

Good Friday/April 2, 2021
Isaiah 52:13-53:12/A Rich Burial
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
Pastor Jerry Stobaugh

“...by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.”

Rich and famous people are accorded a final honor when they die as family and friends go all out on a rich burial. For that fact, I think most people will do all they can to accord the highest honors, the finest casket, a great feast, and a long list of eulogies as family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and townspeople rave about the dead. After all, isn't the highest praise one can receive is to be praised and worshiped by all?

On this most holy night, The Lord Jesus died on the cross. He died alone. He died in poverty. He died humiliated. Jesus died for you. He died in the company of “wicked men,” however, His Father had a plan that His Son would be buried a “rich man.” Jesus would receive the highest honors afforded the rich.

God chose another humble man named Joseph. He was a rich man from Arimathea. He was secretly a disciple of Jesus because he feared the Jews. Joseph owned a tomb in a garden near Golgotha. It was a virgin tomb he had hewn from the rock. This virgin tomb is where The Lord Jesus will take His rest from His atoning sacrifice on the cross.

The Father's plan of salvation was to send His only-begotten Son into the world to suffer and die for the sins of the world. His plan included a rich burial for His Son. Jesus would be assigned a grave with “wicked men.”

Jesus was considered a friend of sinners. He associated with tax collectors and prostitutes, the poor and lowly, and those who were despised and scorned by society. Jesus identifies with sinners. He was executed as a common criminal.

It is by the death of Jesus you are saved. Isaiah says, “by His stripes you are healed.” Jesus died bereft of all His possessions. He died forsaken by His Father, scorned and harassed by the world, and in utter poverty, naked, and humiliated.

This poor Son of the Father exchanges His life of poverty to give you a life of riches. A life of glory lived in the presence of the Triune God. A life surrounded by the all the saints who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Isaiah prophesied about this rich life Jesus died to earn for you. He wrote, “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 spoil Jesus divides with you is the forgiveness of your sins. His righteousness. His holiness. His death. His life. His kingdom. All of this is yours because Jesus redeemed you from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

Adam’s sin caused the expulsion of mankind from the Garden in Eden. His disobedience brought sin and death into God's creation and separated all men from the love of the Father.

Jesus’ obedience restores all mankind to the Father. His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. This is why we pray at the graveside, “Almighty God,

by the death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, You destroyed death, by His rest in the tomb, You sanctified the graves of Your saints, and by His glorious resurrection, You brought life and immortality to light so that all who die in Him abide in peace and hope.”

No one can rob you of God’s riches in Christ. His forgiveness of your sins is sure and certain. Jesus said so. Because of Jesus, you are no longer dead in your trespasses but you are alive in Christ Jesus. You are cloaked in His righteousness so you will live with Him forever in the new heavens and new earth.