

SERMON DISCUSSION STARTERS

- ☀️ **Only when we accept the true nature of the cross can we appreciate the depth of Christ's sacrifice.** If you ignore the gore, or spurn the offensiveness of Jesus' execution, then you fail to understand the depth of his love.
- **He was wounded for OUR transgressions. He was bruised for OUR iniquity.** In (John 10:17-18) Jesus says, "I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." Jesus willingly gave his life in the brutal slaughter of the cross because he loved us. (Romans 5:8) says, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- **Has the cross been domesticated in your view? Has it simply become a decoration, a pendent, or a picture on the wall? Or have you chosen to ignore the cross altogether?** Perhaps you want no signet of his death because you view it as an unfortunate loss or a tragic shame. In either case, Isaiah 53 challenges us to see the offense of the cross, and appreciate its necessity. Take some time today to give thanks for the cross. Take some time today to glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14) "Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

☀️ The cross was the intentional plan and purpose of God.

- We could even say that it was His pleasure or will (Isaiah 53:10) "Yet it was the will of the Lord [Yahweh] to crush him." The Father did not joy in the suffering itself, but rather in what that suffering was working – namely, our justification (Rom. 3:24-25) "[We] are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."
- **How have you responded to God's plan for redemption? Have you embraced Jesus' sacrifice as a substitute, a payment for the debt you owe? Have you received his grace gift by faith alone?** God the Father poured out His wrath on the Son so that He would not have to pour out his just wrath on you. Give praise to God for his loving purpose and plan. Give praise to God for the cost of redemption paid in full by Jesus.

☀️ The cross was shameful and purposeful, but it was not final.

- The story doesn't end with Jesus' death. God the Father recognized and rewarded the Son's sacrifice. Jesus rose from the dead. He conquered the grave and in so doing demonstrated God the Father's stamp of approval. (Isaiah 52:13) says, "he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted." And so He was that first Easter.
- We celebrate that today. He lives! Rejoice in the resurrection today. **Take some time to think about the implications of Jesus being risen from the dead.** Perhaps you could read 1 Corinthians 15 and just revel in the resurrection.