

Advent 6: The Pleasure¹
Isaiah 53:10; Hebrews 12:2
ABC 12/29/19

My Advent series has been stretched out longer than usual for 2 reasons: 1) I was sick the Sunday before Christmas & 2) as I got into this series, I planned for a 6th message for the Sunday between Christmas & New Year. Because I missed a Sunday, you get it today, the 1st Sunday of 2020. Quiz time: What were the 1st 5 messages in this series? 1 – The Problem. What’s mankind’s problem? Sin. We’re all in rebellion to God, addicted to sin, & don’t want to serve God but ourselves. We’ve exchanged the glory of God in our affections for something else. That’s what sin is. 2 – The Promise? God would send a Redeemer to buy us out of our slavery to sin & redeem us for Himself. 3 – The Proclamation. The promised Redeemer would bring glory to God & by God’s grace restore us in our relationship with God. 4 – The Plan God would send the 2nd Member of the Triune Godhead to be the suffering Servant in our place. The punishment of our sins would be taken by Him & He would die in our place. We looked at 5 – The Present on Christmas Eve, the Gift God gave us in the incarnation of His Son who was born so that He might die in our place fulfilling God’s plan & fixing our problem. Today we see 6 -The Pleasure that God had in this as well as Jesus Himself. If I asked you to list the 5 top things that bring you pleasure, what would they be? Be honest. Don't feel the need to be super-spiritual. What brings you pleasure? If you look back at the end of the day & say, *Wow! That was a great day!*, why would you say that? Our pleasures, what we live for, say a lot about us. You know someone’s heart when you know what their desires are & what satisfies them, what brings them pleasure. This morning I want us to see not just God the Father’s pleasure in fulfilling His promise & plan to save us, but also the joy this brought Jesus as well. We see this unfold in what They desire, in what satisfies & brings Them pleasure & joy. & They aren’t at odds in this. They have one heart & goal. Here’s what we must understand: This magnificent story we’ve been considering is connected to pleasure in the heart of God. & when you get that, it changes the way you think about this story. Turn in your Bibles

¹ This Advent series adapted from Paul David Tripp’s Advent sermons from 2010

again to Isaiah 53. As we saw last week, this is God's plan to fix our sin problem. There is no clearer or greater demonstration of God's love for us than the sacrifice of His Son. **10 PRAY**

1. The Pleasure of God The Lord was pleased to crush Him. What does this mean? What does **pleased** mean? In Isaiah 1:11 God says, **What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me? ... I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams & the fat of fed cattle; & I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.** That's the same word used in 53:10. God doesn't take pleasure in the blood of bulls but **the Lord was pleased to crush Him.** So God is **pleased to**, has pleasure in crushing His Son. What is the crushing? It's the crucifixion & death of Jesus, making Himself a guilt offering for our sin & the prolonging of His days is a reference to His resurrection to eternal life. Before we go any further, notice who is ultimately responsible for the death of Jesus. According to God, He takes the responsibility for the death of His Son. That's what this vs says. It's meant to stop you up short; it's meant to make you ask the questions like, *What? How? Why?* The truth stands & can't be denied: *Jesus died because His Father willed that He should die.* The terrible suffering our Lord endured didn't happen by chance nor did it happen only because the Jewish leaders wanted it & Pilate cowardly caved in. Behind the selfish deeds of evil men stands the Lord God Almighty. He & He alone sent Jesus to the cross. Until you understand that fact, the true meaning of the birth, life, & death of Christ will be lost to you. God willed that His own Son be crushed. God planned that His own Son should suffer grief. God desired that His own Son be made an offering for sin. Beyond that, it brought Him pleasure. Yahweh ordained that something horrific, inexplicable, & incomprehensible would happen to His Servant. The Servant's death was God's doing, according to God's plan. As the first half of Acts 2:23 acknowledges, Jesus was **delivered over by the predetermined plan & foreknowledge of God.** Without diminishing the evil of the act, Scripture plainly teaches that this was precisely what God's hand & **purpose predestined to occur** (Acts 4:27-28). It was ultimately God who pierced Him for our transgressions, chastised Him to bring us peace, wounded Him to heal us, & laid our iniquities on Him.

