

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

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[0 : 00] Acts chapter 8, verse 35. Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

Now, the text that Philip took that day when he spoke to the Ethiopian eunuch was taken from one of the most remarkable predictions known to literature.

As we see from this chapter, he took his text from Isaiah chapter 53, and he taught this seeking individual, taught him that the whole portion of Isaiah that he was reading was predicting the sufferings and the death and the exhortation of Jesus.

And as you know, most of the New Testament writers identify the suffering servant of Isaiah 52 and 53 with the Lord Jesus Christ.

My purpose this morning will be to focus attention with you upon Jesus Christ as he is presented to us in that portion of scripture.

[2 : 02] And consider the various views that that chapter, that portion of the Bible brings to our attention with reference to Jesus Christ.

Because as you know, Jesus Christ is a many-sided subject. And he is viewed in various ways and from various angles by the word of God.

The Bible, for example, speaks of him as a mediator. Speaks of him as a redeemer. Speaks of him as a prophet.

As a priest. As a king. Speaks of him as a savior. As a physician. As a miracle worker.

There are all these views presented in the Bible of Jesus. This morning I would like to concentrate on three particular aspects in which the Bible presents him to us.

[3 : 15] The passage from which Philip preached to the Enoch presents him. Or you may put it like this.

We will follow three persons as they consider the Lord Jesus Christ. In his sufferings.

In his death. And in his exhortation. And the three persons are these.

God's view. God the Father's view. Of his own son. In his sufferings. We write it there in Isaiah 52. Behold my servant.

God. And then. We will look at an unbeliever. Considering Jesus Christ and his sufferings. And in his death. And we will ask.

[4 : 16] What is the unbelieving world's estimate. Of this person of whom God says. This is. My servant. Well. This is the unbelieving world's assessment.

Of Jesus Christ. He is despised. And rejected. Of men. A man of sorrows. And acquainted with grief.

And then we will look thirdly. At the view. Of this person. What does this person think of Jesus. In his sufferings. And his death.

The believer. What is his assessment. How does he sum it up. How does he see. This wonderful picture. And this is.

His summing up of it. He was wounded. For our transgressions. He was bruised. For our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace. Was upon him.

[5 : 15] And with his stripes. We. Are healed. These three views then. Of Jesus. Of Jesus. Who is presented to us. In this wonderful.

Passage. Of scripture. First of all. What God. Thought. Of his son. Behold. My servant.

Now you know that the word. Behold. In the bible. Has a particular meaning. It is a very common word. In the bible. And whenever it is used. It is used so that.

What is follows. From it. What follows after it. Will be given. Great. A. Consideration. By. The readers.

Father.

He came to do his will. And there was no... Do you realize this? That while Jesus was in this world, he was doing nothing but the will of the Father.

Nothing but the will of the Father. And the Holy Spirit was directing him at every single step to do the will of the Father.

[12 : 27] His own will was submerged, as it were, in the will of God the Father. He did nothing but what he was told to do by God.

Nothing. Behold, my servant. He never at any time of his humiliation. Never at any time did he act independently of God.

Never. The Holy Spirit was given to him to lead him. To direct him. To do whatever the Father told him to do.

And that was the great thrust of his ministry in this world. He was here doing the will of God the Father. All the miracles that he performed.

All the advice that he gave. Everything was done in dependence upon the Spirit of God. Some people may think that whenever Jesus preached, for example, that everyone who heard him was bound to be converted.

[13 : 45] But that wasn't the case. No one who heard Jesus was converted in any way other than people are converted today. The Holy Spirit blessing to their hearts what they heard from his lips.

And he was in his preaching, serving the Lord. In his ministry of healing, serving the Lord. In his ministry of prophecy, serving the Lord.

In his work of priesthood, serving the Lord. Behold, behold, my servant. Says God. As he looked out upon the whole of the ministry of Jesus.

My servant. Doing my will. Even to the extent of death. Dying on the cross. He was there doing the will of God the Father.

That was him doing the will of God. And there is a very wonderful picture there for us. Of the difference between the death of Jesus and the death of any other individual.

[14 : 53] Not in the nature of death. You see, death is that which severs soul from body. And as far as that was concerned, that was the death that Jesus died.

It was a natural death. His soul and death was severed from his body. I don't know how you would define death clinically.

Today, medically. But certainly from a point of view, from theologically. It is the emphasis the Bible places on it for us is this.

That at the point of death, whenever it occurs. A person's soul is severed from his body. The spirit is released from the body.

If you want to use the word released. Now in that sense, Jesus' death was an after one. But in other respects, it was very different to an after one.

[15 : 58] Death. In dying, he was doing the will of God. He was, as the New Testament tells us, as the Old Testament passage, this one, I say, 53 tells us.

