

# **“The Most Important Gift”**

## **Sermon Reflection Questions December 20, 2009**

### **Isaiah 1:18, 53:6-12, Unlocking the Old Testament**

During this final Sunday of Advent we want to look at the most important role that Jesus plays as He comes to earth. We have seen that He is our Good Shepherd; He comforts us when we are in pain, and He changes the nature of religion from having rules on paper to having Him put His desires in our heart. The most important role that He plays, however, is the one who takes away our sin. We often focus on Jesus taking away our sin during Holy Week. However, I think it is helpful during Christmas and the celebration of Jesus’ birth that we recognize that it was already planned for Him to go to the cross for our sins.

1. When we talk about Jesus’ role of taking away our sin we must first start by understanding what sin is and the consequences of our sin.
  - a. Read Romans 3:23. In your own words describe what sin is. Give examples of different kinds of sin. (You may want to think about sins of commission and of omission.)
  - b. Read Romans 6:23. In your own words what should we receive because of our sin?
2. In Isaiah 1:18 God speaks through the prophet Isaiah and begins by, “Let us reason together.” God is saying this because the Jewish people were putting up all kinds of excuses why their sin should not bring guilt upon them. Part of their excuse was to say basically, “look at all the sacrifices we have done, or we are your chosen nation, or we aren’t as bad as the neighboring countries.”
  - a. In what ways might we in our day try to excuse away our sin?
  - b. Why do you think that people want to excuse away their sin rather than wanting to rely on the gift of Jesus?
3. Isaiah 53:6-12 paints a pretty graphic picture of what will happen to the suffering servant. How can you see the fulfillment of these words in the life and ministry of Jesus? Read Psalm 88 as well and see how this Psalm is fulfilled in Christ.
4. Read Romans 3:23-31
  - a. How is Jesus’ suffering and death an appropriate payment for our sin?
  - b. What would Paul’s response be to our rationalizing away our sins?
5. The final point of the message was that we must receive the gift of Jesus.

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- a. Read John 3:16, what does it mean to “believe in” Jesus?
  - b. How can we be sure we have “believed in Jesus”? (Read James 2:14-26 and Galatians 5:16-26)
6. What do you need to do in order to accept the gift of Jesus more completely this Christmas season?