Isaiah 53:10 is a verse we could take weeks digging into. Don't worry, we won't. But what does it mean, **the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief?** Think about that. We have to get

our minds around & our hearts open to what this means. How could it be that God the Father would ever find pleasure in the crushing & the grief of His Son? God, who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11), took pleasure in the death of His Son, the righteous One. As a father of 4 kids, I can't fathom this. I have no way of wrapping my mind around willingly putting one of my kids to death, much less taking pleasure in it. If you're a parent, think with me of the love you have for your children. You do everything you can to protect them from danger. You never want anything like what's described here to happen to your kids. That's the heart of a parent. So we have to look at this passage & ask, *What could be so powerful, so motivating in the heart of God, that He'd be willing, even find pleasure in, subjecting His Son to this horrible thing?* Again, Jesus was crushed, He suffered under the relentless, unrelieved terrors of divine wrath & fury against sin. God arrived in the blackness at Calvary to bring judgment, not on the ungodly, but on His own Son. God unleashes the full extent of His wrath against the sins of all who'd ever put their faith in Jesus. Infinite wrath moved by infinite righteousness brought infinite punishment on the eternal Son. Surely, **this is a difficult statement** (Jn 6:60), right? Even many Christians reject this truth thinking of it as divine child abuse. One writer cynically writes, *If God wants to forgive us, why doesn't he just do it? How does punishing an innocent person make things better? That just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. It sounds like divine child abuse. You know?*² In reality, the fact that God the Father made His own Son an offering for sin is the greatest possible expression of His love for humanity. **In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, & sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins** (1 Jn 4:10). Jesus absorbed the infinite judgment of eternal hell for all who will ever believe & then rose from the dead because He Himself is infinite God, with infinite power. Scripture is clear on this: He bore in His own body our sins (1 Pt 2:24). Although He knew no sin, He was made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21). He was pierced for our transgressions & crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). He was made a curse for us (Gal 3:13). This was the cup that He pleaded with the Father in Gethsemane to remove from Him, if possible. His cry from the cross, **My God, My God, why**

² Brian McLaren, *The Story We Find Ourselves In: Further Adventures of a New Kind of Christian*, p 143

have You forsaken Me? (Mk 15:34) reveals that the Father didn't comfort His Son through this. This is the only time in the NT where Jesus refers to God as anything other than *Father*. The Father was present in the fury of judgment but absent in terms of comfort. If Jesus was to endure the full punishment of our sins, that suffering had to include both the punishment of God & the absence of His comfort.

So again, how could God possibly have been **pleased** by bringing such agony & torment on His Son? Let me be clear: It was the *outcome* that pleased Him, not the *pain*. His pleasure in crushing Jesus & putting Him to grief wasn't in the torment inflicted on His Son, but in the Son's fulfilling His Father's purpose. It wasn't His agony, but His accomplishment; not His suffering, but the salvation His suffering accomplished. God was pleased because the Servant willingly sacrificed Himself as a guilt offering. He gave His life to save sinners. In other words, what was in the heart of God that allowed Him to be pleased in crushing His Son? The answer is His magnificent, faithful, joyous, redeeming love! How do we know? What does Jn 3:16 say? **God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...** God so loved sinful humanity that He was willing to do this radical thing, to give His Son to save them. God looked at this broken world, He looked at us, sinful, separated from & in rebellion against Him, & was so full of love, so full of grace, so full of compassion, He did something about it. He'd do whatever was necessary to redeem us. That's love! God doesn't find pleasure in the suffering of His Son; He finds pleasure in what that suffering would result in. God's pleasure is in what the Son accomplishes in dying. It says at the end of vs 10, **the good pleasure or delight (Isaiah 62:4) of the Lord will prosper in His hand.** God's pleasure isn't so much in the suffering of the Son considered in & of itself but in the great success of what the Son would accomplish in His death. There was pleasure in what the Son accomplished in His suffering, the justification of many sinners for the glory of God. Why was God pleased? What was it that pleased God? How could God be pleased? How could He possibly be pleased with such agonies? God's delight & God's pleasure in crushing His Son in this way wasn't in His pain, but in His purpose. It wasn't in His agony; it was in His accomplishment. It wasn't in His suffering; it was in His salvation. & that's what it says. Why was the Lord pleased?

