



24 March 2018

THE RIGHTEOUS ONE

Isaiah 53:10 “Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. *11* Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. *12* Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

The intention of this excerpt of this religious poetry is to point to the purifying role of ‘the servant’¹: “The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities” (Isa 53:11). Instead of the righteous one withdrawing from the sinners in order to retain his religious purity, he gets alongside of them and his righteousness purifies them.

Here is the rub: for generations people of faith have thought to isolate ourselves in order to keep our faith pure. Isaiah suggests that our faith is preserved when we have been “numbered with the transgressors ... and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isa 53:12). Instead of Lent being a time where we withdraw from society to find religious purity, let us discover our righteousness as we share our lives with the unfaithful, the unrighteous, and the sinful.

For Thought:

*May we be a healing balm to the nations
A healing balm to the peoples of the earth
Till the whole world knows the power of Your name
May Your healing flow through us*

Chris Christensen

Palm Sunday

The Wounds and Sorrows of Ministry

The Scripture passage for the day is drawn from Rueben Job and Norman Shawchuck, *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and other Servants*, (Nashville, The Upper Room 1983), 136.

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¹ As mentioned over the past two days: many Christians read this retroactively and discover a description of Jesus who was unjustly crucified; there are other people of faith who see the “servant” in Isaiah 53 as a poetic symbol to describe the community of God’s people. Beginning with chapter 41, the equating of God’s Servant with the nation of Israel is made nine times by the prophet Isaiah,