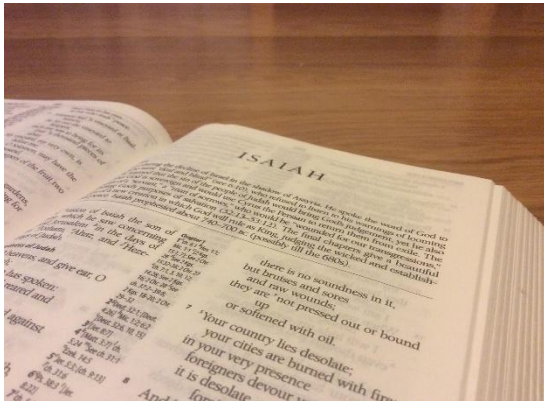


'EMBRACING HIS REDEMPTION' # 4**Read Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12**

Isaiah is informing his readers of the prophetic vision received from God, inviting them into the scene that they may discover what it signifies for them. It's importance cannot be overstated. The nation Israel of that time completely misunderstood it, leading to a failure to recognise messiahship and their unwitting part they played as the prophecy was fulfilled. When the first Christians, following Christ's

resurrection, re-looked at the scene, they realised that Jesus was the Messiah, just as prophesied (see Philippians 2:6-11, 1 Peter 2:21-24). From that moment everything changed for them, embracing His redemption. Our challenge is, have we accepted truly embracing His act of redemption.

- ❖ *What do you understand the term redemption to mean?*
- ❖ *Why do think Israel did not see that a messiah was being illustrated in this passage?*
- ❖ *I wonder if anything has changed today. Could you imagine a person who fitted the character description in our passage being given opportunity to rise to public acclaim? Why is that?*

To quote C S Lewis, 'mere improvement is not redemption, though redemption always improves people'. Let us reassess whether we have embraced Jesus' redemption. We all constantly try to improve what we do and say, even what we are, but whatever progress we make, it will not be sufficient to earn our salvation. The gift of salvation is free to all who truly embrace Jesus; He invites us to embrace the redemption for which He has fully paid.

Read Romans 5:1-11

It is from the writings of St Paul that we learn much of our basic Christian theology, not least from this passage (he explains the same principles slightly differently in Ephesians 2:1-10). These principles of an all-loving God separate Christianity from all other religions.

- ❖ *There's no such thing as a 'free lunch'. Discuss.*
- ❖ *If embracing His redemption is free, and we cannot earn our salvation, what are we supposed to actually do in response to grace given redemption?*
- ❖ *What reason is there to view our future 'with the Lord' with confidence?*

Writing on the subject of redemption, theologian R L Hubbard, Jr writes, 'As Redeemer, God lovingly demonstrates it in Exodus ... and consummates it in Christ. Its sub-themes are rescue from harm, freedom from tyranny, the forgiveness of sin, and unbelievable joy. Paradoxically, it frees slaves of sin to make them slaves of God. But in the end, the slaves become God's adopted children for all eternity. This is, indeed, a wonderful story.'

Prayer: *O Lord, who has taught us that to gain the whole world and to lose our souls is great folly, grant us grace so to lose ourselves that we may truly find ourselves anew in the life of grace, and so to forget ourselves that we may be remembered in your kingdom.*
(Reinhold Niebuhr)

Bible used = NIV 2011 translation

St James Church, Taunton – Roger Fenton - 2025