He was pouring out his soul unto death. He was giving himself to death when it came to the point of dying. Jesus, one of theologians, put it, summoned death to himself.

There is no person in the universe who summons death to himself. Death comes to him. And no matter what he tries. And no matter how much this, no matter how strongly he struggles against it. Death will inevitably and eventually take that person. But when it came to the death of Jesus.

Remember how the New Testament puts it?

Survey. And this is a picture you have of the trees on the cross. Surveying the whole of Old Testament prophecy. Surveying the whole of Old Testament typological teaching.

[17 : 01] Surveying all that he had to do. Looking as it were, scanning. All the program that God the Father had given him to accomplish.

When he looked at it all, he realized, he saw, it was all accomplished. Only one thing remained to be done. That was to die.

And looking at the whole program, he said of it, it is now finished. And he cried with a loud voice, it is finished. And he gave up the ghost, saying, Father, into thy hand I commit my spirit.

That was Jesus dying. As Dr. Hugh Martin put it, his greatest doing was his dying. He was active in death.

You and I aren't. No passion is and no passion was. Jesus is the only person who was ever active in death.

[18 : 05] He died. He gave himself, rather, in dying to death. And as there was no point of his ministry, in which his service to God comes more clearly to light, than in that act of dying, when his father could say of him, Behold my son, or my servant, into my soul he lighteth.

This was God's view of Jesus. Why was he in this world? What was he doing in this world? Why is he suffering in this world? Why is he on that cross dying in this world?

The world beholds his God. Consider this. That's my servant. There is doing my will.

It pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief. See that you and I recognize.

The inseparable link between Jesus suffering and dying in the world and God the Father sending him into the world that he may suffer and die.

[19 : 31] Secondly, this world in which he lived and this people amongst whom he lived and this people to whom he spoke and this people amongst whom he suffered and this people in whose presence he died.

What did these people, what did they think of Jesus in his sufferings? If God said of him, this is my servant, how did this unbelieving world into which Jesus came, how did they react to him?

What was their assessment of him? What was their summing up of this person in his sufferings unto death? Despised and rejected of man.

Now, this is the case to this day. Listen to the prophet as he opens his 53rd chapter. Who has believed our report? This was the evangelical.

You've heard of Isaiah refer to us the evangelical prophet, haven't you? Well, the meaning of that is this, that Isaiah of all the prophets is the one who speaks mostly of Jesus Christ. And here he was, speaking about Jesus, hundreds of years before he came into the world.

[20 : 43] Speaking about the necessity of his being sent into the world by God and being sent into the world as a saviour. And the prophet was told by God, go and tell the people about my provision for them.

And he went. And this was his complaint as he was preaching to them. Who has believed our report? Who has believed this message, this proclamation? All the people to whom we speak, he says, who has seen the arm of the Lord?

And that's a reference to the power of God operating in the lives of men and women, boys and girls. Who has really believed this and felt this in their own lives?

Very few, he says. He shall grow up before them as a tender plant and as a root of a dry ground.

This person, he says, of whom I speak, he has no form nor comeliness.

When people see him, there is no beauty that they should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. People hide their faces from him. They don't want it to be taken up with this person.

[21 : 48] He is despised and he is not esteemed. Well now, this as you know is the case to this very day.

There is nothing new under the sun. In Isaiah's day, Christ wasn't very important. People didn't have enough time for it. They couldn't be bothered considering this report.

God was calling to these people. He says, look, consider this. Stop for a minute. Fix your attention on this. Behold. They couldn't be bothered. They, as I said earlier, had enough time.

They were taken up, so taken up with far too many other things. Jesus wasn't important enough for them. But as I've said before here, on other occasions, he wasn't big enough for the people of his day.

He wasn't big enough for the people in Isaiah's day. He wasn't big enough for his own generation.

And he's not big enough for people in 1986. They can't be bothered with the Lord Jesus Christ.

[22 : 56] I think these words would sum up the meaning of this passage. People, to this day, turn away from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why are there not more people frequenting the churches in our town and our land today? Why don't more people come to hear the gospel? Is it because they're too lazy? Is it because they can't be bothered getting up in the morning or the program on the television is too good in the evening?

Is that really why? Maybe these are the excuses. But at the root of it all is this. They have no time for the Lord Jesus Christ. They're too busy with other things. Life is too full of other things.

And he's not big enough to push these things out of their thinking. They're not prepared to be taken up with the Lord Jesus Christ.

God in the gospel speaks to them today as he spoke then. Behold my servant. This is the whole purpose of the preaching of the everlasting gospel. That the attention of people might be directed to and riveted upon the Lord Jesus Christ in his sufferings and in his death.

[24 : 11] People are told that there's a meaning in all this for them. But they don't see it like that.

and they haven't got the time to devote to the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't it staggering to think that the Lord can give being to a person in this world and give him seven days in the week.

