



**Isaiah 53:3-12**

One day in college my roommate became disgusted with the fraternity and sorority scene with all of their wild parties and seeking after pleasure. One sunny afternoon he stopped on the sidewalk in front of sorority row and yelled at the top of his lungs, “How can a pleasure seeking society ever survive?” I am not sure why he felt the need to vent his emotions like this, but he was right—a society that predominantly seeks after pleasure will not long survive.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, pleasure seeking goes hand in hand with the prosperity of a society. A poor society seeks survival but a prosperous society alone has the luxury to seek pleasure.

Would it surprise you to know that the Lord seeks after pleasure? God is a pleasure seeking God. Another word for pleasure that Scripture uses often is delight. Let me show you a few things in which the Lord takes delight.

The Lord delights in Jesus, his Son.

Psalm 22:8—*He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!*”

Interestingly, these words are spoken by those who were mocking Jesus on the cross. We see the NT fulfillment of this in Matt. 27:14. *He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’* “ You can see the deep irony in these verses because even while they were mocking and insulting Jesus, these scoffers were actually speaking the truth. The Father truly does delight in the Son, in all that he is and all that he does.

The Lord delights in truth

Psalm 51:6—*Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.*

The Lord is truth so of course he delights in the truth, especially when expressed and lived out through his people.

The Lord delights in his people

Numbers 14:8—*If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.*

It is an amazing truth to think that the Lord takes delight in his created beings who seek to love and serve him.

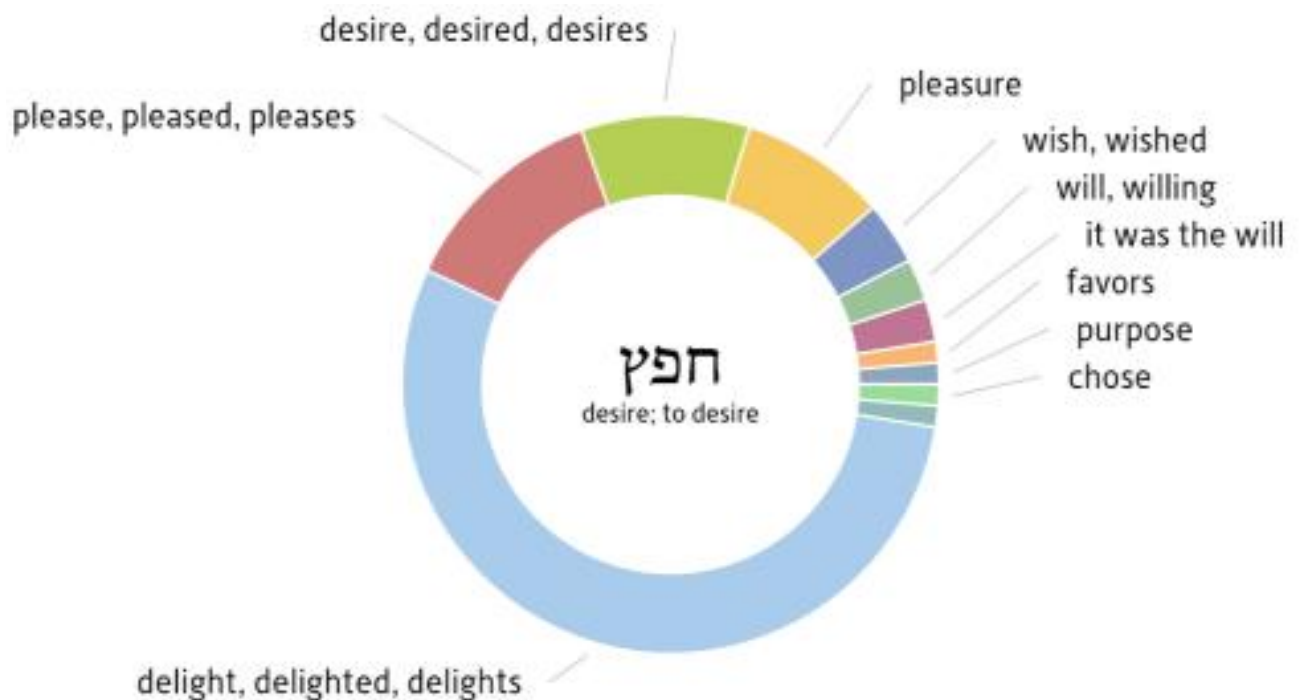
This is a powerful triad of the Lord's delight—he delights in his Son, in the truth and in his people. But there is one more delight I need to show you. Isaiah 53:10 reads, But the LORD was pleased to crush Him. The word translated as “pleased” is the exact same word translated as “delight” in these other verses. The ESV and the NIV use translate it as “the will” of the Lord but the NASB and KJV used the word pleased.

