

Date: 28th June 2009
Reading: Isaiah 53:6
Speaker Stephen Whitmore
Subject: A Message for All.

Our verse tonight starts and ends with the word “all”. This emphasises that the message of the verse is one that encompasses everyone.

The verse can be broken into three parts:

1. “All we like sheep have gone astray” - This is the first awakening to a recognition of failure.
2. “We have turned everyone to our own way” - This shows a deeper recognition of sin
3. “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” - This is the answer of God to sin.

The verse centres on the cross of Christ where a work was accomplished that can meet the need of every person in the world.

1. Revelation 21:8 gives a picture of the result of the final judgment of God. It states that “without are the fearful..”. The implication is that the most significant reason for people failing to enter into the blessing of God and rather being consigned to everlasting judgment, is that they are afraid. This is the idea in our verse when it says “like sheep”. Just as sheep will follow the one restless sheep who wanders away from the shepherd, so we are all prone to follow the path that takes us away from God, most often for fear of standing out from the crowd and failing to realise that many others are only following because they have the same fear.
2. As the verse continues, it emphasises that we are guilty of making a deliberate choice. While we may have followed initially because it was the path others were taking, the time comes when we are faced with an individual choice. It is of no use to blame the crowd. It is of no value to compare ourselves with others. We must all stand before God and answer for our personal decision. We all need to recognise that as an individual, we have chosen to follow our own path and therefore we are guilty before God. Beyond this, we need to recognise that the character of God is such that any sin will merit everlasting judgment and no action that we can take would prevent the judgment.
3. The verse ends with the answer of God to the question. At Calvary, He did for us what we could not do for ourselves, He punished His Son, the Lord Jesus, for our sins so that He could be just but still offer a pardon for the sinner.

The word used for sin in this context teaches what He really thinks about sin. Iniquity has the idea of rebellion. We need to acknowledge that, however we may compare with people around us, we are rebels and enemies of God by nature and practice and that the only hope is to acknowledge our guilt and to accept that the only answer for God was to punish the Lord Jesus instead of us. God has said that, “None ... can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:” (Psalms 49:7). The answer of God was that the Eternal Son should leave His side in heaven to come into the world to deal with the question of sin: “the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14). When we consider the cross, we learn what it meant to God to accomplish this when we think of the question, “**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**” (Matt 27:46). He had lived a life that delighted God in every detail and yet He must be abandoned by God awhile He suffered for our sins because no one else could have done the work. He was forsaken for a time so that we need never be forsaken for eternity. No one else, not even the greatest of angelic beings, was capable of such a work.

God exacted a price that was sufficient to deal with all our sins. He dealt with the Lord in a way that showed no mercy because His character demanded that sin must be punished. The result is that He can now deal with us in mercy. As Paul writes to the Ephesians, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Eph 2:4-5).

He now asks of us that we recognise what He has done, turn from our sin and rebellion and believe on His Son so that He can deliver us from our sins and give us eternal life.