

The Only Remedy for Our Spiritual Sickness

“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that bought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

It’s difficult to come to terms with the depth of our sin. The temptation is to make light of our daily struggles, and perhaps even believe the lie that we’re not actually terrible sinners, each of us in need of rescue. But have you ever talked critically about your friend behind her back? Have you ever been filled with jealousy over your best friend’s boyfriend or girlfriend? Have you ever been tempted to cheat on a test that you did not prepare for? Have you ever lied to your parents about where you were?

Sin Infects Us All

The reality is, sin infects every single person on a daily basis. And in the same way that we notice signs of becoming physically ill, we need to also consider the signs of spiritual sickness. Whether you have experienced a period of intense anger or jealousy, or whether you struggle daily to turn away from lust or dishonesty, we all battle spiritual illness. And often we want to blame someone for our sin, as if this will soothe our conscience, as if shifting responsibility is the only remedy for our deepest struggles and wounds. The humbling truth is that your sin is *your* sin. Every human heart is immersed with spiritual sickness, and unfortunately, we often pass it on to others.

Is there a remedy?

Re-read the prophetic words above from Isaiah. God promised a remedy in the form of a Savior who would come to earth and pay the penalty for our sin, completely curing our spiritual sickness. And this promise was fulfilled 800 hundred years later when a baby was born and laid in a dirty manger surrounded by donkey and sheep.

Do you see how magnificent this is? The “he” that was promised by Isaiah thousands of years ago is *Jesus*, and the “we” that he wrote about is you and me. *With his wounds, we are healed.* When Jesus came to earth on the very first Christmas, born as a child in Bethlehem, the promise that a Savior would come to die in order to bring peace and healing was fulfilled. This sacrifice was not quick and painless, but Jesus was pierced *for you*. He was crushed and chastised *for you*. Jesus suffered in an agonizing way not for His sin, but for *yours*.

Why?

Because Jesus loves you more than you can comprehend. He is not keeping track of your sins, only hearing your prayers when you’ve been “good.” No. He has already completely and fully paid for those sins – both past and present. He knows the worst things you’ve ever done or thought, and because of Jesus He loves you unconditionally, *no matter what*. Because of Christ’s sacrifice, you have peace with God. You can shed the weariness caused by trying to make yourself worthy; Jesus calls you *His child* even on the worst days. You can throw away condemnation and shame for past sins; Jesus has paid for every one.

How should I respond?

During this Christmas season, give thanks for what Jesus has done for you! Ask Him to help you trust Him and ask him to give you the strength to turn away from foolish pursuits. He will do this because He loves you. He took on flesh in order to die the death that we deserve. There has not been nor will there ever be a greater sacrifice than the one Jesus has made for *you*, beloved child of God.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Is it hard or easy for you to believe that every last one of us is deeply afflicted by sin, equally in need of Jesus' salvation?

2. Verse 5 of Isaiah's prophecy says that Jesus was pierced for our "*transgressions*" and crushed for our "*iniquities*." *Transgression* refers to presumptuous sins – the times when we intentionally disobey. *Iniquity* goes a little deeper. To commit iniquity is to continue in sin without repenting. Jesus died for our transgressions and our iniquities, and His sacrifice on the cross was sufficient enough to cover the most depraved heart.

What response does this stir up in you? Read Ephesians 2:8-10, and discuss how these verses connect with the possible responses to Jesus' sacrifice.

3. Jesus was pierced, crushed, and chastised in order to bring you peace. Do you feel that peace with God this Christmas season? If so, how does this peace make a difference in your day-to-day activities? If not, what do you think are some of the barriers to experiencing this peace? Ask the Lord to reveal Himself to you that you might experience His peace, and then be watchful for the ways in which He will answer this prayer.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, open my eyes to the depth of my sin. Only when I have a right view of myself as a sinner do I understand my need for you. Thank you for being the remedy for this spiritual sickness. Thank you for coming to earth and for sacrificing yourself in order to set me free from the bondage of sin. I love you, Jesus.