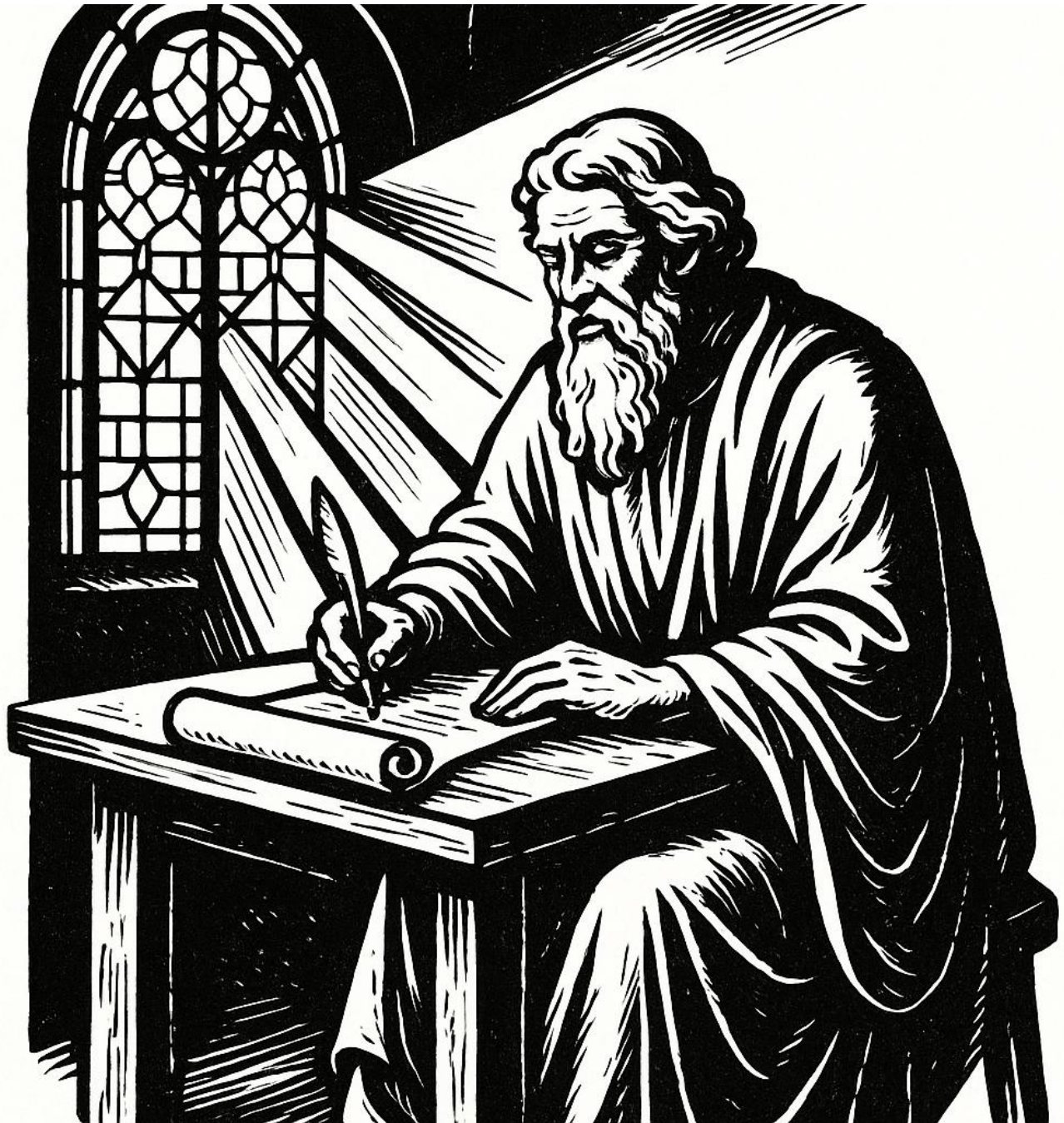


# THE FIFTH EVANGELIST:

## Ten Gospel Windows in Isaiah

Lesson 9 – Substitutionary Grace



Calvary Lutheran Church  
Dallas, TX  
Fall 2025

# LESSON EIGHT — MISSIONARY GRACE

## *Isaiah 52 & 53*

*“The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

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### 1. OPENING DEVOTION & ORIENTATION

Imagine being told that the reason for your separation from God is not mysterious or accidental. It is not bad luck, and it is not someone else’s fault. It is your sin. And imagine hearing that when God looked for someone to step forward and set things right, no one could answer. No one could redeem. No one could carry the cost.

That is the setting Isaiah 50 places before us. It strips away the illusion that we can repair what has been broken or free ourselves from what our sin has done. If redemption is going to happen, someone else must step forward. Someone must do what we cannot do.

