

The Gospel according to Isaiah in the suffering Servant Songs

Class 8 Chapter 50:4-11

There are a few places where the servant speaks without introduction. We saw this in Chapter 49 for example verses 1-4. We will also see this in chapter 61.

Our entire section for today is the servant speaking. This whole section is dedicated to the servant and his suffering from a first-person view. Chapter 53 is known as the chapter of the suffering servant but as in chapter 49 here we get a glimpse into what it was like from his point of view.

In chapter 49 we see his doubt and his questioning of his purpose.

4 But I said, "I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the LORD,
and my reward with my God."

This chapter exemplifies the steadfast dedication of the servant to his purpose.

The servant has heard the Lord God. Adonay Yahweh. There is a sense of majesty as the servant uses this name for God. This is who the servant has learned from. His words, the things he speaks have come from The Lord God. As we read this chapter the use of the words and phrases should cause us to remember other parts of scripture.

50:4 The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.

This verse reminds us of

Matt. 11:28 "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

It should also remind us of Jesus' teaching ministry.

5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.

The servant is obedient. He listens to the Lord and obeys. No rebellion on the part of the servant. He walks his path and does not deviate from it.

6 I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

Matt. 26:67 Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him,

Mark 14:65 Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" The guards also took him over and beat him.

Mark 15:19 They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. **20** After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

He endured. He gave himself. There is a big difference from not having control over this situation as a normal thief or criminal and giving his back to those who struck him and his cheeks to those to pull out his beard. There is a willingness, a decision made by this servant to endure these sufferings.

As we read this chapter my mind goes to the garden where Jesus was praying while his disciples slept. And in his anguish he sweat drops of blood. Jonathan

Edwards has an incredible sermon on the suffering and anguish of Jesus at the Garden.

Here is a passage from that sermon

Hence we may learn how dreadful Christ's last sufferings were. We learn it from the dreadful effect which the bare foresight of them had upon him in his agony. His last sufferings were so dreadful, that the view which Christ had of them before overwhelmed him and amazed him, as it is said he began to be sore amazed. The very sight of these last sufferings was so very dreadful as to sink his soul down into the dark shadow of death; yea, so dreadful was it, that in the sore conflict which his nature had with it, he was all in a sweat of blood, his body all over was covered with clotted blood, and not only his body, but the very ground under him with the blood that fell from him, which had been forced through his pores through the violence of his agony. And if only the foresight of the cup was so dreadful, how dreadful was the cup itself, how far beyond all that can be uttered or conceived! Many of the martyrs have endured extreme tortures, but from what has been said, there is all reason to think those all were a mere nothing to the last sufferings of Christ on the cross. And what has been said affords a convincing argument that the sufferings which Christ endured in his body on the cross, though they were very dreadful, were yet the least part of his last sufferings; and that beside those, he endured sufferings in his soul which were vastly greater. For if it had been only the sufferings which he endured in his body, though they were very dreadful, we cannot conceive that the mere anticipation of them would have such an effect on Christ. Many of the martyrs, for ought we know, have endured as severe tortures in their bodies as Christ did. Many of the martyrs have been crucified, as Christ was; and yet their souls have not been so overwhelmed. There has been no appearance of such amazing sorrow and distress of mind either at the anticipation of their sufferings, or in the actual enduring of them. Christ's Agony- Jonathan Edwards

Is. 50:7 The Lord GOD helps me;
 therefore I have not been disgraced;
 therefore I have set my face like flint,
 and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

Luke 9:51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

I shall not be put to shame. Can you imagine the shame of the sufferings? Shame is tough for us because all manner of judgement for us as normal people is shameful. Being judged in front of friends family. And this judgement of Jesus is recorded for people from all times and places to read and know about. Shameful. But not for the servant. He knows this will not end in shame.

8 he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.

1Tim. 3:16 Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great:
He was revealed in flesh,
vindicated in spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among Gentiles,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.

Christ is vindicated. There is no one to contend with him nor can his adversaries confront him.

9 It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.

Heb. 1:11 they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like clothing;

12 like a cloak you will roll them up,
and like clothing they will be changed.
But you are the same,
and your years will never end.”

Is. 50:10 Who among you fears the LORD
and obeys the voice of his servant,
who walks in darkness
and has no light,
yet trusts in the name of the LORD
and relies upon his God?

John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

John 12:46 I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness.

11 But all of you are kindlers of fire,
lighters of firebrands.
Walk in the flame of your fire,
and among the brands that you have kindled!
This is what you shall have from my hand:
you shall lie down in torment.

Rom. 10:3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God’s righteousness.

Here we find two types of people those who are lost and in darkness and those who think they have found their own way. The Lord is merciful to those who fear him and are lost. But to those who think their righteousness is enough they will end up in judgement and torment.

I want to end with another excerpt from Christ's agony by Jonathan Edwards.

2. From what has been said, we may see the wonderful strength of the love of Christ to sinners. What has been said shows the strength of Christ's love two ways.

1. That it was so strong as to carry him through that agony that he was then in. The suffering that he then was actually subject to, was dreadful and amazing, as has been shown; and how wonderful was his love that lasted and was upheld still! The love of any mere man or angel would doubtless have sunk under such a weight, and never would have endured such a conflict in such a bloody sweat as that of Jesus Christ. The anguish of Christ's soul at that time was so strong as to cause that wonderful effect on his body. But his love to his enemies, poor and unworthy as they were, was stronger still. The heart of Christ at that time was full of distress, but it was fuller of love to vile worms: his sorrows abounded, but his love did much more abound. Christ's soul was overwhelmed with a deluge of grief, but this was from a deluge of love to sinners in his heart sufficient to overflow the world, and overwhelm the highest mountains of its sins. Those great drops of blood that fell down to the ground were a manifestation of an ocean of love in Christ's heart.