

The Breaking of the Bread of Life
Isaiah 53
Second Baptist Church, Memphis
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One of my favorite movies is *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Indiana Jones, played by Harrison Ford, is the world's most athletic archaeologist, and his dad, played by Sean Connery, is obsessed with finding the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail is the cup used by Jesus at the last supper.

They go through all this stuff, and at the end of the movie Indiana Jones and one of the bad guys finally get to this cave where the Holy Grail is. But there's not just one cup in there. There's about twenty cups lined up.

They don't know which one is the Holy Grail. The bad guy, who wants the grail because it's worth a lot of money and he thinks drinking from it will give him eternal life, picks up the fanciest looking cup in there. He thinks it's a prize he's looking for.

He drinks from it, and he dies. Bad choice. The cup from which Jesus drank is not a prize to win.

Indiana Jones looks at all the cups, and he thinks out loud, "Carpenter's son, carpenter's son." And he picks up the plainest, the most ordinary, the ugliest old cup there.

And he was right. It was the right one. It's the Holy Grail.

Evidently, Indiana Jones knew something about the Bible. He knew that Jesus wasn't born in a palace. He was born in a manger. He must have known that Jesus didn't grow up to be an aristocrat. He grew up to be a carpenter.

Maybe Indiana Jones had heard in Sunday School one time about the humility of the Son of God. Maybe Indiana Jones had read Isaiah 53.

This is one of the most remarkable passages in the whole Bible. Here, about 600 years before Jesus was born in a barn in Bethlehem, the prophet speaks of this suffering servant of God.

600 years before Jesus was actually born, God was planting in the minds of his people a picture of the life of his son. They didn't recognize him when he came, because that picture that God planted didn't take root in the imaginations of the people; other, more aggressive, pictures crowded it out and suffocated it's growth.

Listen again to verses 1-9:

He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us

whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

In 1957 a group of Buddhist monks had to relocate a clay Buddha from their temple to a new location. The monastery was to be relocated to make room for the development of a new highway through Bangkok.

When the crane began to lift the giant idol, the weight of it was so tremendous that it began to crack. What's more, rain began to fall. The head monk, who was concerned about damage to the sacred Buddha, decided to lower the statue back to the ground and cover it with a large canvas tarp to protect it from the rain.

Later that evening the head monk went to check on the Buddha. He shined his flashlight under the tarp to see if the Buddha was staying dry.

As the light reached the crack, he noticed a little gleam shining back and thought it strange. As he took a closer look at this

gleam of light, he wondered if there might be something underneath the clay. He went to fetch a chisel and hammer from the monastery and began to chip away at the clay. As he knocked off shards of clay, the little gleam grew brighter and bigger.

After many hours of labor, the monk stood face to face with a ten and a half foot tall, solid gold statue. It weighs over two and a half tons and is now valued at approximately one hundred ninety six million dollars.

Historians believe that several hundred years before this monk's discovery, the Burmese army was about to invade Thailand, and the Siamese monks, realizing that their country would soon be attacked, covered their precious golden Buddha with an outer covering of clay in order to keep their treasure from being looted by the Burmese.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Burmese slaughtered all the Siamese monks, and no one knew the secret of what was underneath that ordinary looking clay statue until the outer covering cracked in 1957.

In Jesus, God became an ordinary human. To use the Apostle Paul's language, God entered into an earthen vessel, a jar of clay. But it was when that earthen vessel was cracked and broken open that a gleam of light began to shine brightly through.

That was when the glory of the Son of God began to come to light. That was when God brought glory out of the ordinary.

As the prophet Isaiah goes on to say in verses 10-12:

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, . . . through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light. . . the righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

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.

When Jesus allowed his ordinary body to be broken open and spilled out, that was when the extraordinary glory of God shone forth as never before.

Jesus offered up his body to be broken, and for two thousand years the breaking of bread in remembrance of that has shown a bright light on those gleaming words:

Redeemed! Forgiven! Reconciled! Restored!

It was the breaking of the bread of life.