

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost  
 October 1, 2017  
 Isaiah 50:4-10

In Christ Jesus, who is the willingly obedient Servant of the Lord, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

In the past few weeks we have heard the word “judgment” mentioned frequently in our study of the prophet Jeremiah. Most often when we hear that word “judgment” we think of punishment and condemnation, but a “judgment” is simply a verdict. The judgment of the court may be “guilty, or not guilty, innocent.” That is a good judgment. God’s judgment upon all sinners because of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection is one of “not guilty, innocent, righteous.” In this morning’s sermon we will see through prophecy how Jesus’ obedient suffering, death and resurrection brought about our judgment of “not guilty,” brought about our salvation. And these words of prophecy were written some 750 years before it happened.

The speaker of our text this morning is the Servant of the LORD whom we know from the fulfillment of these words to be none other than Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Jesus tells us what He would have to suffer for His people’s sake. This beautiful text points in two directions. We have first of all a picture of God’s obedient Servant, His Son, whose suffering, death and victory over His accusers is prophesied in very graphic detail. Then in vs. 10 we have described for us the benefit of this saving work for those who are desperately in need of saving strength.

Isaiah’s message is a message of comfort for the weak, the helpless, the ones who are wearied and heavy laden with their sins and who despair of finding any help within themselves. In other words for a repentant child of God, one who has realized he has no goodness or strength of his own, one who has been led to see his tremendous debt of sin through God’s Law, one who is in the midst of the darkness of despair. Help is there. Light shines in the darkness. Victory is assured! But this is assured only for those who look to Him who died for them.

Using Isaiah’s opening verses for the wording of our theme this morning we have chosen as our theme:

**A WORD THAT SUSTAINS THE WEARY**

- 1) **WE SEE HOW THE LORD GOD SUSTAINED HIS SUFFERING SERVANT**
- 2) **WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO TRUST THAT HE WILL SUSTAIN US TOO!**

The Messiah mentions two important gifts that He has been given by the Lord God.

- 1) **A LEARNED TONGUE AND**
- 2) **A LEARNED EAR.**

Literally the words read, “a tongue adapted to deliver effectively the message that is given to speak.” This gift enabled the Messiah to speak and to sustain the weary with a word. We see this fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus has the authority to preach the salvation of mankind which He alone would bring about. Jesus came into this world to “preach good news to the poor.” Jesus’ invitation to the world is: **COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO LABOR (WEARY) AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN FROM ME...**

Jesus has come not to the spiritually healthy but to the sick. He has come to proclaim to those who realize their lost sinful state from the law, who have been led to a knowledge of their sins and been led to come to Him. Spiritually wearied, worn out, burdened consciences can find rest and peace by learning about Jesus and learning from Jesus.

We are told that Jesus taught the people as one having authority and not as the scribes. Even Jesus’ enemies were shocked at the words of this carpenter’s son and declared, “**NO MAN EVER SPOKE LIKE THIS MAN.**” But how did Christ have this ability to speak effectively the message of peace, comfort and words of spiritual rest? He tells us in our text: **THE LORD GOD AWAKENS ME MORNING BY MORNING, HE AWAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR AS THE LEARNED. THE LORD GOD HAS OPENED MY EAR;** The Word of God was Jesus’ constant companion. Day in and day out Jesus studied and heard the Word. He was given a learned ear; again that is “an ear adapted to hear effectively the message that is given in order to speak it.”

As true Man Jesus had to continually hear and read the Word of Life and as a result He remained a learner all of His life. As true Man Jesus had the Spirit of the LORD rest upon Him. The Spirit of

wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. Jesus always had the right words to say at the right time, the proper application of Law and Gospel, of comfort and conviction. So often we feel inadequate to bring the Word to others, we just don't know what to say. Jesus never had that problem, for He was totally immersed in the Word of God.

Through the Spirit He received the ability to hear well and to speak well the Good News of salvation. But this Good News was not always received as Good News. When Christ proclaimed that He had come to save the lost, to redeem the condemned, to set the captives free; the Jewish people as a whole, did not recognize that Jesus was speaking about them. They did not believe that they were the lost, the condemned, the captives of Satan. These words of rebuke and reproof because of their sins and hardheartedness resulted in a rejection of the Savior and opposition to His message.

What happened? Again the Servant of the LORD, some 750 before it took place, tells us what happened: **I GAVE MY BACK TO THOSE WHO STRUCK ME, AND MY CHEEKS TO THOSE WHO PLUCKED OUT THE BEARD; I DID NOT HIDE MY FACE FROM SHAME AND SPITTING.** From Jesus' passion history we see that He was whipped, beaten, tortured, mocked and spit upon. This was done by the leaders of the Jewish senate, by the people and by the Roman soldiers. All of this Jesus willingly endured as part of His humiliation to atone for our sins.

