The Great Exchange BY Malusi Skunyana

Read Isaiah 53:3-9

ISA 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

ISA 53:4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISA 53:5 But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

ISA 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

ISA 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

ISA 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

ISA 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth.

The cross on which Jesus Christ died speaks to us of the great exchange – Jesus taking our own and giving us His own. Ellen G White, a renowned author of the 19th and early 20th Centuries, pictured this great exchange in the most beautiful language in her book The Desire of Ages, page 25. She wrote:

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’”

Isaiah 53 is an amazing and detailed prophecy of the suffering and death of God’s dear Son, who suffered and died for the world that was condemned to eternal death because of sin. In this wonderful and touching account God offered His only Son to take the place of undeserving sinners. When Jesus was in this world He was despised and rejected by men. He had come as God’s message of hope to the world, but the world did not accept Him and instead decided to nail Him on the cross at Calvary. The Son of God had come to share in our sorrows and to bear our burdens, and finally to die for our sins; but men rejected Him and put Him to death.

Jesus had come to be man’s substitute, to die in his stead. It had pleased God to pour upon His Son the wrath that we deserved because of our sins. The punishment that should have fallen on us fell on God’s only Son, so that by His stripes we might be healed. His death would lead sinners to eternal life, those who would accept Him as their Saviour. As a lamb to the slaughter, Christ was led to the hill of Calvary where He was crucified. The innocent died for the guilty, so that the guilty might live the life of the innocent. This is indeed amazing grace!

“Christ’s death proves God’s great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him.... Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope.” Ellen G White, Acts of the Apostles, page 209.

Dear friend, it is my prayer that you may make Jesus your personal Saviour, that you may appreciate what He has done for you, and that you may receive His gift of eternal life. May God richly bless you! Amen!