

2014_04_13 Palm Sunday
Ascension Lutheran Church, Batavia IL
Pastor David Pfeiffer

Jesus is Determined to Stand Trial For You

Isaiah 50:4-9a

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Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text today is a prophesy of Isaiah, yet it is ultimately the promised Servant of the Lord who speaks. Jesus speaks and reveals His inner most thoughts as He contemplates His path to the cross. We find a prelude to chapter 53 where the suffering Servant is stricken for our sins. Yet all the while, His confidence remains perfect; Nothing can detour His determination to go to the cross and to death for you. So we read,

Isaiah 50:4-9a

- 4 *"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.*
- 5 *The Lord God has opened My ear;
And I was not rebellious,
Nor did I turn away.*
- 6 *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.*
- 7 *"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.*
- 8 *He is near who justifies Me;
Who will contend with Me?
Let us stand together.
Who is My adversary?
Let him come near Me.*

⁹ *Surely the Lord God will help Me;
Who is he who will condemn Me?*

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

We pray,

*Jesus, I will ponder now on Thy holy Passion;
with Thy Spirit me endow for such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith may the image cherish
Of Thy suffering, pain, and death that I may not perish. Amen.*

Jesus is Determined to Stand Trial For You

1. He is faithful
for those who are unfaithful
2. He endures shame and guilt
for those who are ashamed and guilty
3. He is declared righteous
for those who are unrighteous
4. He speaks a word of strength
for those who are weary

Jesus is Determined to Stand Trial For You

A child's Sunday School craft tells the story. There is a picture of Jesus; He is hanging from the cross; a Roman centurion is looking on. And beneath that picture, the child has written a caption in blue crayon: "Jesus took away your sins, that's why."

The court is in session and a man is on trial. We want a judge who is fair; who will weigh all the evidence and come to the right verdict. And this man is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The evidence has proven it: murder, stealing, lying, adultery, and even high treason against his own home country; this man is a traitor.

Now I ask you a question: raise your hand if you would like to take his place? But we say, "I am not guilty. I did not do it. Why should I face the consequences for someone else's actions?"

We believe a person should face the consequences for their actions. There is little, if any determination to take the place of the guilty. We want a judge who is fair and just – who is impartial and will serve the proper consequence for this man’s actions.

His face is set like flint; His determination is as firm as a rock; He stands silent as accusations are hurled against Him. It is utter determination like only God’s Son can display. For He knows this trial is your trial; and this sentence He faces is yours. A child’s Sunday School craft tells the story – Jesus is awakened to this call and says:

5 The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

Jesus is Determined to Stand Trial For You

1. He is faithful for those who are unfaithful

The fulfillment of the 1st commandment is really expressed in one word: trust. Trust is the fulfillment of all that God desires of us. It is the opposite of idolatry. The Scriptures sometimes expresses this idea as “faithfulness” – that is to say, the type of obedience that is filled with faith; full of determination; confident of God’s goodness, His promises, and willing to do whatever He asks without a shed of doubt. And so all the commandments are fulfilled in one thought: “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.”

We want a judge who will weigh all the evidence. Will He find faithfulness? Will He find a life filled with determination to keep God’s commandments? Or will He find a flesh that is filled with excuses?

The accuser is there, in the court room – and he will not fail to bring before God every time you and I doubted God’s good purpose; every time we chose the easy way of something evil rather than the difficult way of what is good. Satan accuses. And this trial is a trial of the heart. The Law judges not just the actions, but the heart which produced those actions. It finds a traitor – convicted of betraying his own people and his own God in just one word: unfaithfulness.

But a picture shows the caption written in blue crayon beneath: “Jesus took away your sins, that’s why.”

He says: v.5, 7 – *The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away. ... “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.*

With a face like flint, He rides into Jerusalem and offers Himself to Judas. He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a slave – our King rode faithfully into Jerusalem. With perfect determination He fears, loves, and trusts in God, despite all circumstances. He stands trial for you and remains faithful to the end.

2. He endures shame and guilt for those who are ashamed and guilty

The court is in session and a man is on trial. Will he accept the accusations being hurled against Him? Surely they are false witnesses. They cannot be allowed to bring up the past. The judge cannot permit such evidence to be admitted.

