

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth

Friday, April 3rd, 2026

Rev. Gerry Gallant

Crushed for Us: The Offence and Glory of the Cross

Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:13

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

On this day of solemn remembrance, we gather at the foot of the cross.

We come in silence and in sorrow.

Here the innocent One suffered for the guilty.

Here love was poured out in blood and tears.

The world sees only shame and defeat.

Yet in this hour we see the depth of God's mercy.

Come, let us worship the crucified Lord.

We bow our hearts before the One who gave Himself for us.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O holy and righteous God,

You are perfect in justice, unsearchable in wisdom, and boundless in mercy.

You do not overlook sin, nor do You abandon Your people.

In Your perfect will, You have made a way where there was no way,
and brought light into the deepest darkness.

We gather in the shadow of the cross,

where Your holiness and Your love are revealed together.

Here we see the depth of our guilt and the greatness of Your grace.

Here we are reminded that our hope rests not in ourselves,
but entirely in what You have done.

Draw near to us now, we pray.

Quiet our hearts, humble our pride, and open our eyes.

Give us grace to see rightly, to feel deeply, and to worship truly.
 Let our thoughts be fixed upon Your redeeming work,
 and let our hearts be lifted in reverent awe.

We ask this in the name of the One who was given for us.
Amen.

Call to Confession

Beloved in Christ, on this day we remember the depth of our Saviour's suffering.
 Let us therefore examine our own hearts.
 We have wandered far from God. We have turned to our own ways.
 In humility and repentance, let us confess our sins together.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God,
we confess that we are the ones for whom Christ suffered.
We have betrayed You with our silence, denied You with our actions,
and turned away from the cost of true love.
Like sheep we have gone astray, each pursuing our own desires.
We have loved comfort more than obedience,
prestige more than humility,
and self more than our neighbour.
We have hidden our faces from suffering—our own and others'.
Forgive us, O God.
Cleanse us by the blood of the cross.
Renew a right spirit within us,
and draw us back to the One who was wounded for our healing.
We ask this in the name of our suffering Saviour. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear this good news:

The burden of sin has not been ignored—it has been borne.
 The debt has not been overlooked—it has been paid.

What we could never carry has been carried for us.
 What we could never satisfy has been satisfied in full.

For all who turn in humility and trust,
 there is forgiveness—not partial, but complete.
 There is peace—not fragile, but secure.

Rest not in your own efforts,
but in the finished work of redeeming love.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever, Amen.**

Hymn #230: "Go to Dark Gethsemane"

Go to dark Gethsemane,
you that feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
watch with Him one bitter hour;
From His grief turn not away;
learn from Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgement hall;
see him beaten, bound, arraigned;
patiently he bears it all,
all our pain his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame or loss;
Learn of Christ to bear the cross.

Climb to Calvary's mournful site;
there the Lord of glory reigns;
there, through weakness, wins the light
over sin our victory gains.
"It is finished !" hear him cry;
there, in Christ, dare to die.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 22

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

² **O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.**

³ Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

⁴ **In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.**

⁵ To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁶ **But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.**

⁷ All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

⁸ **“He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”**

⁹ Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.

¹⁰ **On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): “Who is the Man?”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

He Was Pierced for Our Transgressions

¹³ **Behold, my servant shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.**

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—**

¹⁵ **so shall he sprinkle many nations.**

**Kings shall shut their mouths because of him,
for that which has not been told them they see,
and that which they have not heard they understand.**

53 Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?

⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,

and he shall bear their iniquities.

**¹²Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.**

Sermon

Good Friday refuses to let us look away. It drags every one of us into the very heart of the Christian faith and confronts us with a claim that overturns everything the world teaches us: our salvation does not come through our own moral victories or personal strength, but through the humiliation and death of our Saviour. We cannot save ourselves. We can only be saved through His divine intervention.

The cross stands against everything that this world teaches us we want, we crave glory without shame, we want crowns without thorns, and new life without tasting death. Yet the Word of God states a truth we must accept, the power of God shines most brightly in the places where human wisdom sees only weakness and defeat.

The prophet Isaiah does not just predict the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, he explains it so we can all understand it.

He unfolds it for us in three movements:

First, the rejection of the Servant.

Second, the substitution of the Servant.

Third, the victory of the Servant.

