

The Redemptive Impact of Isaiah 53: (part four of a four part series)

As promised, this final segment will consist of a practical application of Isaiah 53:11, which is provided for us in Hebrews 12:1-2 –

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The Christian life is presented here as a race to be run. If it is to be run effectively, a requirement must be fulfilled. We are to lay aside both encumbrances and sins. Why? Because they can hinder us from running the race as we should. If we are successful in fulfilling the negative imperative, we will be free to focus on the positive one: “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.”

Our Savior was given a race to run, a purpose to fulfill, and it meant not only living a sinless life, but enduring death on the Cross; and despising the shame associated with such a death. Christ did not enjoy the Cross, He endured it. He didn't welcome the shame but He did despise it. The verb “despise” is *katphroneo*, and literally means “to think down on something.” We generally think of shame as an embarrassment to be avoided at all costs. Jesus thought so little of the shame of the Cross that He despised it. Why? Because of the joy set before Him, consisting of His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the throne of God; as well as the successful application of the redemption which He accomplished on our behalf.

Hebrews 12:1-2 gives us a deeper understanding of what Isaiah meant in 53:11 of his oracle. Jesus understood that the negative aspects of God's redemptive purpose for His life would pale in comparison to the positive results. So that when He looks down at you from heaven as His convert, His offspring, He is satisfied. Your conversion to Christ means that His death was not in vain. When He sees the positive transformation in your life since that conversion, it gives Him joy. There is no greater motivation for followers of our Savior, in running the race as we should, than to know that it pleases Him; and that His sacrifice for us was worth it! The apostle Paul made that motivation his own and expresses it in 2 Corinthians 5:9 –

“Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”