Isaiah 52 and 53 reveal what God does next. A Servant appears—not to admire from a distance, but to bear what belongs to others. He steps into the place no one else can stand and carries what no one else can carry. As we move into these chapters, we are not just learning about the Servant. We are being led to see why he is necessary and what he is doing in our place.

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### 2. MIRROR — The Law Section

*Isaiah 50:1,2 – When Sin Creates a Debt We Cannot Pay*

**Read Aloud:** Isaiah 50:1–2

Listen for what these verses reveal about guilt, separation, and our inability to repair the damage of sin.

#### **Observation:**

1. What question does the Lord ask about divorce and debt in verse 1?  
What is he inviting the people to consider?

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2. Where does the Lord say the separation actually comes from?

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3. What does the language of being “sold” suggest about the condition of the people?

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4. In verse 2, what does the Lord look for—and what does he find?

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5. What does it mean that no one answers when he calls?

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**Dig Deeper – Personal Reflection:**



1. **How is this comic a commentary on Isaiah 50:1-2?**

(Hint: Who does the comic say the real problem is?)

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2. **Why do we resist admitting that we are the root of the problem?**

What do we prefer to blame instead?

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3. **In Isaiah 50:2, who is silent—and why is that silence “loud”?**

What does it reveal about us?

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4. **Quiet reflection (no speaking, no writing):**

Where in your life do you sense an “unpayable debt” before God – something you cannot undo or fix by trying harder?

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**Summary:**

Isaiah 50 holds up a mirror that is difficult to avoid. Our separation from God is not accidental. It is the result of real sin and real rebellion. And when the Lord looks for someone among us who can repair what has been broken, no one can step forward. No one can pay the debt. No one can answer the call. This silence prepares us for what comes next. If redemption is to happen, someone else must step forward—someone who can bear what we cannot and do what we cannot do.

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### 3. WINDOW — The Gospel Section

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 — *The Servant Who Answers for Us*

**Read Aloud:** Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Listen for what the Servant does, what he suffers, and who benefits.

#### First Impressions

As you listen, note any words or phrases that describe:

- What the Servant endures
- What others have done
- What the Lord does
- What comes as a result

#### Observation:

1. How is the Servant first described in 52:13? What tension do you notice between his exaltation and what follows?

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2. What reactions do people have to the Servant's appearance and suffering? (53:2–3)

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3. In 53:4–6, whose griefs, sorrows, transgressions, and iniquities are mentioned? What is repeatedly emphasized?

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4. What does the Lord do in 53:6? Why is that statement central?

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5. How does the Servant respond to suffering and accusation? (53:7–9)

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6. What does the Lord accomplish through the Servant's suffering? (53:10–12)

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#### Seeing the Substitution

Look again at the language of exchange in the passage.

- What belongs to "us"?
- What happens to the Servant instead?
- What comes to us because of what he bears?

Complete quietly:

- He was pierced for \_\_\_\_\_.
- He was crushed for \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Lord laid on him \_\_\_\_\_.
- By his wounds \_\_\_\_\_.

What pattern do you see?

**APPLICATION — Proclaiming Good Friday from Isaiah 52:13–53:12**

Isaiah 52–53 is the clearest Old Testament window into Good Friday.

If you had to preach a Good Friday message using only this text, what would you say?

Work through the questions below as if you were preparing a sermon.

**1. What Would Be Your Theme?**

A theme should be clear, focused, and rooted in the text.

Examples of the kind of theme this passage invites:

- “The Servant Who Stood in Our Place”
- “The Debt Laid on Him”
- “By His Wounds We Are Healed”
- “He Answered When We Could Not”
- “The Silence Is Broken”

Your Theme: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. How Would You Divide the Text? (Parts)**

Isaiah 52:13–53:12 moves in a deliberate progression.

How would you structure it?

Possible movements:

- 52:13–15 — The Shocking Exaltation
- 53:1–3 — The Rejected Servant
- 53:4–6 — The Substitution
- 53:7–9 — The Silent Suffering
- 53:10–12 — The Saving Result

Or you may want fewer, broader parts.

Your Outline (2–3 parts):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What Is the Sharp Law?**

Good Friday is not sentimental. It is surgical.

From this text, what is the Law that must be proclaimed clearly?

Consider:

- “We all, like sheep, have gone astray.”
- “Each of us has turned to his own way.”
- The Servant suffers because of *our* transgressions.

**Formulate one sharp Law sentence:**

The problem is not that Christ suffered.

The problem is that \_\_\_\_\_.

Or:

Good Friday exposes that \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 4. What Is the Gospel — and How Would You Phrase It?

Isaiah 53 is substitution in its clearest form.