So, on this day we are not gathered here to pity the death of our Lord upon the cross, We are here to confess that His death was for us. Without the suffering servant there is no forgiveness, no peace and no salvation.

Isaiah 53:1-2

53 Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

²For he grew up before him like a young plant,

and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

and no beauty that we should desire him.

Isaiah Chapter 53 opens with a question that is heavy with disbelief, **‘Who has believed what he has heard from us?’** This is not a question of clarity it is a question of understanding, because what Isaiah is teaching about the coming Messiah was just as counter cultural then as it is today.

Isaiah explains that the **‘arm of the Lord’**, the Biblical symbol of God’s divine power and authority, is going to be revealed in an unexpected form. It will come not as conquest or splendor, but in weakness and quiet humiliation. It will be **‘like a root out of dry ground’** fragile, unimpressive and easily ignored.

In fact he emphasizes that point, **‘he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.’** There will be nothing about Him that will make him appear great. He will be an ordinary man, no charisma that draws people to him, no status that he can hold over people or to draw people to him, no outward glory that commands respect. Instead of admiration, respect and reverence because of worldly things, he will receive contempt and rejection from the world.

He is **‘a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.’** Suffering will not be just an occasional visitor in His life; it will be His constant companion. Isaiah even makes it clear that it is not just far off unbelievers that will cause this suffering. He says, **‘we esteemed him not.’** We will do it, we the ones who are called to believe will be the ones who hide our faces and turn away, refusing to look fully upon the one who is our salvation.

This is what is the first offence of the cross: When God draws near to us in humility, the natural response of the human heart is not reverence and awe, not worship, it is refusal. A humble Saviour confronts our prideful nature. A suffering Saviour goes against our concept of the importance of strength. People want a Messiah that confirms their worldly values, one that elevates their worldly status. We want a Saviour who affirms us, not one who must die for us.

A Saviour who improves our lives, not one who exposes our sin. But the moment the cross tells us we are not merely wounded—but guilty—we begin to resist, we reject him and turn away.

But then the prophecy takes a dramatic turn with one small but powerful word: **‘Surely’**

Isaiah 53:4

**Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.**

This servant does not just empathize or sympathize with our pain, instead he takes our pain unto himself. It is not a shared suffering, he becomes our substitute. He carries the burden that belongs to each of us.

We get it all wrong, **'we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.'** We look upon this man and assume he is suffering because of His own actions, he is under God's judgement because of His own sinful nature. Well we get it half right, He is indeed suffering under God's judgement, but we completely miss the mark as to why he is suffering.

Isaiah 53:4-6

**⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.**

**⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.**

All the wrath and punishment that was to fall upon us because of our sinful nature has fallen upon Him. The wounds on His flesh should have been ours, and they become our means of healing.

Isaiah refuses to let us escape this truth, **'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all'**

Every single one of us has done exactly that.

Isaiah uses a metaphor that is simple enough to understand. Sheep do not wander a little way away and return quickly. When they wander, they wander away foolishly, stubbornly, each in its own direction seeking its own desires, sweet grass, cool water or a nap in the shade. They go after what they want without thinking of the flock or the shepherd.

No sheep sets out intending to be lost.

It simply follows what seems good in the moment—one step, then another.

And before long, it is farther away than it ever meant to be.

That is how sin works in us.
Not always in sudden rebellion—but in quiet drifting.

We are no different, each of us wanders from God in pursuit of our own desire, with little thought to those around us or to the God who loves us.

Sin is both a universal truth and a deeply personal action.

We see this in the ordinary patterns of our lives.
When we fail, we explain it. When others fail, we judge it.
We soften the language around our own sin—“mistake,” “stress,” “bad day”—but we are far less generous with others.

We instinctively defend ourselves, justify ourselves, excuse ourselves.

But the cross does not allow that.
Because at the cross, sin is not explained away—it is exposed, and it is paid for.

Yet God does not allow our guilt to float in some vague abstraction. Instead, he gathers every bit of it and lays it upon the servant.

God’s justice is not delayed or ignored, it is satisfied fully by the one who bears it.

The full weight of human rebellion, every hidden failure, every open defiance, every sin, is laid upon the servant and he bears it all completely.

The cross, therefore, is not some vague display of love detached from the reality of Sin and justice. It is the place where Holy love and justice meet.