In verse 5 we again see our Savior's total willingness. We read: **I WAS NOT REBELLIOUS NOR DID I TURN AWAY...** Jesus' will was to do His Father's will even though it meant the greatest suffering, agony, pain and torment man has ever experienced. Jesus endured rejection by both man and by His own Father. He was condemned for our sins. We read Jesus' words in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He was to die; **NOT MY WILL, BUT YOURS BE DONE!** Jesus did not draw back from His task. He willingly went through death and damnation to obtain for us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. In this we see Jesus' perfect obedience as a child of God in hearing the Word, as a perfect Prophet in speaking the Word, and as a perfect Substitute in doing God's will.

How could Jesus endure all of this? He tells us in verse 7: **FOR THE LORD GOD WILL HELP ME!** Jesus has total and complete confidence and trust in His heavenly Father. There is something triumphant in the tone of this verse. Yes, even though the suffering would be excruciating, the victory would be glorious. Jesus knew this, therefore He implicitly trusted His Father. As true Man He looked to His Father for help and strength. He often prayed to His Father, many times alone. In His High Priestly prayer recorded in John, Jesus said: **FATHER, THE HOUR HAS COME. GLORIFY YOUR SON, THAT YOUR SON ALSO MAY GLORIFY YOU.** What an excellent example for us on how to obtain strength in this life. We too can turn to God our Father in Jesus' name and ask for help in all of our trials and troubles, both physical and spiritual.

Jesus steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem and toward the cross. There His enemies and sufferings, death and damnation awaited Him. Even His disciples tried to dissuade Him but Jesus would do His Father's will, no matter what. He would earn our salvation.

We have more prophetic words in verses 8-9: **HE IS NEAR WHO JUSTIFIES ME; WHO WILL CONTEND WITH ME? LET US STAND TOGETHER. WHO IS MY ADVERSARY? LET HIM COME NEAR ME. SURELY THE LORD GOD WILL HELP ME; WHO IS HE WHO WILL CONDEMN ME? INDEED THEY WILL ALL GROW OLD LIKE A GARMENT; THE MOTH WILL EAT THEM UP.** Jesus was falsely accused by the Sanhedrin. He was wrongly condemned by Pontius Pilate. No one, not even false witnesses could prove Jesus to be guilty of any wrong doing, for He was without sin. Jesus even challenged His enemies to show Him where He had sinned or done wrong.

The Father would proclaim Jesus to be righteous. He did so by His resurrection. As for Jesus' accusers, they will wear out, but not Jesus. The moths will eat them up. A striking picture of being condemned before the righteous judgment of the Lord. Their ultimate doom is certain.

There was no one who could condemn Jesus, no one who could convict Him of sin and do you know that there is no one who can condemn us either. Not because we are holy and perfect like Christ, but because we have been forgiven by God for the sake of Jesus' sacrifice. Paul writes very similar words in Romans 8:31-34: **WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS? IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US? HE WHO DID NOT SPARE HIS OWN**

**SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS? WHO SHALL BRING A CHARGE AGAINST GOD'S ELECT? IT IS GOD WHO JUSTIFIES. WHO IS HE WHO CONDEMNS? IT IS CHRIST WHO DIED, AND FURTHERMORE IS ALSO RISEN; WHO IS EVEN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, WHO ALSO MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US.**

Finally in verse 10 Isaiah encourages us believers in Christ, we who revere Jesus and His Word to trust in the name of the LORD. We read: **WHO AMONG YOU FEARS THE LORD? WHO OBEYS THE VOICE OF HIS SERVANT? WHO WALKS IN DARKNESS AND HAS NO LIGHT? LET HIM TRUST IN THE NAME OF THE LORD AND RELY UPON HIS GOD.** Do you revere, respect and honor Jesus' name? Do you obey His Word in your daily lives as a fruit of faith? Do you proclaim His name to others? If you do, you will probably run into opposition by others, perhaps even ridicule or persecution. **TRUST IN THE LORD, RELY UPON THE LORD GOD.**

Have any of you walked in the darkness of sin? Walked in a lifestyle that was not God-pleasing or fallen into a sin that took over your heart and life? Then you are counseled by Jesus to trust in His name, to find your strength in the Lord when you lean upon Him and His Word. David learned this most valuable lesson when in distress he cried out in Psalm 30: **I WILL EXALT YOU, O LORD, FOR YOU HAVE LIFTED ME OUT OF THE DEPTHS AND DID NOT LET MY ENEMIES GLOAT OVER ME. O LORD MY GOD, I CRIED OUT TO YOU FOR HELP AND YOU HEALED ME. O LORD, YOU HAVE BROUGHT MY SOUL UP FROM THE GRAVE.**

Jesus is the WORD that sustains the weary! Trust that He will sustain you, too! May we be given through the Spirit ever **LEARNED EARS**, ears that continually hear day after day the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Ears that listen effectively to the one message that saves.

And may the Spirit also give to us a **LEARNED TONGUE** to be able to communicate this message to others, by speaking to one another and telling them about the love of our Savior, the Suffering Servant of the Lord.

Amen.