



**Series:** Advent: A Season of Worship

**Date:** December 18, 2022

**Speaker:** Josh Jones, Community Life Pastor

**Text:** Isaiah 52:13-53:12

**Title:** Our God Who Steps In

**Big idea:** Jesus willingly stepped in to rescue us from sin

**Outline:**

1. He willingly stepped into rejection (vs. 2-3)
2. He willingly stepped in to bear our sin (4-6)
3. He willingly stepped in to suffer and die (7-10)
4. He willingly stepped in so many would be justified (11-12)

**Intro**

Good morning, Mercy Church! If you are new to Mercy, or we have yet to meet, I want to take a minute to welcome you. We

are glad you are here! My name is Josh Jones, and I serve as the Community Life Pastor which means I get to provide oversight and leadership to our groups and equip ministries. As you continue to hang around Mercy, you will find that we make it our goal to always keep the gospel at the center of everything we do. We place a high value on this time here (Corporate worship), and we place a high value on helping you take your “Next Step” in following Jesus, whatever that may be. We also place a really high value on community. We believe that God intends for us to grow in our relationship with him while in community with other believers. This is why we have community groups scattered throughout Charlotte and why we are trusting God to help us multiply out more groups that will help people take their next step in becoming more like Christ. So, you may be new this morning, or maybe you have been visiting for a while, we want to help you connect to the body of Christ here at Mercy, so we are glad you are here.

I want to get started this morning by asking you a question. What would you be willing to do for 50 grand? What would you willingly “**step into**” if you knew that on other side of it there would be a pay day? What would you be willing to give, what would you be willing to sacrifice?

I used to love watching a TV show called Fear Factor. For those of you who haven’t seen it, Fear Factor was a television game





show where teams of men and women were pitted against each other in challenges that tested their fears, their fear of heights, insects, reptiles. It tested the strength of their stomach. These people would attempt to eat the craziest things... and they would do it willingly. They would willingly subject themselves to terrifying and grotesque challenges all for the chance to win 50,000 dollars.

I remember watching this show... Cringing at the challenges that involved eating nasty things or challenges that required you to let snakes or insects crawl all over you, but the stunts... jumping from heights, or running on the wings of airplanes...I was all in for that.

One of their episodes is literally described as "Airplane Walk; Snake Face-off; Car Launch". Airplane walk and Car launch... I'm good with that. Snake Face-off...? Not so much. Or how about this one... "Truck Jump; Worm Coffin; Catapult"

This show had contestants lined up for days willing to subject themselves to things like this, all for the chance to win 50K.

Now, what if they changed the rules of the game a bit. What if the contestants had to perform death defying stunts, and eat gross insects and bugs, all so that someone else could take home the 50K. Would they do it? Do you think they could even find one person willing to play the game?

What about you? Would you willingly face your fears so that someone else could benefit? Hang with me for a minute and I think you will see how this ties in.

When We think about Christmas, our minds go in about a million different directions. We think about lights, we think about decorations, parties, presents, we think about helping those in need. We think about the birth of Jesus, and the life of Jesus. But maybe we don't think as much about the **"What"**. What he stepped into when he came into the world.

Over the past several weeks we have been in an Advent series looking in the book of Isaiah, and Isaiah talks all about Jesus.

I love this so much. It wasn't until after college that I learned that Jesus was in the Old Testament. I kind of thought the OT talked about God the Father and the NT talked about his Son Jesus. I'm sure someone had tried to share that with me before then, but I couldn't see it.

I remember being shown for the first time how Jesus shows up in in the Old Testament. And later I was shown in the gospel of John that Jesus was present with the Father at Creation, and in fact it was through Christ that all things were created.



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As we watch the story of humanity unfold in the scriptures. As we see man fall away from what God intended for them to be because of sin, we also see a God who willingly stepped in. A God who willingly sent his Son Jesus to rescue us. We see Jesus, the son of God, willingly to leave his throne in heaven to come to earth, born in a stable, willing to suffer and to die so that we might be forgiven.

