

Palm Sunday
April 9, 2017
Isaiah 50:4-9

In Christ Jesus, our Humble yet Exalted King, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

How many leaders really care for their people? The Syrian leader Bashar al Assad seems little concerned for the welfare of his people as he continues to bomb them, even dropping chemical weapons on them. It is estimated that he has killed over 400,000 citizens during their civil war. While millions of others have fled to neighboring countries. His one main goal, it seems, is self-preservation, to remain in power no matter what.

Over the thousands of years of history we see countless examples of Pharaohs, Kings, Dictators, Czars, Premiers and Presidents who also cared little for the people they served, they were more concerned with their own interests and power.

How amazingly different our King, Jesus is. He is the most unique King the world has ever seen. He came for one purpose: to suffer and die, to **GIVE** His life for His people. He does not rule with laws and implements of war, weapons and threats, but with words of love and forgiveness. Instead of sacrificing others, He sacrificed Himself. He won the battle for the souls of His people by losing His own life. We saw His uniqueness this morning in our Palm Sunday reading. Jesus is welcomed as King but looks anything but that. He does not have a huge following. He does not ride into the city on a white stallion or in an ornate chariot, but on a little donkey. He has no army, He has no weapons. What kind of King is He?

He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Ruler of heaven and earth! He is the One who rules in the hearts and lives of His people.

Our text this morning from Isaiah 50 answers for us the question,

WHO IS THIS KING?

We see that He is

1) A FAITHFUL PREACHER

We read the first two verses of our text, vs. 4-5 **THE LORD GOD HAS GIVEN ME THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED, THAT I SHOULD KNOW HOW TO SPEAK A WORD IN SEASON TO HIM WHO IS WEARY. HE AWAKENS ME MORNING BY MORNING, HE AWAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR AS THE LEARNED. THE LORD GOD HAS OPENED MY EAR, AND I WAS NOT REBELLIOUS, NOR DID I TURN AWAY.**

Who is speaking in our text? Isaiah introduces us to the **SERVANT OF THE LORD**. This is none other than the **MESSIAH**, the **CHRIST**. He is the one who is speaking in our text. His was the tongue of a well-learned person, skilled in public speaking, teaching and preaching. In Is. 61 we are told that this Servant was **ANointed TO PREACH GOOD TIDINGS TO THE POOR**. It was very evident to the people of Jesus' day that He was a special speaker. We read in Matt. 7:28-29 **AND SO IT WAS, WHEN JESUS HAD ENDED THESE SAYINGS, THAT THE PEOPLE WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS TEACHING, FOR HE TAUGHT THEM AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY, AND NOT AS THE SCRIBES**. In Luke 4:22 we read **SO ALL BORE WITNESS TO HIM, AND MARVELED AT THE GRACIOUS WORDS WHICH PROCEEDED OUT OF HIS MOUTH**. In John 7:15-17 we read, **AND THE JEWS MARVELED, SAYING, HOW DOES THIS MAN KNOW LETTERS, HAVING NEVER STUDIED? JESUS ANSWERED THEM AND SAID, MY DOCTRINE IS NOT MINE, BUT HIS WHO SENT ME. IF ANYONE WANTS TO DO HIS WILL, HE SHALL KNOW CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE, WHETHER IT IS FROM GOD OR WHETHER I SPEAK ON MY OWN AUTHORITY**. Indeed the Father had **GIVEN (HIS SON) THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED**, so that He could **KNOW HOW TO SPEAK A WORD IN SEASON TO HIM WHO IS WEARY**.

A quick review of Jesus' ministry and we see that Jesus always had the fitting words to say at just the right time. His words were hard and difficult for those who were full of pride, self-righteousness and unbelief, but His words were gentle and refreshing to those who were

spiritually fatigued. Some examples: His words to Nicodemus about being born again; His words to the Samaritan woman at the well concerning the Water of Life; His words to the woman caught in adultery about forgiveness; His words to the Pharisees about their hypocrisy; His words to Pilate about the Truth and His Kingdom. In John 6 Jesus tells us that His words are life-giving. He said to His disciples, **IT IS THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES LIFE: THE FLESH PROFITS NOTHING, THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK TO YOU ARE SPIRIT, AND THEY ARE LIFE.** His powerful words gave help in times of great need, for example to the widow of Nain when He said to her **DO NOT WEEP** and His words brought the dead back to life when Jesus said to her dead son, **YOUNG MAN, I SAY TO YOU, ARISE. AND HE WHO WAS DEAD SAT UP AND BEGAN TO SPEAK.**

His words released people from the prison of sin, for example when He said to the paralyzed man, **SON, BE OF GOOD CHEER; YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU.**

His words comforted those who mourned, for example when He said to Mary and Martha, **I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, THOUGH HE MAY DIE, HE SHALL LIVE. AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE.**

His words bound up the broken hearts of His disciples when He said to them on Maundy Thursday evening, **THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU WHILE BEING PRESENT WITH YOU. BUT THE HELPER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, HE WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, AND BRING TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE ALL THINGS THAT I SAID TO YOU. PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU; NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES DO I GIVE TO YOU. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID.** And there are countless more examples.

Jesus preached to win souls for the kingdom of God. His words drew large crowds of people who sat at His feet. They came to learn because they knew His words were from God. Jesus invites us to do the same, **COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND LOWLY IN HEART, AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.** Jesus always had the fitting words for the wearied soul. He still does in His Word. May we be moved by those words to consistently come to hear them for our soul's sake.

