



Scriptural Background: Isaiah 53

"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted." Is. 53:54

For all His love and concern, we serve an invisible God. For all the ways He guides and helps, there is still a separation – there is a heaven and an earth. He has made Himself known to us, yet it's partial... incomplete... and sometimes feels distant. Isaiah looked ahead to One who would be immersed in grief. To One who would have sorrow at his core. But He would make real the psalmist's song: "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." (Ps. 34:18). An invisible God who would not be estranged but would know, feel, and relate to the human experience! Who could be looked to with confidence because He could be trusted with human pain. But it's complicated. Isaiah will go on to say that His grief was heavy because of OUR affliction and OUR transgressions. His entire mission was to be crushed... afflicted... smitten by God due to the rebellion in OUR lives. And it dawns that the One who came to comfort and bind up wounds is Himself wounded and cursed because of those He came to save. My comforter is Himself crushed. One day His crushing will give way to victory and He will conquer the spirit of rebellion that oppresses me and causes Him such anguish. But for now... the God who has come near to serve has also become a suffering God.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we feel the heaviness of life and we are no strangers to grief, sorrow, and affliction. Our hope is in You, who likewise suffered but who also knew no sin. You paid a price for OUR sin and rebellion. The weight of that knowledge is heavy for us to bear. Help us to remember the stark price You paid – but not to wear guilt or fight battles You won at the cross. Amen.

~This devotional was written by Casey Hurst, Antrim's Pastor of Congregational Care.