Mercy, as we enter into this week, I want to encourage us to just stop. Kids, Students, as you enter into this week thinking about all that is about to happen, the fun you hope to have, the presents you hope to open. Stop...Just for a moment to consider Jesus, who willingly stepped into our world knowing that he would be rejected, he would suffer, and he would die. His reward...your redemption.

A little different from Fear Factor huh?

Our text this morning is Isaiah 53, and here we find ourselves jumping into a song. You guys didn't know that Isaiah was a songwriter, did you? There are actually 4 songs in Isaiah called "Servant Songs", each one communicates something to us about the coming Savior, and the one we are looking at this morning is the 4th and last servant song that Isaiah wrote, and it's a pretty popular one. If this were a 4-song album on iTunes, this one would have the most downloads. Of some 80

references to Isaiah in the New Testament, most of them come from this song.

What's important for us to know about this song is that it is all about Jesus who willingly stepped into a world broken by sin. He willingly stepped in to be our substitute. He took the punishment for sin that you and I deserve, the punishment that all of humanity deserves. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul was referring to in 2 Corinthians 5: 21

**21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. -- 2 Corinthians 5:21 (CSB)**

Jesus, the servant that Isaiah is talking about, "Stepped into our world", became sin, so that in Him... We might be forgiven and given God's righteousness.

This is what I want us to hear this morning. This is the image of God that I want us to walk out of here with. A God that steps in, and not away. Isn't that Good news? Isn't that what we long for from God and others? A willingness to step in and not away? Think about it, I'm sure it's not hard for you to think of a time where you just really wished someone would have stepped into a hardship with you, but instead you felt them step away. Our God is a God that Steps in, and he willingly steps towards us even with all of our brokenness. So, as we



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work through this song in Isaiah, my goal is to highlight for us the different ways we see Jesus stepping in. My hope, and my prayer is that it will leave us in Awe of our Great God.

### He willingly stepped into Rejection (2-3)

2 He grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He didn't have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at him, no appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; he was despised, and we didn't value him. -- Isaiah 53:2-3 (CSB)

Jesus wasn't surprised by the rejection he faced. In fact, it was because of the rejection that he came as he did. Where maybe his rejection shouldn't be surprising to us, it is startling, that the very people he made wanted nothing to do with him. The very people he had given the breath of life, walked away from him. The very people he was sustaining turned away and said that he offered no value to their lives. It literally says he was despised and rejected.... The King of the universe, the one

who spoke creation into existence and formed man out of the dust of the earth was useless to them.

The Apostle John in the first chapter of his gospel described it this way.

He (Jesus) was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. -- John 1:10-11 (CSB)

Can you imagine? Can you imagine how you would feel as the creator and sustainer of the world to see the people you loved and created, so quickly and effortlessly despise you? I mean, I know how I feel when I make a dinner that my kids complain about. They didn't earn it, they didn't make it, all they should be saying is thank you dad for this amazing meal. Rather than being received with rejection, Jesus should have been received with thanksgiving and worship. I don't know about you, but I always seem to find it easy to read through the scriptures, watch how people respond to God and point the finger.... How could they treat God this way? How could they treat his son this way?! In those moments I have to remember to turn the question back on myself.

What about me? What are the ways I'm prone to despise Jesus; to walk away from him as though he was worthless?



Since it's Christmas, let's use it as an example. What is most central in your home right now? The tree in all its splendor, the beautifully wrapped presents, or is it giving thanks to the one who made you and gave his life so that you could have life?

Now I'm not suggesting that you replace your tree with a giant Nativity set, but I do think if we are not careful, we can get so caught up with the festivities of Christmas and the celebrations that we miss giving thanks and praise to our savior. That's just Christmas... but we could go on and on listing ways that we despise and reject Jesus in our daily lives. Every time we prefer ourselves to someone else. Every time we prioritize our desires and passions over obedience, we are essentially despising Jesus and failing to value and prioritize the authority he should have over our lives. But in spite of all this, in spite of man's rejection of him, He still willingly stepped in. And in verses 4 through 6 we see that...

