

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 25, Isa. 52-53

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 25, Isaiah chapters 52 and 53.

Good evening. On a night like this, you find out who the righteous remnant really is. Congratulations. Good to see you. Thanks for braving the downpours.

Let's pray together. We do remember the old song, there shall be showers of blessing. And we thank you that that is your character and your nature, to pour out blessings upon your people. Blessings that are richly undeserved but given out of the goodness of your heart. Thank you.

We recognize so many of the blessings that we just take for granted. We assume that we have somehow earned them or deserve them. And we get bent out of shape when they're not there when we want them.

Have mercy upon us, oh Lord. We pray for those this evening who are going through deep waters, spiritually, emotionally, financially, many other ways. We pray that you will indeed pour out your blessings upon them.

Enable them to stand when the enemy would knock them down. Enable them, oh Lord, to prosper when the enemy would indeed deprive them of every support. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you that that's your nature, that's your character. We praise you and glorify you. Thank you for this wonderful passage of scripture that we have before us this evening.

We pray that again you'll help us to plumb at least some of the depths that are here, to find some of the riches that are here for us. Oh, magnify yourself, oh Lord. Let us see you in the wonder of your beauty and your care and we'll thank you. In your name, amen.

Last time we looked at 49 through 51 and we saw that in those chapters, though deliverance language is used, Babylon is not mentioned. That there's another issue that has to be dealt with and that issue is their alienation from God.

It's one thing to go back home, but how do you get back to God? How do you become these servants of the Lord that have been promised? These who have been designated as God's evidence and so that question is being dealt with here. We began with chapter 49 verse 1 with the second revelation of the servant, capital S.

The first one was in chapter 42, but the people said, God, you've forgotten us. You're done with us.

You have nothing more to do with this and God protests, no, no, I have not forgotten you. And so, we see that growing note of anticipation and we see here verse 1 of chapter 52. Compare that to chapter 51 verse 9. What's the difference? That's right.

The person being told to wake up in 51 9, who is being called on to wake up? The Lord, the arm of the Lord. Wake up arm of the Lord. This is the hour when we need your strength and God says here, who needs to wake up? Jerusalem needs to wake up.

You wake up. Put on your wedding garments, Jerusalem. So, this note of anticipation, get ready, get ready, get ready.

Then look at 52 to what is God saying that Jerusalem should do. Shake off the dust, rise up, and what? Sit down, sit on the throne. Now compare that to 47 one. It's the very opposite, isn't it? Get off the throne, and go sit in the dust.

So how do these two points express one of Isaiah's major themes? What did Babylon do to herself? Yes, that was the end result. What had she done before that? She had exalted herself. What happens when you exalt yourself? You shoot yourself in the foot or to use Isaiah's words, you end up sitting in the dust.

What happens when you voluntarily accept sitting in the dust for God's sake? He lifts you up. That's the theme that runs all the way through the book. Pride will humiliate you.

Trust in God will exalt you. Excuse me. Remember that.

You don't remember much else about your study of Isaiah. Remember that, that counterbalance theme. Pride will humiliate you.

Trust in God will lift you up. Verses three through six. What are they saying? Why did God sell his people? For how much did he get out of it? Nothing, nothing.

That thing that we talked about last time that, oh God, you divorced us and so, or you divorced mother Zion and so you can't take her back. And God said, where's your mother's certificate of divorce? No, I may have sent her away, but I did not legally or officially divorce her. Well, God, you had to sell us to your creditors.

Who are those creditors? No, I was not forced to sell you by something outside of my control. So again, he's saying, if he did not have to sell them for something, what

does that mean? He can take them back for nothing. He doesn't have to pay anybody off. He can deliver them.

Yes. I'm just confused a bit. Why did God sell his people? Isn't it more like he didn't sell them, but he did allow them to be on the market? He didn't sell them, but he did allow them to be on the market. Yes, I mean, it's, it's, it's metaphorical language. It's, it's imagery.

