

He Did This For Me

Have you ever been surprised by someone who did something just incredible for you without it ever dawning on you that they would do it? Sometimes it happens – even from complete strangers. I think of John Foxe who found himself penniless, almost starved to death, out of work and sitting alone in a pew in St. Paul’s Cathedral in London in 1553. A complete stranger walked up to him, handed him a bag of money and told him to cheer up, go home and recover himself and get on with what God had planned for him to do. Foxe never saw the man again and never knew who he was, but the gift renewed him and he went on to pen one of the most influential books in all of Christendom, after *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*.

As Easter approaches, we all should take time to read the great Old Testament messianic chapter, Isaiah 53. This chapter deserves to be read and reread to digest the depth that it contains. As you read it, you will remember that it is a chapter that many of us are familiar with from our Communion Services. It is a masterpiece written 700 years before the events described and yet it contains such great detail about our Christ and His death. I remember teaching on this passage many years ago when I read it out loud in my class and personalized it to individuals in the class. I like to read it now and personalize to myself.

He was despised and rejected by **me**, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom **I** would hide **my** face, **I** despised Him and esteemed Him not. Surely He took up **my** infirmities and carried **my** sorrows, yet **I** considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted. But He was pierced for **my** transgressions, and He was crushed for **my** iniquities; the punishment that brought **me** peace was upon Him, and by His wounds, **I** am healed. Isaiah 53:3,4.

Verse 10 goes on to say that it was God’s will to crush Jesus and cause Him to suffer for me. In other words it pleased God to do that for **me**. I am overwhelmed. My mind goes to the contemporary song by Stuart Townend, “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” and the words sting my soul. As Christ hangs on the cross, these words emerge - “It was my sin that held him there.” Christ crucified by but also for **me**.

I mentioned the John Foxe story in conjunction with this section of Scripture to make this point. Like John Foxe, I was lost and hopeless before Christ saved me. I was dead to Christ, but He was stricken for me. He was a stranger – worse than that He was an enemy to me when He died for me. There was nothing that I had done to deserve such an eternal gift. In my sinful nature I despised Him and all that He stood for in life. Yet in that condition, it pleased God to pierce and crush His only begotten Son to give me eternal life and bring salvation to my soul.

When was the last time you truly contemplated the gift of your salvation? When was the last time that you personalized these verses so that they hit directly at your heart? Fortunately, unlike John Foxe, this gift allows us to know the Giver, to fall in love with Him. When we receive eternal life, we begin at that point to build our relationship with Christ. He has known us from before the foundations of the world, but when we accept

Him as Lord and Savior by faith, we begin a new journey of discovering and loving our God. Yes, He did all this for you and for me. Jesus Christ died so that you and I could truly live!

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Whisper of God