Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.  Amen.

Today we continue our Lenten theme of ***Waiting for the Lord: Joining the Old Testament Saints in Vigil***, as we are Waiting for the Lord: To Carry Our Sorrow.

This passage from Isaiah is some of the most incredible Gospel! Of course, to know it as Gospel, we need to understand Gospel as God understands it, as God's work for man. What we do in love for God is not Gospel. That we do such is however, good, right, and salutary – in fact, it is required of us – which is why it is Law, and not Gospel.

This passage from Isaiah is some of the most descriptive language portraying the suffering of God's Christ. It is Gospel, for it shows what God’s Christ endure in our stead, and for our sake.

But even as we know all this, the burdens of our life in this world weigh heavy upon our hearts and minds. In fact, sometimes the sorrows of this life seem so heavy we fear they may overwhelm us.

Earlier this year my heart was heavy with the sorrows of having to proclaim God's word at the death of five dear friends. I have been their pastor for many years, had visited them regularly, they were near and dear to me. When loved ones depart this life, even knowing that one day we will be together again in God’s kingdom of glory, we are still left in sorrow.

**Waiting for the Lord: To Carry Our Sorrow**

**Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

Good Friday – 04.15.2022

How many of you carry that same sorrow in your heart, grief at the loss of a loved one? What other sorrows weigh heavy on your heart? Uncertainty because of some illness that you are bearing? Uncertainty of an illness in another loved one? Maybe sorrow that some close relationship is now broken, the family may even be splintered because of an unresolved argument?

From the time Satan began his temptation in the garden by asking, “Did God really say?” and they ate the fruit – to this 15th day of April, 2022, the cause of sorrow has been, and remains the same.

What is it you ask? What is the cause of death? What is the cause of illness? What is the cause of broken relationships? What is it that causes sorrow? The answer is all the same! It is sinfulness!

Which one of us is unstained by sinfulness?

Of course, the answer is, none of us! *All we, like sheep, have gone astray! We have turned—every one of us—to his own way.*

And still, we try to be the strong ones. How many times, when there have been sorrows in the family, have we tried to carry them by being the strong one. We like to think, “I have to be strong for the family. I need to carry the burden for a while. I am the only one that others can lean on.”

That is the height of sinfulness, speaking in pure arrogance! I cannot carry myself, or my own sorrows – much less anybody else and their sorrow. In fact, it is the same dilemma with every single sinner. No sinner can carry their own sorrows, much less another’s. And yet we try!

How many times have people, overwhelmed while trying to carry a burden, gone to God asking for His help and do so in a confused manner? What do they ask for? They ask that they might be made strong enough to carry not only their burdens, but the burdens of others.

In our sinfulness, we want to be made strong enough so that we can do the task. Why? Why this infatuation with self?

Satan has led the world to tell us his lies, “Tap the strength within yourself. Reach down into your heart for that is all you need to do to find ***your*** strength! You are enough!”

I am not, neither are you! When we are most honest with ourselves, we fall down upon our knees and beg God, “Lord, I believe help my unbelief!” True faith comes repentant before God! There is no boasting! But there is honesty and truth, “I'm a failure, a miserable sinner! I am not enough! I cannot do it! Lord, help me!” Like Paul we need to confess our weaknesses. Paul related this. *A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.* (2 Cor. 12:7-10)

Going back to the very beginning, after they were removed from the garden, Eve became pregnant. She thought she was giving birth to the one who was going to carry their sorrows, to restore them from shame to glory. But she did not give birth to the Lord.

Long have believers been waiting for the Lord to carry our sorrow. That is why our text from Isaiah is so comforting. God reveals to us that there is one who carries our sorrows. Did you hear it?

It is not what people expect though. There is no strongman, no mighty one, at least not as we would understand it in worldly terms. In fact, *his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—so shall he sprinkle many nations.*

It was that Friday which we today call Good that it happened. He was abused and beaten, whipped, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross. But why is that good? What good could it possibly accomplish? We like to ask, “How does that help me with my sorrows?” *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.*

Do we fully understand what was going on after Pilate sent Him to Golgotha? We know it was done to Him, but we think it was injustice. Indeed, it was! He was the only one who was without sin, perfect and holy. He did not deserve to die. How sad! It wasn’t fair. We think such things for we only see Jesus as the innocent man. He was so much more!

He was the Son of God, who took on our flesh according to God’s plan. It was according to Divine purpose. *Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to His own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

It was laid upon Him because we cannot carry it. We look for Him to carry our sorrows, but it was accomplished upon the cross. He has already done so! *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment, he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

What had Jesus done that He should die? What had our Savior done that He should endure such suffering?

*It was the will of the Lord to crush Him; He has put Him to grief; when His soul makes an offering for guilt, He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in His hand*.

But why? Why would it be the will of God that His own Son should suffer in such a manner? What could be the possible purpose for His Son to endure such agony? *Out of the anguish of his soul He shall see and be satisfied; by His knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will divide Him a portion with the many, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

I could try to say it better, to put it into my own words, write a better sermon. What arrogance that would be, to think I could say it better than Him who inspired Isaiah to speak in our text.

We are waiting for the Lord to carry our sorrow because we are looking for something as we would like to see it. Our eyes are longing for a worldly type answer. But all we need to do is bow a repentant knee and know that God, in Christ Jesus, has already carried all to His cross. Isaiah has already proclaimed this better than I could ever state it. *He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.* In the name of Jesus. Amen.