And they're saying you had to sell us. You couldn't help it. Therefore, if to get us back, you're going to have to shell out a whole lot of money to somebody to get us back.

And God is saying, no, I didn't get anything for selling you. And I don't have to pay anybody to buy you back. So, it's, it's imagery that it's not complete.

It's like parables, but it's making that point that I can do this. Now I want you to look at verse six said, I, I sold you for nothing. I can get you back for nothing.

Therefore, my people will know my name. What does that mean? Didn't they know the name Yahweh before this? Of course, they did. So, what does this mean? Character, character, they will know what kind of a God I am.

They may have known it with head knowledge. But if you remember, as I've told you a lot of times before, in Hebrew, the concept know is to know by experience. So, they're going to experience my character.

Then what about the rest of the verse? They will know that it is I who speaks. Here I am. What does, what does that mean? All right.

Okay. Okay. They will know him as their father.

Mm hmm. They'll know him as true greatness. Mm hmm.

Mm hmm. They'll know where to find you. Mm hmm.

And remember all the way back to the meaning of that name. Now it's in the third person, he who is. But if you're not talking to him in the third person, you call him, I am.

Once again, this whole issue of who in this universe can say, I am, and there's none beside me. It's only Yahweh. And you're going to know that.

You're going to know that I am not constrained by anything in creation. The idols are, but I'm not. And I can get you out and you will know it.

So, you will know my grace. And you will know my power. It's no good to have a powerful being if he's not gracious and it's no good to have a gracious being if he's not powerful, but you will know who the, I am is when I say here, I am, you'll know who's talking now, then in verses seven through 12, we have an extended piece of imagery.

And I talk about that in the background at the top. Before the invention of gunpowder, it was difficult to break into a walled city. The primary alternative was a siege.

The besieging army would surround the city and prevent anyone from going in or out, hoping to starve out the inhabitants. For those inside, the only hope was to outweigh the besiegers. One of the ways for that to happen was for the besieging general to be forced to withdraw his forces because of some event elsewhere in his domain.

That's what is being described in 52, seven to 12. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news. And as I say, bring good news, the Greek translation is which is the basis of evangel or evangelist.

Who publishes Shalom? Dan? I have a question. So is the picture that in the besieging city, a runner is coming from a battle who is a part of the city that's being besieged. Yes.

The message that in that far battle, the ally of that city has won. That's exactly right. That's exactly right.

So the watchman is standing on the wall of the besieged city and he's saying, I see a messenger. Well, what do you see? Well, he's waving a palm branch. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.

You remember the story of Marathon. That's how this whole thing got started. Man who ran 26 miles to announce to the Athenians that the Greek army had won the battle against the Persians at Marathon and he ran into the city and dropped dead.

Of course, part of the reason for that was he had run 52 miles the day before. So he didn't drop dead just because he ran 56 miles or 26 miles, but that's the picture here. Who publishes salvation? Who says to Zion, your God reigns.

He was victorious in the battle. The voice of your watchman, they lift up their voice. Together, they sing for joy for eye to eye.

They see the return of the Lord to Zion. Now, I want to stop there. Let's go back and look at chapter 40, verses 3 through 5. Again, famous verses, a voice cries in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God, every valley shall be lifted up, every mountain and hill made low, the uneven ground becomes a plain, the rough places a level, the rough places a plain, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh will see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Now, my question is, why is salvation described in terms of God's coming? They felt that they had been deserted by God. Yes, what else? Okay, a stronger force comes to your aid. What does that suggest about them? They're under siege and they are helpless.

We cannot save ourselves. There is nothing we can do of our own strength, of our own energy, of our own intelligence to somehow get to God. That's what Jesus said, meant when he said, no one can go up into heaven to bring God down.

God has to come on his own into our world. And so, the whole idea of Christ coming, he comes to us in our helplessness, in our hopelessness, and if he hadn't done that, we would remain in our helplessness and hopelessness for all eternity. How beautiful in the mountains are him, are the feet of him who brings good news.