Why pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief? *Because He would render Himself as a guilt offering. Because He would give His life to save sinners.* It was the outcome that pleased God, not the pain. But the pain & the agony was necessary. He had to die under the full, unmitigated, unrelieved, comfortless realities of divine law & wrath. That's why God is pleased. Pleased to crush Him, not because He delighted in the agony, but He delighted in the atonement. Pleased because He was the guilt offering for all believers from Adam on. Jesus was an acceptable sacrifice for sin, putting an end to the sacrificial system. He would have spiritual offspring & would live beyond the grave along with those who believe in Him. The sacrifice of Jesus gave God pleasure in a way none of the ancient sacrifices ever could. His sacrifice accomplished what they only typified. The reason for God's pleasure in the Son's death becomes even clearer in vs 11. **As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it & be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities (53:11).** This is the pleasure of God that prospers in the hand of the Son, the justification of sinners accomplished by the Son bearing their sin. This is why the Father is pleased to crush the Son.

2. The Joy of Jesus The writer of Hebrews helps us to see that it wasn't only the Father who was pleased with the death of Jesus; there was a sense of pleasure in it for Jesus as well. What does Hebs 12:2 say? **Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author & perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, & has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** Jesus understood the extent of the blessing that would come from His crushing at the hands of God. He could see the joy beyond the pain. He anticipated with pleasure the redemption of sinners as well as His own return to His Father's presence where He will rule forever.³ In the Garden of Gethsemane, just before His arrest, trial, & crucifixion, Jesus said to His Father, **My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will (Mt 26:39).** Whatever the suffering, He trusted His Father. His Father's will was what He lived by & died by. It was all He considered. He didn't leave His Father's presence & His heavenly glory, be born a baby, endure temptation, suffer ridicule, scorn, blasphemy, torture, & crucifixion, & experience

³ Nancy Guthrie, *Discovering Jesus in the OT*, reading for October 11

the misunderstanding & denial of His own disciples for the sake of whatever pleasures & satisfactions He had while on earth. No, He was motivated by much more than this. Only what was at the end of the race could have motivated Jesus to leave what He did & endure what He suffered. Jesus came to earth for two things here: **the joy set before Him & sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God.** He lived & died for the joy of exaltation. In His high-priestly prayer Jesus said to His Father, **I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was** (Jn 17:4–5). Jesus gained His reward by glorifying His Father while on earth, & He glorified God by doing the Father's will. When Jesus went to the cross, He endured all it demanded. He despised the shame & accepted it willingly, for the sake of His Father's pleasure & the joy of the result of His sacrifice.

Maybe you're sitting there thinking this morning, *OK, I understand this, I've heard it before. Why are you making such a big deal of this?* Here's why: Maybe sometime next week or next month or sometime this year, you'll be tempted to doubt God's love for you. Maybe it will be a period of physical suffering & you wonder why God has allowed that pain to be your experience. Maybe it will be in the midst of a relational disappointment; somebody you love has turned their back on you & you wonder why God has brought this into your life. Maybe it will be in a moment of financial difficulty. You've tried to be a good steward of the resources He's given you, but you've lost your job, & it doesn't make sense. Or maybe as you look around at the world we live in, you see evil prospering & you wonder, *Where is God? Where is His love?* What we're seeing this morning is your anchor in times like this. This is the place to run because not only does the giving of Jesus argue for the magnificence of God's love, but it also argues that He'll continue to love you. Rom 8:32 tells us, **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** Here's Paul's logic: If God would do this radical thing to offer His Son to cruel suffering & death, to be **pleased to crush Him**, will He not also give us everything else we need? It would make no sense for God to crush His Son for you & then turn His back on you in your moment of need. That doesn't make sense. Paul argues that

your guarantee that God will be faithful to you & meet your needs, is the death of Jesus. If God did this for you, He'll meet your other needs. Of course, we have a selfish problem with the word *need*. We load all kinds of things onto our needs list that aren't needs. Paul isn't arguing that God is going to grant your every wish & be your personal Santa or genie. He knows what you truly need & He's totally committed to meet every one of those needs. You don't have to be afraid & play out all the *what ifs*. You don't have to figure out the sovereignty of God because you can't. There are moments in life when God will confuse you. We see that in the Psalms frequently. Ps 13:1 says, **How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?** Sometimes it's the things that God brings into your life are confusing. You'll never find peace & rest by means of understanding because there are things God will do that you won't understand. But we always have a place to run to & an argument to give in those moments when it doesn't seem like God is listening, when He seems distant, when we're confused about what He's brought to us, when the thought comes taunting, *Where is your God now?* we have an argument to give. We open our Bible to Isaiah 53:10 & Rom 8:32, & I say, *If God would do this for me, will He not meet all of my needs?* When the Father forsook the Son & handed Him over to the curse of the cross & lifted not a finger to spare Him pain, He hadn't ceased to love the Son. In that moment when the Son was taking upon Himself everything that God hates in us & God was forsaking Him to death, even then the Father knew that the measure of His Son's suffering was the depth of His Son's love for the Father's glory & in that love the Father took pleasure.

