

ISAIAH FIFTY-THREE SIX

Intro: (This is #4 in the series on The Great Verses of Scripture.)

On May 4, 1969 I preached from this pulpit on this text during a Sunday evening service. I am going to have to be like the preacher whose little boy said that his Daddy did not have to work hard. He just preached the same sermon over and over, but shouted in different places!

Well, some of you keep quite complete notes on what I have to say, so I have to do more tonight than just "shout in different places." It is not difficult to come back again and again to a verse like Isa. 53:6 and find more than you saw before!

Since beginning this series on The Great Verses of Scripture, I have given considerable thought to the question, What makes a verse great? Why do we come back to certain verses again and again?

I am sure that one reason is the simplicity of a verse.

But there is also the fact that these are verses which have demonstrated their truthfulness to us in some way.

And then it seems that there is another factor that most favorite verses have in common. It is this: They speak primarily about what God does for us, as compared with what we are to do for Him. It seems that we do not care what it may say about us as long as it presents Him as the One who is able and willing to meet our needs.

Think how many passages you know that refer to people as sheep, and to the Lord as shepherd!

Now it is not particularly complimentary to be likened to sheep! They are not particularly attractive. They do not smell very good. They are probably among the most defenseless of all animals. They can easily get lost. And you can add other things which you and I would not normally apply to ourselves.

BUT HOW WE LOVE TO QUOTE PSALM 23!

In Psa. 100:3 we read, "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture!"

One startling thing about these verses is that this is what the people of God are saying about themselves. The same is true in our text tonight. This section begins with Isa. 52:13. In vv. 13-15 the Lord is speaking about His Servant, the Messiah. Then, beginning with 53:1 we have the voice of the people des-

cribing what will happen to the Servant, and in v. 6 we learn why!

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE REASON IS FOR MAN'S TROUBLE TODAY, read the first part of Isa. 53:6. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE TO MEET THAT NEED, read the last part of the verse.  
Let us look at this verse tonight from these two points of view.

#### I. WHAT HAS MAN DONE?

The people of Israel, illuminated by the Spirit of God, say, "He has done two things--tragic things!"

##### A. "Like sheep have gone astray."

This means that they have wandered from the shepherd and are lost, unprotected, and that this presents an especially alarming situation because sheep are so helpless.

This picture is seen many places in Scripture.

- 1) Cf. Psa. 119:176 (the last verse of the longest Psalm), "I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments."
- 2) Moses prayed for Israel saying, "Let the Lord . . . set a man over the congregation . . . that the congregation be not as sheep that have no shepherd" (Num. 27:16, 17).
- 3) Matthew tells us (9:36) that when our Lord "saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

There is in the verb which the people use the idea of missing their aim and failing in their efforts (see Ges., p. 1140).

But how generally is this true? Note: "All we . . ." The people are saying that what is true of all of us is true of any one of us, and you can single out any person and see evidences that will show you what is wrong with the whole flock.

Here, then, in this first expression, we are seeing what is true of the whole flock.

Now the statement singles out the sheep individually, but still the truth applies to all--but not in the same way.

##### B. "We have turned every one to his own way."

If it is alarming to see a flock of sheep lost, think

how much more alarming when you see one sheep off by himself.

"We have turned" is the translation of a Hebrew verb which means to turn to something to trust it. Isaiah uses it in Isa. 45:22 where we read, "Look unto me . . ."

Notice this in Zech. 10:2,

"For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain; therefore, they went their way like a flock; they were troubled, because there was no shepherd."

In Psa. 60:11 you see the despair of one who has turned to his own way. "Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man."

We sing it in our hymns: "The arm of flesh will fail you. Ye dare not trust your own."

Cf. Prov. 14:12,

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Jeremiah lamented,

"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

It is quite apparent that man has wandered from the right way and that he always is inclined to make the wrong solution. Can you see in this a picture of your own heart?

Is there any hope? Let us look at the last part of the verse to see . . .

## II. WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE.

"And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Let us examine this carefully. There are four things I want you to see here:

A. That what is mentioned in the first part of this verse is "iniquity."

Regardless of the sins you and I may have committed, we will not see our real need until we realize that our basic sin is that we have turned from the Lord and have gone our own way. This is what Jeremiah said: "They have forsaken ME."

B. Note Who it is Who has done something about it.

It is not the sheep; IT IS THE LORD! And the name that is used here is Jehovah. I love to remind people of the meaning of this name. It means the One who never changes, the One who is always the same--regardless of what men may do, and regardless of the ways they may turn for help to others--or for how long!

C. What has He done? "The Lord hath laid upon him."

Who is the "him" referred to in this passage? Just so there will be no mistake, please turn to Acts 8:26-35. Where in Isaiah was the eunuch reading? From Isa. 53:7b, 8a. Who is the "him"? Isaiah 53 is speaking of "Jesus." What the Lord did with Him is the answer to man's need!

What did He do? The English here, according to David Baron, "is too weak and suggests the idea of mild and inoffensive gesture" (The Servant of Jehovah, p. 96--footnote).

What does it mean? It means to strike a person violently, putting him to death! ALL OF THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF CALVARY ARE BROUGHT BEFORE US HERE IN A VERB! Jesus Christ was struck down for the sake of sin. "Iniquity" includes:

- 1) The sin itself.
- 2) The guilt incurred.
- 3) The judgment deserved. (According to Delitzsch.)

But there is one more thing: For whom did He die?

D. For whom? "The iniquity of us all."

Listen carefully. This verse begins in the Hebrew as it ends. And it would seem to be sound exegesis to say that, if you are included in the first "all we," then you are included in the second "us all."

Concl: It is easy to see why so many of the Lord's people know this verse, and why it should be considered one of the great verses of Scripture. There is such a simple picture here of man's need, and God's remedy.

But let me close with this for any who may not know one further point. Just because Jesus Christ died, it does not follow that you are forgiven. You must accept Him as your own personal Savior. See Isa. 55:6, 7; John 3:16.