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Lent Day 20: The Sinless Servant

3-4 minutes

Isaiah 50:4-9 (ESV)

*The Lord God has given me
the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word
him who is weary.*

*Morning by morning he awakens;
he awakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.*

*The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I turned not backward.*

*I gave my back to those who strike,
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;
I hid not my face
from disgrace and spitting.*

*But the Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like a flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.*

*He who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?*

Let us stand up together.

Who is my adversary?

Let him come near to me.

Behold, the Lord God helps me;

who will declare me guilty?

Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment;

the moth will eat them up.

In these verses we observe the contrast between the obedient servant of the Lord and those who persecuted and abused him. Astonishingly, it is the obedient servant who is called to suffer on behalf of the disobedient people – to be struck, spat upon, and mocked. And yet, he “sets his face like flint” toward the road of suffering and will “not be put to shame.” He knows that his suffering is not in vain because by it his people shall be redeemed.

The writers of the New Testament recognized that the servant of the Lord, referenced in this passage, is none other than Jesus Christ. He “set his face” toward Jerusalem, knowing the pain that awaited him there (Luke 9:51). He was struck, mocked, and spat upon (Mark 15:19-20). He suffered, not because of his sin but because of ours, and his life was marked by perfect obedience, even to death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-9).

Through all of this, Jesus remained the sinless servant (Hebrews 12:2). How was Jesus able to endure such treatment and yet be confident that ultimately he would not be put to shame? The answer, in a word, is joy: for “the joy set before him, he endured the cross.” The joy that motivated Jesus was the fact that by his suffering his people would be redeemed.

We too have a great joy set before us today. Certainly there is pain

and suffering on our journey, but being united to Christ by faith, we will not be put to shame! Let us take up our cross and follow Christ, the sinless servant.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our sinless servant. May this good news bring strength to us as we pursue joy in the midst of our pain and suffering. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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