**ESV** Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him

**NASB** But the LORD was pleased to crush Him,

**KJV/NKJV** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;

This graph quickly demonstrates that this Hebrew word is translated as delight, desired or pleased 90% of the time.



We immediately have somewhat of a tension here. If you recall last week we looked at Isaiah 52:14. *As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.* Jesus' suffering was so great that he was disfigured beyond recognition. He no longer looked like a man, So even if the film,

The Passion of the Christ spent too much time beating and scourging Jesus' body, the fact remains that they got that part exactly right—Jesus was marred beyond human semblance.

But a few verses later in Isaiah we read that the Father was pleased and delighted to crush the Son. How in the world do we reconcile these two facts? Certainly the gospel accounts seem to imply that the Pharisees and the crowds were the ones to blame for Jesus' suffering and crucifixion, right? The Sanhedrin planned and schemed behind the scenes for years to kill him. Mobs of people pushed into the court of Pilate and demanded that he be crucified. "Crucify him! Crucify him!" they screamed. Pilate literally washed his hands of the dirty deed and handed the Messiah over to his death. Surely the people are to blame so how could the Father take delight in his agony?

We are greatly helped in answering this question by the prayer of persecuted apostles in Acts 4. First they quoted from the 21<sup>st</sup> Psalm.

*who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,*

*“ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage,*

*and the peoples plot in vain?*

<sup>26</sup> *The kings of the earth set themselves,*

*and the rulers were gathered together,*

*against the Lord and against his Anointed’—*

<sup>27</sup> *for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,*

According to this passage, who was to blame for the death of Jesus? The apostles laid all of the blame at the feet of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and the Jews. The crucifixion of Jesus was the single most heinous sin in human history. In his first sermon on Pentecost, Peter laid all of the blame on the Jews in Jerusalem saying “*God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*” The people and the people alone were to blame for this infinite injustice against the Messiah. However, in the very next verse we read <sup>28</sup> *to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.* (Acts 4:25-28)

God predetermined that Jesus would be betrayed, beaten, scourged and crucified. He holds all blame on the human conspirators yet it was his perfect, predestined plan. More than that, we now know that the Father not only planned and willed it all to happen, he delighted in crushing his Son.

This is undoubtedly part mystery but let me give you a principle to help move us forward: ***The Father loves the atoning work of the Son, therefore he delights in it.***

Here are two Scriptures that bear this out.

*For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again* (John 10:17).

*I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do* (John 17:4).

It hardly needs to be said that the Father most certainly did not delight in the actual punishment inflicted upon his Son. He did not delight in his disfigurement. Every blow, every scourge and every instance of rejection of Jesus was the highest insult to the Father and every one of these are incalculable sins which will meet with his full wrath and justice. Moreover, the Father could not have delighted in turning his back on his Son and pouring his wrath on his Son. However, he does delight in his son's obedience and willingness to be our substitute for sin. Not only that, but this substitutionary atonement was planned from time eternal. Let's dig into the text further in order to see that which brings such great delight to the Father.

1. Surely **he** has borne **our** griefs and carried **our** sorrows;

This verse was used by Matthew to describe Jesus' healing ministry and not his atoning death.

<sup>14</sup> *And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. <sup>15</sup> He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. <sup>16</sup> That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. <sup>17</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."* (Matt. 8:14-17)

The remainder all have to do with Christ's atoning work. Please note the importance of the prepositions. As I read these I want you to see and feel what Christ has done for us.