God does not lower His standards to forgive His people. He upholds His justice fully and provides a substitute who stands in our place.

This is why it is so important that we do not reduce the meaning of Good Friday to sentiment or tradition.

The servant is not just showing us how to suffer, He is suffering because of our Guilt, He is paying the debt for our sin which we could never fully pay.

Having shown us who the servant is and why he suffering Isaiah now turns to the how.

Isaiah 53:7-10

**⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.**

**⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?**

**⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth**

In the face of injustice, silence feels unnatural. When we see injustice we protest, we defend, we demand answers and explanations. Yet the servant says nothing, does nothing.

The Scripture says, **‘like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.’** This is very deliberate language, chosen to reflect sacrifice. The lamb that is sacrificed does not argue, does not complain. It is brought, offered and given. And the Servant willingly takes on that role.

The injustice is clear, **‘By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people’**

A corrupted legal system, a corrupt legal process, a corrupt people condemn the innocent while the guilty will go free. Yet in the face of this injustice there is no outcry, no defence, no call for answers or explanations.

Isaiah wants to make it perfectly clear what is happening is unjust, **‘he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.’** The man who is suffering in our place is pure in His words and in His actions, He is entirely righteous. And that is why his willingness as a pure and innocent man to suffer silently in our place is so profound.

He does not speak because speaking would mean stepping out of the roles which He had willingly embraced.

Every accusation He refused to answer, He instead absorbed.
Every charge He did not resist, He carried in our place

His silence is not a sign of weakness or indifference. It is purposeful obedience. It is the only way that he can be sure to bear all our burden, all our guilt and all our punishment to the end.

His silence is the silence of trust, a calm confidence in the righteous judge.

Even in death, humiliation follows him. They assigned him a grave with the wicked, he is numbered among the criminals of the nation. Yet the Sovereign God overrules what the wicked man has planned, He is buried among the wealthy, the innocent servant is not cast aside and abandoned.

What Isaiah says next is the hardest line in the chapter, not because it is cruel, but because it refuses to soften the cost of our salvation. The Servant's suffering was not merely permitted by God — it was God's purpose. This is not the Father acting against the Son, but the Father and the Son acting together in love.

Isaiah 53:10-13

**¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.**

**¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.**

**¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.**

The cross stands at the center of divine intervention, not at the edge of human chaos.

The word 'will' does not imply cruelty, instead it speaks of a divine resolve. God's determination to accomplish the greatest good even if the cost is great.

The father takes no pleasure in the suffering, but he is pleased with the salvation that is secured through the willing obedience of the Son. The cross is the united work of Father and Son in perfect harmony.

Isaiah chooses precise sacrificial language, **'when his soul makes an offering for guilt.'** This is the language used for a guilt offering, an offering used to address a real offence before the Holy God. The servant is not meant to just inspire us, He becomes the sacrifice that pays our debts.

It is His life that is given as our payment. It is His death that satisfies what we owe.

This is substitutionary atonement in the clearest form. The righteous one stands under judgement in the place of the guilty. Justice is fully executed, and mercy is fully extended. God's wrath is fully exhausted upon the Servant so that His grace and mercy may flow freely upon us.

Yet Isaiah does not end there, he offers hope, **'he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.'** The crushed one will live, His offering will produce fruit.

The Servant will look upon his redeemed people, the ones whom his suffering has purchased and declare that it was all worthwhile. His mission is complete, His purpose fulfilled.

Good Friday is therefore not just the day that Jesus died, it is the day that our God decisively dealt with sin, upheld justice and righteousness and secured salvation for all who humble themselves, come before him, repent and believe.

Isaiah then calls for us to lift our eyes from the shadow of the cross to the victory it has won, **'by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.'**

Again, we have legal language being used. Being accounted righteous, being justified before God, is not a slow gradual moral change, it is a divine verdict. The servant declares the guilty righteous, not because they have done anything to earn it, or deserve it, but because He has borne their iniquities.

The Servant's perfect righteousness is given to those who believe, and their guilt, their debt becomes His. There is no justification apart from this act of substitution.

And know that this act is complete, God announces the Servant's reward, **'Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.'**

The Lamb which was led to the slaughter is not the victorious warrior. What had appeared to be a shameful defeat is revealed to be a triumphant conquest.