#### **He willingly stepped in to bear our sin (4-6)**

Yet he himself bore our sicknesses,  
and he carried our pains;  
but we in turn regarded him stricken,  
struck down by God, and afflicted.  
5 But he was pierced because of our rebellion,

crushed because of our iniquities;  
punishment for our peace was on him,  
and we are healed by his wounds.  
6 We all went astray like sheep;  
we all have turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has punished him  
for the iniquity of us all. -- Isaiah 53:4-6 (CSB)

Guys, this is such an important part of the song. Even though Jesus would be despised and rejected, Isaiah says that he would still willingly step in and carry our sickness, and our pain. He would carry it with him to the cross and be...

#### **Pierced because of our rebellion Crushed because of our iniquities (vs. 5)**

Isaiah goes to write that the " ... **Punishment for our peace was on him.**" Did you hear that? Peace was gone between God and man because of sin. The only way peace could be restored was through death. Either man's death, or the Son of God's death. If it's through man's death, then the result would be **eternal condemnation** and **separation**, if it's through Jesus' death and resurrection, then he would fully bear the punishment of our sin in our place, and it would result in our **restoration** and **reconciliation**. In other words, we would be



restored back into a relationship with God as if we had never sinned. Our broken relationship with him would be reconciled.

It is only through Christ that sinful man is able to be restored into a right relationship with God. It is only through Christ that our sins are forgiven, and the scriptures say that when we are in Christ, we are actually given His righteousness. It's 2 Cor. 5:21 again... *God made Jesus to be sin, for our sake, so that those who are in him, would become the righteousness of Christ.* Jesus willingly stepped in and offered himself as a substitute on our behalf. He took our place, now we who the scriptures describe as enemies (Rom. 5:10) of God in our sin can have peace with God. And once this peace is established vertically between us and God, it can then begin to flow out horizontally into our relationships with people and the rest of the created world.

I believe God put a desire for peace in our hearts, we love to talk about peace. We love to sing about it, watch movies about it. We certainly know when we aren't experiencing it. And I just think that this desire that he has placed in us is like a little whisper letting us know that something is off. And that something that's off doesn't first have to do with our relationships with other people, or even our circumstances. Scripture shows us and testifies to us that peace must first be established between man and God, and this peace can only come from him and through him.

The reality for all humanity is that we all have turned away from God. This is what Isaiah is getting at in verse 6. He says **we all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way;** we have tried to make our own way by looking to ourselves and to the created things of this world to provide for us what only God is able to give us. And rather than leaving all of humanity to suffer the just punishment we deserve, he sent his son to take our sin, to take our pain.

God sent him, and Jesus came...this brings us to our 3rd point.

### **He willingly stepped in to Suffer and Die (7-10)**

**7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth.**

**Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.**

**8 He was taken away because of oppression and judgment, and who considered his fate?**

**For he was cut off from the land of the living; he was struck because of my people's rebellion.**

**9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,**



but he was with a rich man at his death,  
because he had done no violence  
and had not spoken deceitfully. 10 Yet the Lord was pleased to  
crush him severely.  
When you make him a guilt offering,  
he will see his seed, he will prolong his days,  
and by his hand, the **Lord's pleasure will be accomplished.**  
-- Isaiah 53:7-10 (CSB)

Oppressed...afflicted... like a lamb he would be killed. What a terrible assignment to step into. The Son endured outrageous legal treatment, twisted justice from the hands of his oppressors.

It's interesting to see this in contrast to God's people (Israel) who at the time were experiencing suffering and oppression. Israel's suffering was the result of their sin and rebellion. Rather than trust their heavenly Father, they chose to turn their own way, and now they were experiencing the consequences of that. Jesus, however, was perfect and innocent. His suffering was undeserved, and yet He willingly stepped in as a substitute for humanity to make a way for us to be Ransomed and Redeemed (*like we learned last week*).