2. But **he** was pierced for **our** transgressions;
3. **he** was crushed for **our** iniquities;
4. upon **him** was the chastisement that brought **us** peace,
5. and with **his** wounds **we** are healed.
6. and the LORD has laid on **him** the iniquity of **us** all.
7. that **he** was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the **transgression of my people?**
8. make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.
9. yet **he** bore the **sin** of many, and makes intercession for the **transgressors**.

First, let's define some of these terms. We commonly use the word sin but rarely use words like transgressions and iniquities, yet Scripture uses them frequently. A transgression is rebellion against an absolute standard. Toddler who looks at you as she directly and defiantly disobeys your clear command. Revolt, traitor, mutiny, insurrection.

Iniquities have a slightly different meaning. Iniquities are not only wrongdoing and rebellion, but they also carry the just punishment of your sin. We all know that there are two parts to a criminal proceeding. Let's use the Trayvon Martin case as an example. This past week, George Zimmerman was charged with second degree murder in the killing of the 17 year old Martin. I am in no way drawing any conclusions about the case since I can't possibly know the facts, but for the sake of argument, let's assume that the prosecutor will present evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt as to Zimmerman's guilt. If that were to happen, the jury would most likely render a guilty judgment against him. In effect, this would be a transgression. If it were true George Zimmerman would have transgressed the law prohibiting second degree murder. But that would not be the end of the trial because the next step would be for the judge to sentence the criminal. The sentence for second degree murder would probably require 10-30 years of prison time. If

this were a case of first degree murder and since Florida allows for capital punishment, the guilty party may be sentenced to death.

The crime itself, the transgression, together with the sentencing, equals an iniquity. An iniquity carries with it both the wrongdoing and the corresponding guilt and punishment. By nature and by deed, you and I are transgressors and iniquitors. We have transgressed the Laws of the Creator and we have rightly received our just punishment. And what is our just punishment? You are probably inclined to say that hell is what we deserve but more specifically, our just punishment is God's wrath.

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him (John 3:36)*

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind (Eph. 2:1-3)*

Transgressions and iniquities incur the wrath of God and because unbelievers are objects of God's wrath, they are separated eternally in the place called hell. Therefore, by atoning for our sin, instead of saying that Jesus saved us from hell, it is more accurate to say that Jesus saved us from the wrath of the Father and in so doing, the wrath of the Father was satisfied. And what is that theological term for the satisfaction of God's wrath? The word is propitiation. We've talked about the importance of this word many times.

But we must understand that the reason the Father was propitiated is because our sins were literally transferred to Christ. The fancy sounding word for that is expiation. Our sins were expiated by Christ. *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21)*. Jesus did not die on *behalf of* us but *instead of* us. He did not die as our representative but as our replacement. He was our substitute on the cross. He was pierced for **our** transgressions. He was crushed for **our** iniquities. He died in our place and thereby expiated our sins. Our sins became his sins. The wrath that is described in John 3 and Ephesians 2 was poured out on Christ, which satisfied his wrath. Expiation and propitiation together form the atoning work of Christ.

Expiation + Propitiation = Atonement

I mentioned last week that half of this chapter is quoted in the N.T. Just as Jesus and Paul quoted freely from Isaiah 53, so did the apostle Peter.

Isaiah 53	1 Peter 2
<sup>9</sup> <i>although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.</i>	<sup>22</sup> <i>He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.</i>
<sup>5</sup> <i>and with his wounds we are healed.</i>	<sup>24</sup> <i>By his wounds you have been healed.</i>
<sup>6</sup> <i>All we like sheep have gone astray;</i>	<sup>25</sup> <i>For you were straying like sheep</i>

Let me ask you a question. Which is more important—Jesus’ physical suffering or his spiritual suffering? Was it more difficult to have endured the wrath of the Romans or the wrath of his Father? We can see the physical suffering but we cannot see the spiritual suffering. As the spotless lamb, Jesus had to die. He had to shed his blood unto death, but was it absolutely necessary that he be marred beyond human semblance? I don’t see anything in Scripture that necessitates his terrible physical suffering—other than to fulfill prophecy, of course. I believe that his physical suffering was a picture to help us see his spiritual suffering.

