



# Links Players

## HOLDING COURT: JESUS, VICTIM OF GOD

*Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him and cause him to suffer... (Isaiah 53:10, NIV)*

**T**ODAY’S LESSON WILL NOT BE EASY. For you, it may be hard to hear, hard to understand, or both. I will do my best not to be like a golf teacher giving you a lesson full of unhelpful technical jargon.

Much of the Bible is clear and plain. Other times, we must use one passage of Scripture to help us understand another. When this crossover becomes a sophisticated threadwork, we call it “systematic theology.” For instance, you will not encounter the word *Trinity* anywhere in Scripture, yet theologians have taught this concept for hundreds of years, because when we piece together the many passages that point to it, we establish a concept that is hard to dismiss. But the Trinity is still an unwieldy topic, as the relationship among the Father, Son, and Spirit is one of both distinction and overlap. This is true not only in the abstract, but in the most earthy of God’s actions: the cross.

The cross, we know, is where, by the shedding of his blood, Jesus did the work of salvation. But he was also doing the work of his Father, fulfilling the LORD’s stern will. From the giving of the Law, God had established that the shedding of blood would provide propitiation (satisfactory payment) for sin. For centuries, this was enacted in the animal sacrifices of the Jewish people. Now God was sending his Son to make this sacrifice once for all.

As an outsider, this can be disturbing theological expression. Some have called it cosmic child abuse, that a Father would demand such a sacrifice from his Son. But we cannot view the Father’s will apart from the Son’s, for as Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.” And even when his human form felt the weight of what was about to happen to him, Jesus prayed in the garden, “Not my will, but yours be done.” Whether in distinction or in overlap, Jesus was all in on the Father’s plan.

When we look at what the Father planned in sending his Son, it remains—as we discussed a week ago—that Jesus was the victim of our sin. His body endured great horrors on our behalf. This should always bring us pause; sometimes it will bring us to tears. But God knew his design. It was not only to bring our Savior to death, but to carry him through to resurrection. “After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life...” (Isaiah 53:11). Wonderfully, because of Christ’s suffering, we can see that light as well, if we go all in with him.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/YmDdFnQaqqI>

**Opening questions** Have you ever walked away from a golf lesson more confused than when you began? What’s the most complicated swing thought you dare to remember as you play?

**READING** Isaiah 53:10-12; Philippians 2:5-11; John 3:16

### Death and life (Isaiah 53)

What severe pain would happen to Christ, our Savior? What promise was given for his enduring this sacrifice? What is the meaning of intercession, and how did Jesus accomplish this on the cross?

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### The Son becomes a servant (Philippians 2)

Apart from the physical pain, what was required of Jesus in becoming our Savior? What praise does this elicit from us? To what measure can you have the same attitude as Christ?

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### Life in Christ (John 3)

How does this well-known verse take on deeper meaning for you today?

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