Our text also tells us **HE AWAKENS ME MORNING BY MORNING, HE AWAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR AS THE LEARNED.** Jesus only spoke what the Father taught Him to speak. He lived in perfect communion with the Father. He drew strength from the Father to face the daunting challenges of His ministry. Remember how much time He spent in prayer and meditation with the Father. He did all of that for us. His life's goal and purpose was to do His Father's will by living a perfect life of obedient love for us and then allow the Father to lay on Him the sins of us all and suffer death and damnation for each of us. In verse 5 we read, **THE LORD GOD HAS OPENED MY EAR; AND I WAS NOT REBELLIOUS, NOR DID I TURN AWAY.** Jesus' heart and mind were spiritually receptive to His Father. Even when His soul was sorrowful to the point of death in Gethsemane, Jesus refused to rebel against His Father's will. He willingly accepted whatever the Father willed for Him, even if it meant the cross of suffering and death.

That leads us to the second point.

WHO IS THIS KING?

2) HE IS A PATIENT SUFFERER.

We read verses 6-7 **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. FOR THE LORD GOD WILL HELP ME; THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE DISGRACED; THEREFORE I HAVE SET MY FACE LIKE A FLINT, AND I KNOW THAT I WILL NOT BE ASHAMED.**

Jesus stood before Pilate and His accusers and said nothing, knowing that His silence would result in a death sentence. He did not defend Himself. He allowed the whipping to take place, the

beating, the spitting which was done only to criminals. He was no criminal, yet Jesus willingly submitted to it. Why? As Isaiah says in chapter 53 **BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; THE CHASTISEMENT FOR OUR PEACE WAS UPON HIM, AND BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED.** Jesus offered and did not hide His back, face and cheeks. Jesus willingly volunteered to suffer and die in our place.

He did this fully knowing that His Father would be there to see Him through and strengthen Him so that He would not suffer ultimate disgrace. Jesus' enemies did everything they could to put Him to shame. They said things like, **HE TRUSTED IN GOD; LET HIM DELIVER HIM NOW IF HE WILL HAVE HIM; FOR HE SAID I AM THE SON OF GOD.** Those words were meant to cut into Jesus' heart and disgrace Him before all of the people. But Jesus' disgrace at the hands of evil men came to an end so that now He is exalted above all principalities and powers, so that **AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THOSE IN HEAVEN, AND OF THOSE ON EARTH, AND OF THOSE UNDER THE EARTH.**

Based on His unshakable confidence in the Father, Jesus set His face like flint. Flint is one of the hardest known substances. Jesus was determined to follow through to the end. In Luke 9:51 we are told, **NOW IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE TIME HAD COME FOR HIM TO BE RECEIVED UP, THAT HE STEADFASTLY SET HIS FACE TO GO TO JERUSALEM.** Thank God, Jesus was determined to carry out His Father's will and earn for us our salvation.

Our third point is this:

WHO IS THIS KING?

3) HE IS A CONFIDENT CONQUEROR

We read 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.** The Servant of the Lord challenges His enemies. Who of you will be willing to stand before the Justice Seat of God and contend with Me? That is charge me with a crime? Who is My adversary, My accuser? Who will condemn Me? No one could. At Jesus' trials, the charges and accusations were all proven false and groundless. The false witnesses could not agree. When Jesus stood before Pilate and Herod, they could find no basis for the charges leveled against Him. Pilate again and again declared Jesus to be innocent of any and all charges. On the cross God the Father declared Jesus guilty of our sins, but not for any sins of His own. That is why He could be our Substitute. Through it all Jesus remained the sinless, holy Son of God. Jesus' resurrection proved He was innocent and that God was satisfied with and accepted the sacrifice His Son willingly made for our sins. The perfect/righteous/innocent One for the sinful/unrighteous/guilty ones!

All of Jesus' enemies are dead and gone, they have indeed **GROWN OLD LIKE A GARMENT AND THE MOTH OF DEATH HAS EATEN THEM UP.** But Jesus still lives and reigns through all eternity.

In the face of suffering and in the midst of insults, Jesus simply turned the situation over to His Father. What a blessed example for us in our times of suffering and distress. We read in I Peter 2:21-24; **FOR TO THIS YOU WERE CALLED, BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, THAT YOU SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS: WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS GUILF FOUND IN HIS MOUTH, WHO, WHEN HE WAS REVILED, DID NOT REVILE IN RETURN; WHEN HE SUFFERED, HE DID NOT THREATEN, BUT COMMITTED HIMSELF TO HIM WHO JUDGES RIGHTEOUSLY; WHO HIMSELF BORE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE, THAT WE, HAVING DIED TO SINS, MIGHT LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS--BY WHOSE STRIPES YOU WERE HEALED.**

WHO IS THIS KING?

HE IS A FAITHFUL PREACHER always with the fitting word for the proper occasion, whose words are powerful for they are **life** and **salvation**.

HE IS THE PATIENT SUFFERER who willingly went to the cross, enduring the shame and disgrace, the suffering and death for us all.

HE IS THE CONFIDENT CONQUEROR. All of the accusations were groundless. He remained faithful and true, holy and righteous through it all by relying upon His Father and trusting in His will and conquered all of our enemies.

Let us praise and honor our Lord and Savior and may we follow Him this coming week as He goes from the glory and praise of Palm Sunday, to the solemnities of Maundy Thursday, to the suffering and condemnation of Good Friday and finally to the victorious resurrection Joy of Easter Sunday.

Amen.