

April 9, 2025

Greetings to all of our Faithful Friends!

*"They don't read Isaiah 53 in the synagogues," I was told by a friend and colleague who is working among the addicted in Israel and the Middle East. He then told me a story of a man who was, in fact, a rabbi he had picked up hitchhiking in Israel. They began a conversation which led to my friend reading Isaiah 53 to his new passenger. He asked the rabbi: "Do you know who the passage is referring to?" The rabbi replied: "Oh, it must be Jesus!" Yes indeed, **it must be Jesus.**

Part of the Isaiah 53 reads like this:

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not.

This description of Jesus is so distant from portrayals we might see of him in art or in TV films. It seems that, humanly speaking, Jesus was not an impressive character. He certainly wasn't the conquering king Israel was hoping for! It seems that in a twisted sort of way, mankind is still hiding its face from the true character of Jesus. "We want a handsome king!" we seem to shout. But God answers, "You have a suffering servant who is/was despised!"

That servant bore our sorrows, carried our sicknesses, encouraged us in our depressions, provided our needs, endured rejection and lost his earthly life. As it is later written in Isaiah 53: *After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life, and be satisfied,....* How satisfying it must have been on that glorious Resurrection Day we are about to celebrate.

I'm not sure what all of you are facing or enduring in these challenging days in which we find ourselves. I know that many of our TC works around Europe are facing many challenges. Terry and I have visited Romania, Czech Republic, Serbia, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and most recently Italy since January 15th. I am amazed at the faithfulness and endurance of these fine TC workers and leaders. I have a great hope that through all things, they and you will *see the light of life and be satisfied*, and that in whatever circumstances are being endured, you or they will be able to say: "Oh, it must be Jesus!"

May the Lord bless you all and keep you and shine His face on you and your loved ones on this glorious day on which we celebrate His resurrection. Thank you, once again, for your faithful support over all of these years! Because of it, we remain with our hands on the plow!

Tom Bremer

*These thoughts are excerpts from an Easter letter written for ISAAC (International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition) by me, who is the acting President of ISAAC.