So, I ask you the question, what's the tone here as you go on? Verse 10, 11, 12. Is it calm? Is it reflective? Is it contemplative? It's singing. Yeah, the answer to that question is no.

It's not calm. It's not reflective. It's not contemplative.

It is excitement and wonder. I can see him in my mind's eye. No, he hasn't come over the mountain yet.

It's the messenger who has come, but the messenger can be trusted, and the Lord is going to be right behind him. Wow. Exciting.

The cavalry is coming. Yes. Exactly.

Exactly. As a child, I had a lot of difficulty distinguishing cavalry from Calvary. So, what has the Lord done in verse 10? Again, in anticipation.

He has bared his arm. He's rolled up his sleeve. Look at that 27-inch bicep.

Wow. Now remember, I think, did I ask you here? Yes. Look back at 50 verse 2. Here, the word is hand rather than arm, but it's the same point.

Is my hand shortened so that I cannot deliver? Is my arm withered? And the answer, of course, is no. All right. Let's look at chapter 51, verse 5. My righteousness draws near.

My salvation has gone out. My arms will judge the people. The coastlands hope for me, and for my arm, they wait.

It's not only the Hebrew people who are waiting for God's arm to be revealed. It's the whole world. And then, of course, 51.9. Awake, awake, put on strength, oh arm of the Lord.

Okay. You've promised you were going to do it, so do it. And so here it is again in chapter 52, verse 10.

The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see. Again, so often through this whole section, this deliverance that God is going to do is going to be before the whole world. It's not just for Israel, but it's for the whole world to see.

So then, if chapters 49 to 55 are not describing deliverance from Babylon, what are verses 11 and 12 talking about? Their sins. Now, here's the other fascinating side of it. God has to come to them but what do they have to do? Yes, and what's the verb there in verse 11? Go out, go out.

Here's the fascinating synergy working together of salvation. We are topless. God must come to us, but when he comes, we have to leave our sins and go out to meet him.

Salvation is always two-sided. It's got to be initiated from God's side, but then we have to reach out and receive it. We are not simply passive recipients that God says, okay, I'll save you.

No, God says, I'll save you. Will anybody get up and come to receive what I have to offer to you? There's something good about an altar call where you have to physically get up out of your seat and receive what God offers you. All right, and then verse 12 is such a wonderful picture.

The Lord will be your vanguard and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. Yes, yes, get up and go, but know that God goes before you and God goes behind you. And we think of the pillar of cloud and fire in the desert.

God goes before to lead, God comes behind to protect from the enemy that is chasing. Okay, we come then to chapter 52.13. As I say in the background, this is one of the clearest evidence in the Bible that the chapter divisions are not inspired. The

53rd chapter of Isaiah begins at 52.13. Now, why the chapter division is put where it is, nobody that I've ever seen has a good explanation.

We don't know who put in the chapter divisions. All we know is that by the time of the, in the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, you've got a huge gap between the Dead Sea Scrolls that we have, which have no chapter divisions. And then the first complete Hebrew Bible was in 1008 AD and it has chapter divisions.

Some say that Christians were the first to do chapter divisions because they were no longer using scrolls, but they were using books. And that to find on a scroll, you could basically just sort of unroll it. And as you did, you could find where you wanted to go.

But with a book, well, at any rate, whoever did it, did it wrong here. Because it's very, very clear that 52.13.14 and 15 is part of this larger poem. You've got five stanzas of three verses each.

It has been very carefully designed. As Dr. Kinlaw said to me once, the fellow who wrote this didn't write it on the back of an envelope on a Saturday morning, did he? No, no, it's very carefully designed. The first stanza 13.14.15 is the introduction, if you will.

The next stanza 53.1.2 and 3 tells us why he was despised. 4.5 and 6 tell us what is his burden. 7, 8, and 9 tell us the unjust outcome of his servanthood.

10, 11, and 12 tell us the nature of his servanthood. So this first stanza 13.14.15 is marked by a terrific contrast. What's the contrast between verse 13 and verse 9? And verses 14 and 15? Suffering servant and a risen Lord.