I want to ask some pastoral questions this morning: Do you have rest in your heart? Do you live with peace, even when you're not in peaceful circumstances? Do you have a stability & a security that's not related to the issue of the moment? Do you torment yourself with an endless list of questions that you aren't able to answer? Do you wish you had more control than you'll ever have? If so, perhaps you haven't understood the full implications of the season we just celebrated. It's the ultimate demonstration of God's faithful love. If God would give His Son in this way, will He not also deliver everything you & I need? This is the place where peace & rest can be found. I don't know, & it's probably good that I don't, all the things you brought into the

room this morning. I don't know the hardships you're facing. I don't know the grief that's in your heart. I don't know the temptations you struggle with. But I do know you'll be tempted to wonder where God is & what He's doing. Isaiah 53:10 can strengthen you in those moments. God's love is magnificent & faithful. It's so powerful & so willing that He was pleased to give His Son to suffering & cruel death so we would have life. If He would do such a thing, is it conceivable that He'd abandon you in your moment of need? No, of course not! Rest won't be found in understanding. Rest is found in the pleasure of the Father & in the willingness & joy of His Son. There is no more clear-pointed, rest-giving demonstration of the love of God for you than the gift of His Son. In your moments of doubt or fear or hurt or discouragement, don't run from this One, run to Him, run towards the love displayed on the cross. It's God's gift to you.

Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York & current presidential candidate, said a few years ago that it was his work that has won him God's favor & a sure spot in heaven. He said, & I quote, *I am telling you if there is a God, when I get to heaven I'm not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in. I have earned my place in heaven. It's not even close.*⁴ Bloomberg may be a successful business man & politician, but he's clueless about going to heaven. He's right about only one thing, *it's not even close!* He's not as good as he thinks he is & he's a much bigger sinner than he thinks he is. But he speaks for many who think they can earn their way into heaven. They are wrong. The only way to heaven is to admit you don't deserve to go there & to confess that because of your sin problem you deserve hell. Then cast yourself on the grace & mercy of God who loved you & sent His Son to die for you & paid the price for your sin when He died on the cross. The wonderful news of the gospel, God's plan, His good news for us, is that not only will we be forgiven but Jesus will be satisfied in it. He will have accomplished His purpose in coming to this earth. He's not waiting to be satisfied based on what you do. He is satisfied in what He has done! We should follow His example in this. Our ultimate satisfaction shouldn't be found in the earthly things that bring us pleasure but in God Himself. If you struggle with the

⁴ Cheryl K. Chumley, *The Washington Times*, Wednesday, April 16, 2014

thought of God loving you, consider the Savior's sacrifice of Himself & God's pleasure & Jesus' joy in it. The cross is the pinnacle of God's love to us. What greater thing could He do? PRAY

Men come for communion

In 1 Cor Paul, speaking empowered by the Holy Spirit on behalf of God, sets up Communion, the celebration of the broken body & shed blood of Jesus Christ. What he says is as we gather & do this, we're to remember the death of Christ. Why is the death of Jesus so important? Because it's in the life, death, & resurrection of Jesus Christ that we have our sins taken from us & have Christ's righteousness put in its place.

The crackers & juice we're about to pass are just that, crackers & juice. They're not magical. They will not, they cannot save you. They won't grant you forgiveness. It will not make you right before God. It's symbolic of what Jesus has done for you. If you aren't yet a believer, just let them pass. There's no judgment from us. We're glad you're here. Just let it pass. It will do nothing for you. It's a cracker & some juice. But for us who are adopted sons & daughters of God, it's far more. It reminds us of His love & sacrifice for us. PRAY & PASS COMMUNION

Paul writes, **I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; & when He had given thanks, He broke it & said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me"** (11:23-24). We eat of the bread remembering that Jesus came to die in our place to give us life.

In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread & drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (11:25-26). We drink of the cup remembering that Jesus came to shed His blood & die in our place to give us life.

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever & ever. Amen (Heb 13:20-21).