Let’s finish off the chapter and then ask see the application. I told you last week that this chapter contains every part of the gospel. After Jesus’ suffering and death, verse nine predicted his burial.

<sup>9</sup> And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death,

Jesus died between two criminals but then he was buried in the tomb of a rich man, just as it was prophesied 700 years earlier.

### **Resurrection and Exaltation**

<sup>10</sup> he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;

<sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;

<sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,

This part does not contain the word resurrection or rise but this is most certainly the meaning. Verse ten states that he shall see his offspring and prolong his days. This can only mean that the person did not remain in the grave. Also, from verse 12, what kind of a person “divides the spoils?” Only a victor divides the spoils and Jesus is the victor over sin and death. This is the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.

We finish with two questions, the first one comes from many of you who may be thinking: Am I really that bad? Is my sin and transgression so severe that the Father punished the Son until he was disfigured? Yes, we really are—or were—that bad. If we have a light view of sin then you will have a light view of the savior but a weighty view of sin leads to a weighty understanding of the Savior. Not until we grasp the depth of our natural depravity we will ever come close to grasping the depth of his substitutionary atonement—the very atonement in which the Father took delight.

The second question is directed to you. There are two ways to live—the way of wrath or the way of delight. Which path are you on? If you are not covered by Christ’s atoning work, you are living every moment of your life in the way of wrath. The wrath which Christ absorbed has not been credited to your account. You may not feel like a rebel and a traitor but the Bible says that you are.

But you do not have to stay there. You know full well that you must repent—turn from your sins—and trust Christ alone. But please beware of the potential of a false conversion. Our family was at a homeschool conference this past weekend and Friday we were at the Mall of America. A man approached us at the big signs in the mall that tell you that “You are here” and started

engaging us in conversation. “Where are you from? How is your trip,” that sort of thing. Then he said, “Do you mind if I ask you a questions?” I’m thinking to myself, “Well you already asked me two or three questions, but go ahead.” He asked a version of the Evangelism Explosion question: “If you died tonight would God let you into heaven?” I look over at my family and smile and say to them, “Should I let him practice on me?” You know me—I am not about to let this guy off the hook easily so I answer his question with a solid Yes. So then he asks me why I thought this was true. I told him that I had never killed anyone, that I had not lied very much and finally I told him that I was covered by the precious blood of Christ. Then he knew I had been toying with him.

I proceeded to ask him if he saw fruit in his witnessing in the mall. He shared how his large church goes there all of the time and so far they had recorded 1.2 million professions of faith!! It quickly became obvious that they were mostly counting “sinner’s prayers” and not necessarily genuine conversions. Now can God use a weak and incomplete gospel presentation to save a person? Absolutely! Some of you may have been saved in precisely this manner, but it is very dangerous because it can quickly make a false convert. Such a person thinks they are saved because they purchased this fire insurance but they are no more saved than the stage I am standing on.

Because we live in a very Lutheran and religious area, most people that come through our church were false converts at one time, including me. Up until the age of 16 I was absolutely convinced that I was a Christian. Please don’t make this same mistake. If you have any doubt about your salvation, you can settle the matter right now.

For the rest of us who are walking the way of delight, remember that God delights in his people. If you have genuinely turned from your sins and placed your faith in Christ alone, then the Father takes delight in you. Isn’t that an amazing thought—that the God of all creation delights in us? You may quench the Spirit or grieve the Spirit but he will never stop delighting in you.

The Fatherly delight—his amazing grace—then becomes the source of all gratitude, the wellspring of all worship and the fountain of all delight that we take in Christ.

I want to make one more application. In the congregational meeting to follow, we will be voting on whether or not to add a second worship service eon Sunday morning. I want to unapologetically tell you that I think this is the right decision to make. I don’t want to add a service just so that we can be the biggest church in town and brag to our friends. I think we should do this because this is the best way for more and more people to take delight in Christ.

Rich Maurer  
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<sup>1</sup> Some of you will tell me afterward that fraternities and sororities also do many service projects and help the community. I don’t dispute this but the truth is that many or most are predominantly a social group seeking after pleasure.