Are you saying 13 is the risen Lord? Okay, yes. Exaltation and astonishment. Now, as I say in the background, verse 13, this is one of these Hebrew words that has multiple meanings.

They're related, but one meaning is to be wise. And some of your translations will say that. He will act very wisely.

Another meaning is to prosper, although not in the exclusively financial way that we tend to think of in English. And that leads us to the third meaning, which I think is the correct meaning here, and that is to succeed. If your work prospers, you succeed.

If you're wise, you know how to be successful. And that's the point. Yes, this servant is going to succeed at the thing he's sent for.

He will succeed. He will be what? Exalted. He will be high and lifted up.

High and lifted up. Those two words occur three times in the book. Does anybody know where the first one is? Chapter six.

I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up. The other place is in chapter 57. Verse 14, or actually 15.

It shall be said, build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way. For thus says the one who is high and lifted up. In other words, in three occurrences, two of them refer to God.

And here's this one. My servant will be, who is this servant anyway? This isn't Israel. And this isn't Isaiah.

It's somebody else. And I often imagine these prophets sort of scratching their head and saying, what did I just say? He's going to be high and lifted up. But God, those are your adjectives.

And God sort of says, yes, Isaiah, I know that. Just write it down. As Peter says, prophets longed to see what you Christians now see.

But from the heights to the depths. Before we go there, I want you to go to the last stanza, verse 12. What is God going to do for this servant? He's going to reward him.

Who divides the spoil in a battle? The victor, the victor. So here we are in the first verse, 52, 13. And the last verse, 53, 12.

And we're talking about the triumph of the servant. That's an M there if you can't read it. The triumph of the servant.

Now, why do you suppose you begin and end on that note? What about the rest of the poem? It's a disaster, isn't it? It's a tragedy. It's horror. But beginning and end.

And it reminds us, it reminds me, I guess I should say, of Paul in Philippians. Who, being found in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with him, but emptying himself. He took the form of a servant.

And being found in the form of a servant, he became human, even unto death. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name. From the heights to the depths.

How could Jesus do what he did? How could he lay aside the robes of glory and step down a staircase of stars to a stable? Because he knew who he was. He knew how the story ended. And knowing that, he could endure anything.

Some of us need to know that. Some of us aren't convinced enough as to how the story ends. If you know who you are, it doesn't matter if all you've got to put on is a towel.

Nothing is lost. But if you don't know who you are, then, man, you've got to have Hart, Schaffner, and Marx. Maybe this says I don't know myself.

Anyway, it's not Hart, Schaffner, and Marx. I can guarantee you that. Beginning and ending with triumph.

Because immediately, they were astonished at you. His appearance was so marred beyond human semblance, his form beyond that of the children of mankind. Wait a minute.

Wait a minute. This is not what we expected our savior to look like. He's supposed to be handsome.

He's supposed to be good-looking. Not that marred, twisted, crucified face. No.

Now, in verse 15, there is an issue. I have the English Standard Version here. It says, so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings will shut their mouths because of him. What have I said to you about Hebrew poetry? Parallelism. One line is synonymous with the other line.

Well, shut their mouths and sprinkle, that's not parallel. There's another problem. Everywhere else that this verb sprinkle occurs, it's sprinkle something on something else.

So according to the logic of the grammar, he ought to be sprinkling nations on something. It doesn't occur in this intransitive form that you've got it here. But these three consonants in Arabic mean to startle.

This would be the only occurrence of the word in the Hebrew Bible. But I'm, you know, if I get to heaven and God says it's sprinkle, I will say yes, sir. But I'm pretty well convinced it's startle.

I think that's the parallelism. He will startle many nations. Kings will shut their mouths because of him.

Who would have thought the savior of the world would look like that? Everybody wants the balm of servanthood, but nobody can stand its twisted, marred face. That which has not been told them, they will see. And that which they have not heard, they'll understand.

