieving person. Find out something that you could do that might be helpful and tell the person unless you tell me otherwise, I'm going to do X, Y, or Z, and then do it. You see, when Joanna died, there were so many details that we didn't even think of that Godly, thoughtful, and sensitive people did. You know, contacting a funeral home, arranging the details, helping to pick out a coffin, scouting out burial plots, all of those things people did for us by telling us, "We're going to do

these things. If you don't want us to do it, please stop us." You see, they acted first and then they gave us the final say. And that made a huge difference in making something very painful and difficult into something that was an expression of the love of God, through thoughtful and sensitive people. You see, in spite of our pain, we knew without a doubt that God himself had taken on flesh in the people that he had sent to minister to us in our pain. That's a privilege that every one of us has today.

You know, I started out this message speaking about an alien visitation to our planet, and there was one and it happened 2,000 years ago. The alien was God himself taking on flesh and living life like we have to live it. Even though he knew as light coming into the darkness he would be despised and rejected, and as a man certain that his days would end with his rejection, torture, and execution, he was entitled to say he was "a man of sorrows." He was entitled to say he was "acquainted with grief." He came to tip the scales of justice in our favor, and we're going to spend the rest of the servant song looking into detailing just what that entailed. But I thank God that he didn't stop at his own personal grief and sorrow. You see, instead, he borrowed and owned our grief and our sorrow. He not only owned them, he expressed them, and he demonstrated how to respond to them as well. And he left us an example that we should follow in his footsteps. *He was despised*

and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you again for the gift of your Son. I thank you for the gift of the servant songs. I thank you for how we can see just what it is he has done for us, how we could unpack what it means to say Jesus died for me on the cross, Jesus lived the life that we were supposed to live and then died the death we were supposed to die. And Lord, to the extent that we can, we pray for the grace to unpack that, to look at that, to understand that, so that we can worship him anew and afresh. And I pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.