Twenty-four hours each day. And isn't it a staggering thought to think that there are many people in this world and in this town and connected with this congregation who can't be bothered giving the Lord to whom they are accountable one hour out of their whole existence in one week.

Isn't that an awful thought? But then you see my friend this has always been the case. And we are only saying what Isaiah said he said the same in his day.

Who is bothered about this proclamation and this message and this report? Well may you be here today perhaps coming into this category turning away hiding your face the meaning of that though there's some difference of opinion amongst expositors on the meaning of these words we hear the world faces from.

[25 : 52] This could mean that when this is presented to people well they just don't have the time for this that's where someone put a tract in your hand and you look at the tract salvation for men and they crumple it up into the waste paper basket.

Perhaps a Bible in your house lying there on the shelf all about the remedy of God for your salvation and for your ruin. You never open it you never touch it with your hand from time to time maybe on a Sabbath or perhaps if you don't want to bother carrying it down the road you'll get one at the church door anyway.

That sums up your attitude to the word of God. Are you like that? And that Bible is speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ saying to you behold my servant but do not bother about that person and the Bible lies untouched.

the gospel preached week after week after week perhaps an occasional soak in the church and that sums up your attitude.

Remember this not your attitude to the church not to me not to the eldership not to your upbringing your parents may be gone many a long day ago doesn't sum up your attitude to them so much as it sums up your attitude to God's remedy for you ruin God says to you look think about this Jesus whom I sent into this world to do my will but not you oh no you defy God and you say to him that's not good enough for me you think that's good enough for me a great being like me an important individual like me with all that I have in life oh well my friend God does nothing else for you and God presents no one else to you and you will never in all your life hear of anybody else as a savior of your soul

[27 : 53] Philip preached this beginning at the scripture preached unto him Jesus sent into this world to die for sinners and this you not looked at him he considered him he listened to him he applied it to himself and he believed it he believed that this was a savior and he believed that this was the person whom he needed but perhaps that's not the way the unbelieving world assess the Lord despised rejected turning away from him not good enough still on a fence still a stumbling block still foolishness to the unenlightened dark and natural heart well you ask yourself here today is that the category that you still belong to as you consider finally this third view of this you see that's not the view that everyone in this world has of the Lord in his sufferings and in his death let me speak to you just for a minute in the passing of one man who lived many years ago and this is the view that he had of him he despised him he rejected him he wouldn't have

Jesus Christ at any cost even in his thinking and he didn't want other people to believe in him either and he went about this world persecuting harrying people from pillar to post arresting them and being a party to their death because of their allegiance to Jesus do you know who that man was Saul of Tarshish and then as you know something happened in that man's life the Lord laid his hands on him in conversion changed the whole culture of his life of his thinking of his outlook and that man has left this on record that Jesus that Jesus who made his despise and rejected this is what he said of him after he was converted God forbid he said that I should glory save on the cross of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ what a transformation what happened well as I said he was converted the spirit of the Lord took possession of that man's darkened mind shed light for him

upon the meaning of the gospel on the meaning of Jesus mission into the world and he saw it in a different light he saw it from the standpoint of God he saw it with the light of the spirit and this is what he said that's all my salvation now or as I say

I put it putting the words into the mouth of a man like Saul why was Jesus in this world he was wounded for our iniquities bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed what's he saying well just this apart from the sin of man the mission of Jesus into the world is meaningless apart from the sin of man meaningless or you can talk about him as an example you can talk about him as a social reformer you can talk about him as a teacher you can talk about him as a great leader and he was all that but above all that he was a savior and don't forget it this is the emphasis of the Bible upon the mission of Jesus and I needn't I needn't spend time emphasizing this point in the pulpit of Stornoway it's been emphasized in this pulpit for years and years and years and years the emphasis is missing in many another place to the great detriment of men and women boys and girls Jesus is preeminently a savior of men from sin from sin from sin and there are times when I wonder if we may be in danger of losing that emphasis even in so called evangelical circles Jesus the savior of men from sin from sin not the Jesus who can come into your life to make it easy for you to live in sin but the Christ took us into the life to break the power of sin and that is the emphasis of the Bible he was in this world for our sins and there are fourfold view here and I just want to deal with this very very briefly in closing a fourfold view of Jesus in his sufferings for sinners wounded and we heard this a couple of weeks ago what I'm going to say to you at the evangelistic service from Professor Donnelly wounded for our transgressions bruised for our iniquities chastened for our peace upon us with the stripes healing now do you notice there's as it were a fourfold cord there four strands four views which sin is brought before us first of all transgression this is what we heard remember transgression is the outward manifestation of an inward state or an inward condition the policeman here today will tell you that transgressions are what people the acts that people commit outwardly now people why the great question is and this is a great question which has perplexed so many sociologists why do people do these things you see people try to get at the root cause of these things that people do and they're perplexed with this question and the answer the bible gives us is this people do these things outwardly because there's an inward condition of man known as iniquity iniquity and you see the two things brought together in the sufferings of Jesus wounded for our transgressions bruised for our iniquities now remember what transgressions are outward acts the sins that people see iniquities the inward condition the inward pollution of our nature from which these sins emanate now we know that Jesus had no sin in him he had sin on him he bore our sins but he had no sin in him but you see at the same time because he was bearing your sins he had to suffer outwardly and inwardly because this is what sin does it does something to you outwardly and it works in you inwardly and that is why these two things are brought together in the sufferings of Jesus he suffered outwardly he was wounded for our transgressions he was wounded in the palms of his hands he was wounded in his forehead he was wounded in his hands he was wounded in his side there were public open manifestations manifestations because