I'm not sure that understand is exactly the right word, but it's the idea of they'll recognize, boy, we never heard this. And so verse one of chapter 53. What's the problem in verse one? This is not a 27 inch bicep.

This is a little stringy spindly thing. He's not a saw. He grew up before him like a young plant, like a root in dry ground.

You know, you can't see the thing grow. I was talking to the dentist this morning. He said, how's your grass? I said, oh, he said, yeah, I was looking out the window yesterday.

I said to my wife, I believe I can see it growing. But the point here is you can't see this thing grow. It's just a little spindly plant growing in dry ground.

Days go by and the thing hasn't grown an inch. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him. No beauty that we should desire him.

I think Jesus was ugly. I don't think he looked like Solomon's head of Christ. You say, where would you get an idea like that? Well, it says he bore our griefs and sorrows.

And for some of us, the first grief of the day is looking in the mirror. I think I've told you this before, but when I was a child about 114 years ago, we didn't have television. 530 on Sunday evenings, the greatest story ever told came on the radio.

Dramatizations of the gospel stories. And I remember particularly the story of the Good Samaritan very, very well. The father left home, saying goodbye to his son and wife, and headed off.

But you never had any trouble recognizing the person who was reading the part of Jesus. He had this gorgeous bass voice. And every time he spoke, an organ played in the background.

Well, maybe if I stood here and said, I am God and an organ played, you might get a little bit jumpy. Yeah, right. Now, we wanted a costume drum major to lead our triumphal parade.

No, no, nothing about him except his goodness. An unearthly, frightening, condemning goodness. If you look back at the descriptions of the servant in 42, 49, and 50, you find an increasing emphasis upon his rejection.

Coming to its climax here, not only rejection but suffering. And if you go back to chapter 11, the picture of the Messiah is a shoot growing out of the stump of Jesse. He will not judge by his eyes.

He will not operate like an ordinary king. No, this man will rule as a child. All the trappings of kingship, were not there.

So how did we respond to him? We despised him. Now, to despise in Hebrew means to not think of, to consider worthless. He's not worth my time.

No need to pay attention to this fella. He's obviously not cut out to be a ruler. A man of literally illness and pain.

And the point, I think, is not to say that Jesus was sick all the time, but simply to use that kind of language to say, to make the point, he's not a strong man. He's not a mighty man. And so what did we do? The latter part of verse three.

We hid our faces. We didn't want to look at him. We don't like to be with people who are sad or depressed or suffering.

We also don't like to be with people who are transparently good. What's his angle? You know, you don't lead with your chin. You protect yourself a little bit.

You keep something in reserve. But this man, it's embarrassing. Just what you see is what you get.

He was despised. And we, I don't know why they keep on doing this, we esteemed him not. Well, I know what esteemed clams are, but what is a, we paid him no attention.

That's what it means. He didn't deserve our attention. We had other things to do.

We didn't think about him. Not going to jump out of a bandbox and say, ta-da. I'm thinking of the way he depicted Jews.

It was always in the worst way. Their characteristics, very ugly. Big noses, long kinky hair.

So, I imagine that he may have had some of those very characteristics. Precisely. That people just were.

Precisely. Precisely. You know, he had no form nor comeliness that we should desire it.

I mean, you know, he only had one suit to his name. It has to have been shiny in the seat. If it were today, he would be driving around in a beat-up school bus with 12 thugs.

Yes. And this is the savior of the world? Third stanza. Now listen as I read.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us health. And with his stripes, we are healed.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Think he's making a point? Now especially, look at verse four. Why did this guy get beat up? No, at the latter part of verse four. God did it.

Yeah, he had it coming to him. You've got to be a little smart. I mean, you lead with your chin, you're going to get hit on your chin.

Yes, as Mel said, it was for us. But we looked at him and said, he brought it on himself. He had it coming to him.

And again, I can imagine people in that crowd on that Friday morning. Well, you know, I don't think he deserves crucifixion. But man, you've got to be a little smart.