The servant receives this honor because he willingly, **'poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.'**

He gave it all, He held nothing back. He was counted among the sinners even though He knew no sin. And even now, in the world today, the once-silent Servant continues to intercede for those He died to save.

The cross was not only the place of finished atonement; the foot of the cross is the foundation of His ongoing ministry of mercy.

So Good Friday does not allow us to remain as spectators. Isaiah pulls us to the confession that we too are one of the sheep who has gone astray.

The cross exposes the truth of our sin before it comforts us. It names our guilt, our pride, our quiet rebellion, and until we see ourselves among the wanderers, we will never fully grasp the glory of the Servant who was crushed in our place.

The cross denies ever false gospel that exists in this world. There is no salvation through self-improvement, through moral effort, through being a good person or religious and spiritual sentimentality. There is no salvation in a Jesus who only inspires and does not atone, Isaiah reminds us that the Servant is not just one we are meant to imitate, he is a substitute we are called to trust.

He bore our guilt, or we will bear it ourselves. There is no other way.

For those who believe, the foot of the cross becomes an unshakable foundation of assurance. The servant was crushed for us; sin no longer has the final word. Judgement will never fall on us again. Our peace does not rise and fall with our feelings or performance, instead it rests upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.

And at the same time the foot of the cross humbles us. If nothing less than the death of the Son of God could save us, our sin is far more serious than we imagined. And yet at the same time we are far more loved than we ever dared to hope.

The cross holds these truths in tension; we are worse than we feared and more loved than we imagined.

Good Friday leaves us in a sacred tension. We should not rush ahead past the cross to Easter. Instead we should remain here a little while, letting the weight of its truths settle upon us.

The Servant was crushed. The offering was accepted. Our redemption was purchased through His suffering.

So we stand where Isaiah leaves us, before the cross, exposed and invited, And his ancient question still echoes:

' Who has believed what he has heard from us?'

When we stand before the cross, we do not remain neutral.

We either look at it and say, "This is unnecessary for me" ...
or we fall before it and say, "This was necessary because of me."

So, Isaiah's question still stands.

Not in the abstract—but here, now.

Who has believed?

Not who has understood it.
Not who agrees with it.
Not who feels moved by it.

But who has entrusted themselves—completely—to this crucified Servant?

Because in the end, there are only two kinds of people at the cross:
those who say, "He bore my sin" ...
and those who will bear their own.

And the cross will not change.
It will either be your judgment—
or your salvation

Let us pray,
O Lord Jesus Christ,
who for our sake was content to be betrayed,

given over into the hands of sinners,
 and to suffer death upon the cross:
 imprint Your sacred wounds upon our hearts,
 that we may read therein both sorrow and love
 — sorrow for our sins which caused Your suffering,
 and love that despises every other affection for love of You.
 By Your cross and precious blood,
 cleanse us, heal us, and make us bold to believe.
 Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

St. Anselm of Canterbury

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #231: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (V 1,3,4)

When I survey the wondrous cross
 on which the Prince of glory died,
 my richest gain I count but loss,
 and pour contempt on all my pride.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
 sorrow and love flow mingled down.
 Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
 or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
 that were a present far too small.
 Love so amazing, so divine,
 demands my soul, my life, my all.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God,

We remain before the cross, humbled and undone.
 We have seen again the cost of our sin

and the depth of Your mercy.

Keep us from moving too quickly past this moment.
Let the weight of what has been done for us
shape our hearts, our thoughts, and our lives.

For those who feel the burden of guilt, grant relief.
For those who feel distant, draw them near.
For those who struggle to believe, give faith.

Teach us to rest not in ourselves,
but in what has been accomplished on our behalf.
Let this truth steady us in our weakness,
humble us in our pride,
and comfort us in our sorrow.

And as we leave this place,
let us carry both the gravity and the hope of this day—
a sober awareness of sin,
and a deep assurance of grace.

We ask all this with reverence and trust.
Amen.

Benediction

**Go now in quiet reflection and steadfast hope.
May the weight of this day humble you,
and the grace revealed in it sustain you.
May you rest not in yourselves,
but in the One who has borne your burden.
And may you walk in peace,
grounded in what has been accomplished,
and held fast by unfailing mercy.
Amen.**