

## God's Servant Was Stricken by God

‡ to carry our sorrows (v.4)

‡ to be punished for our peace (vv.5-6)

In the Name of God's Servant, our Savior Jesus Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

A few weeks ago after our Midweek Lenten service one of the grade school kids asked me two very good questions: "Why do we need another translation? Can't we just translate word-for-word?"

Why we need another translation involves copyright issues. The King James Version was the Bible for the English speaking world for about 400 years, yet it was revised several times. The Christian Bible for 1000 years before that was the Vulgate, but it was in Latin. And Jerome muddied many of the verses of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone – as the Vatican required. In the 1950's when Americans were struggling to understand the old King James English, Lutheran pastors and professors of our fellowship saw the need for a faithful translation in modern English. One Seminary professor even started working on it. But the cost of time and travel was too high. Since the 1970's we've depended on the New International Version, but their charter requires updating the English, which can leave us with copyright problems. For a long time the only major denomination not translating the Bible were the Lutherans, except as individuals. Strange because Martin Luther was one of the major scholars who influenced men like Tyndale to translate into the English which eventually became the KJV.

Is all this confusing? It certainly can be. But what we don't want to confuse in the least is this central truth from the heart of the Fourth Servant Song of Isaiah: **God's Servant Was Stricken by God.**

‡ to carry our sorrows (v.4)

Our young Bible student's second question is right on point too. "Why can't we just translate word-for-word?" The first verse of our text can demonstrate for us:

<sup>4</sup>~~However,~~ *Surely he himself bore our sicknesses/weaknesses,  
and our sufferings—he carried them.  
But we ~~ourselves~~ considered him to be punished stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.*<sup>2</sup>

Trying to get a computer program such as Google translator to give us a word-for-word translation would not sound like good English. The word order is different: Hebrew wants verbs first, German last, English middle. Plus the translator must often choose between several English words. The first word of this text (וְכִי) can mean, "but, however, surely..." There is a strong contrast from last week's text: "**He was despised and rejected by men, a man who knew grief and was intimately acquainted with suffering. Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised and we thought nothing of him.**"

"**But...!**" there's a good reason why the Suffering Servant of the LORD looked so bad. And it was not His fault. Tonight we find out it's all because of us! Yet this Hebrew word (וְכִי) is not the usual word for "but" because it also means *sureness, truth* and *strong assertive force*. How do we choose? Here tradition can help us. Some of you may have this musical tradition ringing in your head already.

<sup>1</sup> Midweek Lenten Series: *God's Servant + Our Savior* at New Life Evangelical Lutheran, Shoreview, Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup> The words of this sermon text are part of my draft review for a translation project. [M.C. 2/24/2016]

There was a young boy in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England who impressed nobility and everyone who heard him improvising on the organ. He could just sit down and make up the music. In his 20's he became the best paid composer on earth. At the Royal Academy of Music, Londoners fought for seats at every one of his performances. But finally his music went out of style, leaving him nearly bankrupt. All the pundits were certain his inspiration was gone, his best days were over.

One morning in the mail came a script with the words from many different Bible texts. They began with Isaiah 40, ***“Comfort, comfort ye my people.”*** They also included words from this text: ***“Surely, he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows....”*** On August 22, 1741, the aging musician shut himself in his London home and started composing music for these Holy Scriptures. Twenty-three days later, he emerged with one of the most famous works of music still sung in parts and in whole by choirs throughout the world. You'll even hear bits and pieces in the music of TV commercials. Everyone who has heard the *Messiah* by George Frideric Handel, remembers, ***“Surely, surely, he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows....Surely, surely...”***<sup>3</sup>

But there's more than tradition here for that first word. Everything that follows is absolutely sure because God makes no secret about our sins. He does not try to sugar coat or deny them. From the Bible beginning we see how sickness and suffering came into this world because of Adam's rebellion against God in the Garden. Not just our bodies suffer, but our hearts from broken promises – disappointed in love and relationships. And our souls feel anguish because of guilt. Yet God in mercy instead of punishing us for this suffering and grief sent His Servant: ***“Surely he himself bore our sicknesses, and our sufferings – he carried them. But we considered him to be punished, smitten by God, and afflicted.”*** Knowing this was God's own Son, we have to ask, why would God punish Him? Why strike Him with the soldiers' hands and finally afflict His soul so cruelly on the cross? **God's Servant Was Stricken by God....**

### † to be punished for our peace (vv.5-6)

How would you feel if someone stepped up and volunteered to pay a huge traffic fine that you could not cover? Say your semi-truck ran off the road and did huge damage, but the insurance company said it was all your fault – and they would not pay. But someone else did. Our debt to God began when we were conceived in our mother's womb and runs non-stop with evil thoughts and undone good deeds until the day we draw our last breath. How do we pay debt like that? We could not. So God stepped up. His Son, God's Servant, volunteered.

***“But actually, he was the one pierced because of our rebellion, he was the one crushed because of our iniquities. The punishment to bring us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each one of us turned to his own way, but the LORD executed on him the iniquity of us all.”***

Doesn't that help when sleep runs away because you're feeling guilty? Does not matter what for. No need to make excuses; don't even try. Remember the LORD's Suffering Servant is also your Good Shepherd, always out searching for His lost sheep. When He finds you cast down in near despair, shivering cold in the damp wind, His strong hands lift you up. He gets out his flask of brandy to warm you up and get your little tail wagging again. Maybe He scolds a little. “Why did you wander off again, you naughty sheep?” But you can hear such love in His voice and feel it in His hands still showing the marks of the nails where He poured out His blood for you. He's taking you going home. And that means that at every age of your life, even if the whole world thinks you're a washed out “has-been,” the LORD God is still seeking, still loving you with all His heart. Sometimes you just need a few days alone with Him – like George Frideric Handel who continues to bless us with God's Word set to music in his *Messiah*: ***“Surely, surely....”*** Oh, so *surely* Christ for us all. Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> Morgan, Robert J. *On This Day* – August 22, “Twenty-Three Days.” © 1997 by Robert J. Morgan. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. [www.laridian.com](http://www.laridian.com) .  
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