I mean, he really brought it on himself. I mean, all this stuff about eat my flesh and drink my blood, I mean, you go around saying stuff like that, people are going to kill you. I'm sorry, it's too bad.

He's a nice man. But you know, he's borne our pain, our sickness, our transgression, our iniquities. And then again, as I say in the background, upon him was the beating that brought us health.

Peace is a very unfortunate translation at this point. Shalom is well-being. That's why the greeting in downtown Jerusalem today is, ma shalomchah.

How's your shalom? And it's, how are you? What's your state of well-being? That's the point here. He got beaten, and we got well. And you see that then clearly in the parallelism.

With his stripes, we were healed. Now, I particularly like verse 6, because my dad and I raised sheep when I was in high school. Some people say sheep are dumb.

I'm not so sure of that. I think mainly they're single-minded. Oh, look at this clump of grass.

Mm, that was delicious. Oh, look at this one. Oh, look at this one over here.

Oh, and this one, and this one, and this one. And look, look, look, look. Where am I? How did I get here? All we, like sheep, have gone astray.

That's us. Not dumb, just single-minded. I want what I want when I want it.

And the Bible calls that iniquity. We have no good contemporary word to translate that, unfortunately. It has the idea of twistedness.

And I think that gets it. There's something twisted in us. That can never look beyond what I think is to my advantage.

And the Lord laid it all on him. Now then, look at the opening verse of the next stanza, speaking about the injustice of what he suffered. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, like a sheep that before its shearers is silent.

Jesus took our, if I can use a neologism, Jesus took our sheepliness upon himself. In us, it's that determined self-serving. In him, it is that mild defenselessness.

We had a buck, and he was mean. And so when the shearer was coming, I wanted to be around when the shearer had to take on that buck. I thought this is going to be fun.

The shearer looked at the buck. The buck looked at him. And just as swift as a snake, the shearer reached down, grabbed one hind leg, and that buck was lying against the shearer's chest with his feet in the air, as mild as a bluebird.

I was stunned. As the sheep before its shearers is silent, he not only gave up his way, he gave up his right to his way. And so what did he get out of it? By oppression and judgment, he was taken away.

As for his generation, who even thought about the fact that he was cut off out of the land of the living? In those days, to die without children was to be as if you never lived. And I can imagine that last six months, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. He's telling these knuckleheads about the cross.

And they are saying, no, Peter, you will not be the prime minister. I will be the prime minister. You can be a minister of sanitation.

And right here sits Satan. Jesus, you are going to go up to Jerusalem. And they are going to kill you.

You know they are. And in six months, it'll be as if you never lived. Now look, there are 20, 30 nice-looking young women.

Any one of them would marry you at the drop of a hat. And you could raise a little family. And you could teach your children all these wonderful things you've been teaching us.

I'm so glad I know what Jesus said. He said, shut up. As for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death.

Adding insult to injury, he couldn't even be buried with the poor whom he loved. He had to be buried with the wicked rich. Although he had done no violence.

There was no deceit in his mouth. The Bible is very ambivalent toward riches. If you have riches, they are a blessing from God.

Be thankful and use them to bless the world. But most rich people got them through violence and deceit. I served God.

I gave up my rights. And what did I get in return? Oppression, judgment, no children, buried with the rich. And why? Verse 10, I think, is in the running for the worst verse in the Bible.

Literally, what it says is, it made God glad to crush him. He has put him to grief. Now, I have two boys.

There have been several of them. Several times when I wanted to kill them, but not really. It made God glad to crush him. What kind of a God is this? For me, the best illustration is one that I heard years and years ago.

The man was a bridge tender. He operated a great lift bridge over a river. It was a railroad bridge.

It was normally up because there was a lot of traffic on the river. And when trains were scheduled to come, it was put down and the train went across. It was lifted back up again.

One day, the bridge tender brought his little boy to work with him. 3 o'clock in the afternoon, he heard the whistle in the distance. Oh, that's the afternoon passenger train.

