

Pastor Luke C. Werre
April 2, 2021
Sermon Text: Isaiah 53:4
Good Friday

HE TOOK UP OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS

This afternoon we meditate on verse 4 of Isaiah 53 which we have just read: *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted.*

I am so weak. Have you ever felt that? Perhaps it was physical weakness, you were sick or your strength depleted after a stressful day. Perhaps you felt emotionally weak -you were so troubled, so distraught you didn't think you could carry on.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. In what way did Jesus do this? Took up our infirmities? Does this mean Jesus got every flu virus I've had? That if I was unable to finish the mile in 9th grade Phy Ed class, then Jesus was unable to finish it too? Did Jesus lose a daughter in a car accident? Did Jesus have a spouse that threatened divorce? Did Jesus have to sell His house and move into an apartment because He couldn't make the payments?

In what sense did Jesus take up our infirmities and carry our sorrows?

Every infirmity or sorrow that we suffer in this life is a consequence of sin. Not necessarily because of any specific sin. But bad things thrive in this world and in our lives because we are sinful and live in a sin-ruined world. Every weakness and sorrow we experience, no matter how devastating, is but a small taste of separation from God. That's what our sin does. It separates us from God. Apart from God there is only weakness and sorrow.

God the Son took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows when He joined the human race and became one of us. He had no sin of His own, of course. Any suffering He suffered was due to the sins of others. But He did suffer. As though He *were* a sinful human, He suffered.

No, perhaps He didn't suffer Covid in particular. Perhaps He never had strep throat. He may not have blown a math test or experienced hand tremors in old age. He may never

have had a grandchild who left the Church. He never had to anguish over an awkward inability to do or say the right thing in a social setting. He may never have suffered some of the specific things you've experienced.

But He didn't need to. For your sake He didn't need to. Rather, on the *cross*, on the cross especially, He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. It was on the cross that He swallowed all of it. Not just a taste of being separated from God like you. He drank down the enormity of being completely separated from God.

When something bad happened to you -the panic that you felt, the disappointment, the bottomless grief, even the physical collapse, whenever you suffered any weakness or grief -Jesus felt it, knows it times ten to the billionth power -even if He never had your flu or broke up with a girlfriend or found himself buried in credit card debt or under arrest or helplessly addicted . He didn't need to go through each and every one of those individual things. He was completely, without any mercy, separated from His heavenly Father, left in the dark, abandoned with no help, no comfort, no understanding, no cushion. He experienced the full, vast capacity of God's damning wrath. It was the ultimate terror.

He experienced the whole thing all at once because all of God's judgment on humankind came crashing down on the person of Jesus Christ as He hung on the cross.

What you have had only a taste of in this life, He drank the whole thing down to the dregs: God's judgment on our sin.

The result is that we do have comfort now in our infirmities and sorrows. By trusting Christ, we are confident that our infirmities and sorrows are no longer God's judgment on us. The judgment we deserved -He took it out on Jesus. We are comforted to have God's full forgiveness and help. We are comforted to be rescued through faith in Christ from that eternal separation from God in hell. We are comforted that no matter how much we are suffering now, relief will come, salvation is near because God is mercy and God is love and Christ has won God's faithful friendship to you.

The help that God withheld from Jesus He pours out on us. We are comforted that even when it feels like the bottom drops out on us, God has not left us. God has not abandoned us or turned His back on us. He turned His back on Jesus instead, so that He will always be near with His careful attention to you and your needs.

For all your shortcomings, failures, sorrows, sins, and every disgraceful secret that you keep, He gives you Christ to be your success, your righteousness, your perfection, your glory, your peace, your way to the Father and your certainty of life even in death.

When a person sees a homeless man crumpled down along the sidewalk of State Street, or you witness a young person in the prime of their life being convicted of a crime you think, “Oh, how sad! Something must have gone terribly wrong here.” No doubt some people must have concluded that about Jesus -convicted and sentenced to execution on a cross. “Oh how sad! Something must have gone terribly wrong here!”

But you and I know better. Nothing has gone wrong for Himself. Christ has taken up *our* infirmities and carried *our* sorrows exactly as He intended, and He got rid of them for us, so that we may look forward to light and joy and life and strength and fellowship with our Creator, now and forever. Amen.