



Studies on the Suffering Servant
Isaiah 52-53

Isaiah 52:13-15: life group study

What is your understanding of a servant? Where did you get this picture or idea from?

1. The role of the Servant (*read 52:13-15*)

Q1. What is the role of the Servant as seen in verses 13 and 15? (that is, what will this servant do?) How might these verses be fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus? Read also Romans 15:20-21 and Philippians 2:9

2. The appearance of the Servant (*read Isaiah 52:14*)

Q2. How does the Servant look in verse 14? What's your first responses to this? How might these words have come to fulfilment in Jesus' life and ministry?

Q's 3 and 4. Reflecting on St Matt's Year of Prayer, how might the following two aspects of Jesus' life and ministry shape our prayers?

1. Jesus' wisdom and exalted nature. What does prayer to a wise and exalted Servant King look like in the here and now? Give examples.
2. Jesus' appearance – appalling, disfigured, marred... What does prayer to a suffering Servant King look like in the here and now? Give examples.

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Q5. How will you prayerfully put in practice the above – now and during the week?

Isaiah 53:1-3 life group study

What were you like as a child? What were the defining moments of your development as a 'unique person'?

Read Isaiah 53:1-3

Q1. If you read Isaiah 51:1 – 52:12, why does 53:1 begin with “who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed”?

Q2. What is the worst photo that has ever been taken of you? Why?

Q3. It's pretty incredible that this passage is written in the past tense – He grew up, He had no beauty etc. God's servant would come and look just like this! What is the appearance of the Servant as seen in verse 2? What does this tell us about Jesus?

Q4. How does this match up with the appearance of Jesus in past and present culture? Is this how you think of Jesus?

Q5. How would people receive Jesus (v.3)?

Q6. Read Hebrews 4:15. How might Isaiah 53:2-3 help us to understand Jesus' ability to understand us, and therefore serve us as our Great High Priest?

Q7. How do you receive Jesus daily? List all the ways you respond to Him? How might this change in the following week after this study?

Isaiah 53:4-6 life group study

What are your thoughts of those who believe that the Holocaust never happened?

Read Isaiah 53:4-6.

Q1. List the personal attributes of Jesus, the Suffering Servant. What does this tell us about Jesus?

Q2. List all the attributes of people that Isaiah 53:4-6 speaks of. What does this tell us about people?

Q3. List all the things which were placed onto Jesus in Isaiah 53:4-6. What does this tell us about the person and work of Jesus?

Q4. What are your thoughts of people who believe that Jesus was just a nice man or a good teacher, but totally irrelevant to life today? Think in terms of Isaiah 53:4-6.

Q5. How would you reply to someone if they told you the following?

*“The fact is that the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse—a vengeful father, punishing his son for an offence he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith. Deeper than that, however, is that such a construct stands in total contradiction to the statement “God is love.” If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies and refuse to repay evil with evil. The truth is the cross is a symbol of love. It is a demonstration of just how far God as Father and Jesus as his son are prepared to go to prove that love. The cross is a vivid statement of the powerlessness of love.” Steve Chalke, *The Lost Message of Jesus**

Q6. What aspect of Jesus' death has most struck you from today's passage?

Q7. Understanding the cross should radically move our whole lives in a different direction. How? Be practical and specific.

Isaiah 53:7-10 life group study

What is your clearest memory of being in trouble for something you had done wrong? Or maybe, think of a time when you were innocent and unjustly accused of doing wrong. How did you respond?

Read Isaiah 53:7-10.

Q1. What words are used to describe the future trial of the Servant?

Read Matthew 27:1-31.

Q2. What words are used to describe the trial of Jesus?

Q3. Are there any similarities in the two above passages?

Q4. Why do you think Jesus was silent?