Consider:

- “He was pierced for our transgressions.”
- “The LORD laid on him the iniquity of us all.”
- “By his wounds we are healed.”

How would you phrase the Gospel so that it is unmistakable?

#### Complete:

The debt was not ignored. It was \_\_\_\_\_.

Or:

What belonged to us was placed on \_\_\_\_\_.

Or write your own full Gospel sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 5. How Would You Conclude?

A Good Friday conclusion should:

- Leave no doubt about the substitution
- Leave no doubt about forgiveness
- Leave no doubt about what now stands true

Would you conclude with:

- Silence?
- A direct declaration of absolution?
- A line like “It is finished”?
- A return to Isaiah 50’s silence now answered?

Write one closing paragraph (3–5 sentences): \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Summary:

Isaiah 52–53 opens the window that the mirror prepared us to see. The Servant steps forward where no one else can. He bears what belongs to others, suffers what others deserve, and brings healing through what he carries. The silence of Isaiah 50 is answered here. The debt is not ignored. It is taken up. The call is not unanswered. The Servant answers for us. Through his suffering, the Lord brings forgiveness, healing, and peace to those who could not redeem themselves.

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## 4. FULFILLMENT — Christ Connection

### *Jesus, the Servant Who Bears Sin and Justifies Many*

Isaiah 52:13–53:12 presents a Servant who suffers, remains silent before accusation, bears the sins of others, and brings healing and justification through His suffering. The New Testament consistently identifies Jesus as this Servant and uses Isaiah’s language to explain what happened on Good Friday. The apostles do not treat the cross as an unexpected tragedy. They understand it through the pattern Isaiah provides: substitution, silence, suffering, and saving result. Again and again, New Testament writers return to this passage to interpret Christ’s death and its meaning.

Isaiah 52–53 does not disappear in the New Testament. It becomes the lens through which the early church understands Jesus’ suffering and death. Your task: Look up the New Testament passages below.

#### **Identify:**

1. What part of Isaiah 52–53 is being quoted or echoed?
2. Why might the writer choose that specific Servant language?

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#### **Acts 8:32–35**

1. Which verses from Isaiah 53 are quoted directly?
2. What question is the Ethiopian asking?
3. Why is this passage a fitting place to begin preaching Jesus?
4. What does this tell you about how the early church read Isaiah 53?

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#### **1 Peter 2:22–25**

1. Identify phrases drawn from Isaiah 53.
2. What part of the Servant’s suffering does Peter emphasize?
3. Why would Peter use Isaiah 53 to comfort Christians who are suffering unjustly?
4. What aspect of substitution is most visible here?

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#### **Matthew 27:12–14**

1. What detail in Isaiah 53 does this scene reflect?
2. Why does Matthew highlight Jesus’ silence?
3. What does that silence communicate about Jesus’ role?

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#### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

1. How does Paul summarize Isaiah 53’s theology in one sentence?
2. Where do you see exchange or substitution in this verse?
3. Why is Isaiah 53 necessary to understand what Paul is saying?

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#### **Whole-Class Reflection**

After discussing, consider:

1. Do the New Testament writers treat Isaiah 53 as poetic inspiration—or as theological explanation?
2. What parts of the Servant’s work do they emphasize most?
3. What would be missing from our understanding of Good Friday if Isaiah 53 were not in Scripture?

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## 5. APPLICATION & PRAYER — Life & Devotion

### *Living in the Aftermath of Isaiah 53*

Isaiah 50 showed a debt no one could pay.  
Isaiah 52–53 showed the Servant carrying it.

This final section asks:

What does life look like when that debt has truly been carried?

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#### **Step 1 — The Day After**

If Isaiah 53 is true, then the decisive thing has already happened.

Complete quietly: Because the Servant has borne my sin, today I live as someone whose

- standing before God is now \_\_\_\_\_.
  - burden of guilt is now \_\_\_\_\_.
  - future is now \_\_\_\_\_.
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#### **Step 2 — What I No Longer Need to Carry**

Isaiah 53 says the Servant carried what was ours.

List one thing believers still try to carry that Christ has already borne:

I no longer need to live as someone who must \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

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#### **Step 3 — The Changed Verdict**

Isaiah 53:11 says the Servant “will justify many.”

If the verdict over you is already settled:

- What fear loses its power?
- What becomes easier to confess?
- What changes about how you face failure?

Write one sentence:

A life lived after Good Friday looks like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

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#### **Step 4 — Prayer**

Read together: “The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”  
(Isaiah 53:5)

Pray silently:

Lord Jesus, You answered when we could not answer. You carried what we could not carry. Teach us to live as people whose debt has been paid and whose peace has been secured. Amen.

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#### **Final Line (complete together)**

Because the Servant has answered for us, we live as people who \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.