Threw the machinery and the gear. And those hundreds of tons of steel started down. And all of a sudden, his son screamed, Daddy! And he whirled around to see that his son's coat sleeve was caught in those gears.

He had to make a split-second decision. Throw the machinery out of gear and save his son's life and watch that train hurdle up through the open bridge and carry 300 people to their deaths, or shut his ears and leave the machinery in gear. I'm afraid if you had been on that train, you would have gone swimming if it were my son.

But God shut his ears for us. That's how it could make him glad because he knew. He knew what the cost would produce.

And you see it immediately in the rest of the verse. And it's funny. The translators are all over the map on this thing because theology gets in the way.

The text says when you make his soul an offering for sin. Well, in good Reformed theology, that's impossible. We can't make an offering of Christ for our sins.

God has to do it. So, this is the ESV. When his soul makes an offering for sin.

That is not what the text says. But you see, the text can't be right, because it doesn't agree with our theology. Others say, well, you refers to God.

And so they will say when God makes his soul an offering for sin. Well, that's not it. But it would be the only time in this passage when you refer to God.

I think it's the people Isaiah is talking to. Jesus comes to us with his broken, bleeding body in his hands, and says, here, child, offer me to the Father in your place. When you make his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring.

No children? He's got millions of children all over the world because he was willing to lay down his life. And he will prolong his days, cut off at 32 years? No, he lives forever. Out of the anguish of his soul, and the will of the Lord, the pleasure of the Lord, literally, will succeed in his hand.

Yes. Yes. If we make him an offering for our sins, then his mission will succeed.

How sad if we say, I don't need an offering. Thank you very much. Then it was for nothing.

Out of the anguish of his soul, he will see and be satisfied. I had the privilege of being in the delivery room when our third was born, Peter. I say privilege.

I don't know how much of a privilege it is to see the person you love most in the world, struggling and suffering. Karen says, if anybody says painless childbirth, I have permission to slug them. And all you can say is, I'm going to slug you.

Push. And when Peter was born, I have to say, he was ugly. He was red, wrinkled, slimy, and yowling, like a catfight.

And they put him on Karen's breast. And it was like watching the sun come out from behind the clouds. Out of the anguish of his soul, he will see and be satisfied.

Yes, Father, it was worth it. It was worth it. By his knowledge, not head knowledge, no, no.

By his relationship with the Father, shall the righteous one my servant make many to be accounted righteous? He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I'll divide him a portion with the many. He will divide the spoiled with the strong because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors.

Yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. So, in chapters 49, 50, 51, and 52, this increases anticipation. Yes, we are besieged by the enemy.

And we thought that God had forgotten us. But he has said he hasn't forgotten us. And we dare to believe that over there beyond the mountains, he's fighting a battle for us.

And yes, here comes the runner. Oh, wow. We're going to see God's power displayed.

What? What? This is not the Incredible Hulk. Some of you are old enough to know what I'm talking about when I say this is a 90-pound weakling. Remember the Charles Atlas ads? Oh, God.

How are you going to deliver us with this? And God says, believe it. This is my mighty arm. I said it way, way back when we were talking about chapters 7 to 12.

God's weakness. His weakness is greater than any human strength. His power is in his ability to take into himself all the evil the world can ever produce and give back love.

That, my friends, is power.

Let's pray. Oh, Lord Jesus, how can we ever, ever say thank you enough? But we hear your voice saying, I don't want your thanks. I want you to offer me to the Father in your place. And so, we do it, Lord. We do it again, saying thank you.

Thank you for all that you endured for us. Coming to Earth in anything but the form we expected. But for us, you laid aside your royal robes. You became one of us. Thank you. Thank you.

Teach us, oh Lord, what it means to walk in your footsteps. To lay aside our royal robes. To lay aside our rights.

To lay aside our need to defend ourselves. Help us, Lord, like Jesus, to lay the outcome of our servanthood in your hands and let you do with it what you will. And we know that'll be good. In your name, we pray. Amen.