sin is public and open there are some people who have taught that it wasn't necessary for Jesus to suffer openly and publicly nonsense he had to because sin is public sin is open and he had to be bruised he had to be wounded rather for our sins and you know that one of the great sufferings of Jesus is this that the sufferings were public and open you know that when people suffer and when people are particularly in the throes of death and when death is particularly trying accompanied with great suffering it is a relief perhaps not so much for the sufferer as for those who are with him or her it's a relief to know that that person in that time of suffering is cut off from the outside world screened from the public gaze it is said that the animal itself in that great moment of suffering wants to be alone so that people have no other eyes on it in its suffering but you see that mercy itself was denied our Lord sitting down they watched him there and he was wounded publicly openly because he bore our sins in his own body on the tree and as he was bearing it outwardly so he was suffering inwardly you see sin is inward he had no sin in himself but he had to bear the inner suffering that is associated with sin because he bore our sins in his own body and the word the

[38 : 10] Bible uses is he was bruised for our iniquity a word which speaks of the human spirit being crushed crushed and though his sins those sufferings were exposed to the public gaze outwardly there were sufferings in the life of Jesus known only to himself and to his father and to the spirit he suffered as you've heard often enough extensively the same as the thief on the cross the thieves on the cross but he suffered intensively more than we will ever understand it pleased the

Lord to bruise he has put him to grief and the point at which his spirit was really bruised and crushed was this when he cried out on that cross from the darkness of the cross my God my God why hast thou forsaken me that was the that was the deepest point of the bruising of the son upon the cross that was the deepest point of the bruising when he had to endure the father turning away from him in his suffering so you see there was inner suffering because sin in us is in

Lord though he had no sin himself then there is the third strand the chastisement of our peace was upon him why was he there because he made reconciliation for God on behalf of the people that was why he was there there was you see God and we God and us we were cut off from one another this is what this peace means estrangement before you can have reconciliation two parties must be brought together but you see before you can bring them together you must deal with what has caused the estrangement why are they estranged why do people break off relationships one with another why be it in a home or in school union negotiations government international affairs why do people break off relationships because something is wrong between them and before these relationships can be restored before reconciliation can be effected that which has caused it must be dealt with first and God and man were pulled apart they were estranged one from the other why because of the sin of man man was cut off from God because of sin and what did Jesus have to do to restore the broken relationship to make peace he had to endure the punishment due to us for our sins chastisement means fatherly punishment

Jesus took our sins he was chastised because he was a sin bearer and because he carried our sins away in his death reconciliation has been effected peace comes to us because he was chastised for our sins finally with the stripes we are healed what does healing do healing is a what does sin do rather sin is a disease in the human heart we are diseased as the psalmist there is a iron full of putrefying souls and wounds sin is the spiritual leprosy of the human heart sin defiles there is decay where there is untreated sin and there is death where there is untreated sin so how can healing be brought to us well he has to be he has to endure all our punishment he has to give sins away that he may restore peace that he may restore healing that he may become our saviour and our cessation he has to enter into our position and carry our sins away in his sufferings unto death on the cross and as the believer looks at Jesus today in the

Bible he says of him the exact opposite of what the unbeliever says the unbeliever despised him he turns away from him he doesn't need him he's got no time for him the believer turns to the Lord and he says this of him I can't do without you I need thee oh I need thee I need thee as my saviour I need thee as my healer I need thee as my reconciler I need thee as my all and if you are a Christian here today one thing you can assuredly say of Jesus Christ is this you cannot do without him isn't it strange and it's sad that you can have people sitting side by side in a home in a church or wherever you are you can have people sitting side by side the one cannot do without

Christ and the other has no time for the same Christ well my friend who are you today where do you stand today as the Bible presents this Christ to you and you behold says God my servant how do you in your heart react to that same passion let us pray have mercy upon us bless to us thy truth to thou give us grace to lay hold of thee by faith and forgive our sins we pray thee for Jesus sake amen