

THE GIFT—2 IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE

When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Matthew 2:10-11 NLT

All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own ... Isaiah 53:6 NLT

- **Sheep are weak.**
- **Sheep are witless.**
- **Sheep are wayward.**

All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. ... Isaiah 53:6-7 NLT

He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! ⁵But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. Isaiah 53:3-5 NLT

Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people. ⁹He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave. ... ¹¹When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. Isaiah 53:8-9, 11 NLT

And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." ²³Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:22-23 NIV

TALK IT OVER

Read Isaiah 53:3-11. What stands out to you from this passage? How does knowing what Jesus did for you influence the way you live?

What are some practical ways you can take up your cross and follow Christ this week?

Who can you share the love of Jesus with this week? Who could you invite to Christmas services with you?