He allowed others to kill him without protesting. He wasn't a helpless victim, he willingly stepped in and laid down his life. In the gospel of John, chapter 10, Jesus says it this way.

This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father." -- John 10:17-18 (CSB)

Jesus' suffering was not at the hands of his creation. It was an intentional act on his part, He willingly stepped in. He wasn't ignorant to what he was about to endure for the sake of humanity. He wasn't bitter and ticked off that this was the plan. He wasn't grumbling or complaining wondering *why Adam and Eve just had to stumble across the one tree in the garden that they were supposed to stay away from.*

No, the author of Hebrews tells us that it was "**For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**" -- Hebrews 12:2 (CSB)

In a way that we may never fully comprehend, **The Father was pleased to crush his son, and it was the Son's joy to endure suffering,** and to die as a substitute for you and I. Why would God find pleasure in this? Because he knew what his suffering would provide for humanity.



This servant would be the guilt offering that would provide life for all who would put their trust in him. Those who put their trust in Christ are “the seed” Isaiah is talking about in verse 10. (In the Abrahamic covenant, God promised that Abraham’s descendants would be as numerous as the stars.... It is through Jesus that this will be fulfilled).

Let's look at how this song wraps up.

**He willingly stepped in so many would be justified (vs. 11-12)**

11 After his anguish,  
he will see light and be satisfied.

By his knowledge,  
my righteous servant will justify many,  
and he will carry their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will give him the many as a portion,  
and he will receive the mighty as spoil,  
because he willingly submitted to death,

and was counted among the rebels;  
yet he bore the sin of many

and interceded for the rebels. -- Isaiah 53:11-12 (CSB)

Don't take lightly the sacrifice Jesus has made for us. It is through his anguish, the anguish of his soul (ESV), that God's wrath was satisfied. And yet anguish wasn't his final emotion, his anguish led to joy.

The very Jesus who “suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and buried” - Apostle’s creed...This Jesus also rose! Conquering sin and death, and as a result “the many” would be justified.

He was counted among the rebels, he bore the sins of the rebel, and now intercedes for the rebel.

And who are the rebels? All of us, all of humanity. Because of sin, we are all born separated from our Holy God. And check this out, listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans.

For while we were still helpless,[...this is our position apart from Christ; helpless.] at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. [This is the substitutionary work we have been talking about] 7 For rarely will someone die for a just person — though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. 8 But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. -- Romans 5:6-8 (CSB)

This Mercy church is what we are celebrating this Christmas. We are Celebrating the incomprehensible love of God, that he would send his Son at just the right time to pay the Ransom necessary in order to Redeem us from our sin.





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## How should we respond to this?

**The non-believer** - If you have not yet responded to Jesus through repentance & faith... repentance simply means to turn away from sin and towards Christ in faith. **Your first step** is to confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is in fact the son of God who came to take away the sins of the world.

**The Believer** - Our Call is to worship and follow the example Christ set for us. Just as he was willing to “Step in” for you. Are you, are we Mercy church willing to step in for others? Are we willing to step towards people rather than away from people. Each of us every day have opportunity to step towards someone who is struggling, hurting, trapped in sin. Will we like Jesus take that opportunity to step towards them with the hope of Christ, or will we step away.

This could look like - Giving Time, resources, taking a next step in your serving, taking a first step towards reconciling a broken relationship?

Our community Groups are designed to create gospel community. A gospel community...essentially a community of

people committed to Jesus and one another, calls people to “Step in” to the lives of others in the same way that Christ stepped into this world and our lives. How will you be intentional this week to **step in** and **towards** someone else with the hope of Christ.

Pray:

God, we read in 1st Peter that Christ is our example and that we are to follow “**in his steps... when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.** God would we be people who whole entrust ourselves and our circumstances to you who judges justly? God as we enter into this week leading up to Christmas day may we remember What it is that Christ came to do on our behalf... **24 He... bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds [we] have been healed. 25 For [we] were like sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. -- 1 Peter 2:21-25 (CSB)**



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