I want to speak up. I want to be justified. I want my record cleared. And so I say things like, “everyone does it.” I try to defend myself: “but what about her – she was rude to me first; I had every right to treat her that way.” I begin saying things like: “I was just being a child, I didn’t know any better.” “And “those were my college years – they don’t count.” “That was my parents fault, my spouse’s fault, my boss’ fault, my circumstances fault.” And I begin to realize the worse is yet to come. There are hidden things. Matters of secret. Things I have only thought. These are not false witnesses, this is the truth. And I no longer can hold my head. I am supposed to be a Christian, and look at what I’ve done. Utter shame and guilt floods my mind and I fall to tears before the judge, knowing what I deserve.

And so this man remains silent. He stands before Caiaphas the High Priest; He stands before Pilate; He is on trial for you. They begin to spit upon Him. They have found Him guilty; and by their Law, He ought to die. And they spit in His face, they slap Him with their hands. He does not resist. He offers His back as sign of submission; a willingness to accept the abuse. Despite all the false witnesses, He says nothing in His defense; no excuses, no self-justification.

Isaiah 50:6 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.

The Son of God accepts shame and guilt for you.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

The caption is written in blue crayon: "Jesus took away your sins, that's why." That's why; that's why He has come to earth; that's why He endure the shame, the guilt; the suffering; the death. It is for you and for your sins. He is determined.

3. He is declared righteous for those who are unrighteous

Still judge has not spoken. There is really only one person who will have the final say. Not Caiaphas; not the Jewish Council; not Pilate; this courtroom is not on earth. This trial is in heaven and it is God who will judge this case.

Meanwhile on earth, Pilate's hands drip with guilt. His hands drip with our excuses. Everyone is trying to get out of the way; we are trying to avoid what is rightfully ours; we know this man to be innocent, and we know the judgment which is coming. He washes His hands and hands the King of the Jews over to our death.

"For our sins, that's why." That's why He's delivered to death; that's why this King, has become a Servant; that's why He has accepted our guilt; and that's why the cross has become more than just a painful means of execution – this has become the place of God's wrath; the place of His condemnation against all sin; Hell itself has come to God's Son, so that He cries out the words of Psalm 22 – "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" Why has God forsaken Him?

For your sins, that's why. This is no mistake; no falsification; on the cross, God the Judge having the final say against our unrighteousness. He is judging the sins of all the world. And God will have the final say.

Isaiah 50:8–9 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?

There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. To "justify" is "to declare righteous." God is near, at hand, there on the cross, He is determined to declare His Son righteous and so He is determined to declare you are declared righteous.

Romans 8:32–34 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.

The Judge speaks and His declaration stands for all eternity. In the empty tomb, God will speak the verdict; and the result? Righteous. The Law is satisfied and you are justified, forgiven, freed from condemnation and hell. Jesus is declared righteous and so are you.

4. He speaks a word of strength for those who are weary

Through all this Jesus has learned obedience. He has done so that He might teach you to know what He has He is the disciple, the learned one who has God's will and word upon His tongue. He is the beginning and end of our faith; and is ready to speak a word of strength for those who are weary.

Isaiah 50:4 "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.

On Easter morning, Christ awakens and He speaks a word to those who are weary.

It is the season for weariness. As we grow ever aware of our sins; as we become increasingly more attuned to the evil that stands against us; and the weakness of our own flesh, we grow weary.

But Jesus is awakened from death; He lives and speaks to you who are weary. And from that cross it begins and in the empty tomb it is confirmed and in this church echoes: "It is finished." To those weary from the abuse of the world, He says: "Come." To those who are accused by conscience, He says: "I will give you rest." To those who are heavy burdened and cannot seem to go on, He says: "learn from Me." He speaks a word: "This was all for you. Never once did I despise you for these sins; but I did it for you; to fulfill the Scriptures and satisfy God's righteous judgment. You are forgiven."

So let us listen and learn of Him. As we carry our cross; in weariness and trial; in sin and guilt – look to Him and be a disciple of Him. Let His Word become yours; that you might respond with determination: "the LORD God has opened My ear and I was not rebellious, For the Lord God will help Me; He is near who justifies Me."

A child's Sunday School craft tells it all. A picture of Jesus; hanging from the cross, a Roman centurion is looking on. And beneath that picture, the child has written a caption in blue crayon: "Jesus took away your sins, that's why."

Amen!