

Third Servant Song Isaiah 50:1-11 (ESV) bible-sermons.org September 27, 2015

Our text today includes the third Suffering Servant Song. It is clearly about our Messiah, Jesus. Two weeks ago we saw the clear difference between the servant Israel, and the suffering servant, the Messiah who was yet to come (49:6-7). The passage today begins with reason for the coming captivity of Judah and then continues with the God's solution to our tendency to be unfaithful. It is the work of the Messiah to create a faithful bride made up of Jews and Gentiles.

¹ Thus says the LORD: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away. Isaiah 50:1 The eternal God of Israel is asking the people of Judah to consider why they are going into captivity. Why would God send them away like a divorced women or like a child sold to creditors? He is not saying He has divorced Judah or sold them, but rather why it will seem as if He had.

God answers His own rhetorical question. It was sin that separated them from Him. It was their iniquities that pulled them away. He didn't leave them. They left Him. A few chapters later He will repeat this thought. *² but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.* Isaiah 59:2 When a nation falls under the judgments of God it is not because God has left them. It is because their sins have separated them from God. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil (Habakkuk 1:13). He will lift His hedge of protection to turn us back to Himself. He is more concerned about our eternal condition than our temporal happiness. It is true for nations and individuals as well.

As our nation turns from God and runs headlong into hedonism what can we expect? We will experience a separation from God because of our transgressions. His hedge of protection will lift (Job 1:10; Isaiah 47:6-11). There will be natural disasters, military failures, attacks on the nation, and a drastic decline in our quality of life. Is it because God divorced our mother? Is it because He sold us to creditors? No. It is because our iniquities have separated us from God. The historical pattern of nations that enjoy success is decadence, decline and defeat.

God did deliver a certificate of divorce to Israel (the northern ten tribes) because of their idolatry. They were conquered and went into captivity, but Judah paid no attention (Jeremiah 3:6-10). Even then God pleaded with Israel to return and acknowledge their sin (Jeremiah 3:12-14). Not only will our nation not acknowledge their sin, but they boast about their tolerance of it and declare all who will not celebrate sin are "bigots."

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 49:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

⁷ Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Commented [PW2]: Habakkuk 1:13 (ESV)

¹³ You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?

Commented [PW3]: Job 1:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Commented [PW4]: Isaiah 47:6-11 (ESV)

⁶ I was angry with my people; I profaned my heritage; I gave them into your hand; you showed them no mercy; on the aged you made your yoke exceedingly heavy.

⁷ You said, "I shall be mistress forever," so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end.

⁸ Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children":

⁹ These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments.

¹⁰ You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, "No one sees me"; your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me."

¹¹ But evil shall come upon you, which you will not know how to charm away; disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone; and ruin shall come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing.

Commented [PW5]: Jeremiah 3:6-10 (ESV)

⁶ The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: "Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore?"

⁷ And I thought, 'After she has done all this she will return to me,' but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

⁸ She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one[... [1]

Commented [PW6]: Jeremiah 3:12-14 (ESV)

¹² Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, "'Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever.

¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the LORD. [... [2]

In the USA we have a wonderful heritage of godly founders. The colonies were divided along denominational lines. If anything, they were too dogmatic about their particular interpretation of the Bible. When they tried to unite around a constitution, they realized they would have to put those differences aside and agree to let individuals be free to come to their own conclusions about faith and the practice of their faith. That is why our first right was the freedom of religion. It prevents the establishment of any one religion over the others and promises that all are free to practice their faith without harassment from others.

Local governments, in their pursuit of political correctness, have decided we will ignore that and establish a new religion. It is the religion of secularism. Its first tenant is the golden rule of Satanism: "Do what thou wilt." That is to say that whatever you think is right is right for you. There are no moral absolutes in this ancient faith with one exception. You absolutely cannot tell anyone something is a sin. You must not just accept but rather celebrate and conform by giving up the right to publicly practice any other faith.

This new religion says that everyone is basically good. That is another reason using the "s" word is forbidden. The word they consider most vulgar is "sin." A religion is being established, and every premise of the First Amendment is being nullified by the very judicial system that was established to defend it.

^{2a} Why, when I came, was there no man; why, when I called, was there no one to answer? Isaiah 50:2a This reminds us of chapter 48 in which the call to hear God went out ten times (48:16). The Holy Spirit was crying out to the people of Judah through the prophets but no one was listening (Jeremiah 13:10). He is crying out today from Bible believing pulpits and directly to the hearts of men and women. Will anyone answer?

When I asked our city council if they were really aiming to deny the religious rights of those who believe in traditional marriage as a sacred institution, no one answered. Is there anyone to answer when God asks why our nation is so filled with pornography, vile entertainment, drug abuse, and lethargy? Will anyone answer when our nation is facing insurmountable debt? But even more importantly, will each of us face the idols that call us away from keeping God and His Word as the priority of our lives? Will you answer when He calls? Will you be one who will take a stand and dare to be different?

At this verse there is a shift in the focus of this passage from the failure of man to the power of God. What man can never do, God is more than able to do! *^{2b} Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst.* Isaiah 50:2b God is able to redeem fallen Judah. He is able to redeem you and me. You and I are unable on our own to resist the temptations of idolatry. We are unable to serve God and be who He has created and called us to be. But God is able! He can reach you right where you are. He can redeem Judah from captivity and you and I from the

Commented [PW7]: Isaiah 48:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there." And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit.

Commented [PW8]: Jeremiah 13:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing.

captivity of sin (John 8:34). He can pay the price that buys us back from the clutches of Satan. He can deliver us from the power of sin.

God gave the example of redeeming and delivering Israel out of Egypt. He made a path through an ocean. He made springs in the desert. He can physically take care of a million people in the wilderness, can't He take care of our spiritual need as well (Philippians 4:19). Can't He make a faithful bride out of us adulterous, pleasure loving, iron sinew necked, bronze forehead rebels? What a mighty God we serve!

It is amazing to see a 500 ton A380 lift off the runway carrying up to 980 people and their luggage into the sky. But God has been flying something weighing ten times that from beginning of the earth. The average cloud weighs 5000 tons!

³ I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering. Isaiah 50:3 At any one moment the Lord has 50 trillion tons suspended above the earth! If He can do that through His design, can't He redeem His people? Now He tells us how He delivers us.

The Deliverer speaks. *⁴ 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.* Isaiah 50:4 No wonder Jesus invited the weary to come to Him and find rest (Matthew 11:28). No wonder the sinners flocked to hear His message. They were weary of trying to obey the 613 laws of Moses and all the traditions surrounding the Law. **Jesus had the solution to the never ending effort of trying to please God. Trust in Him to do what we could never do. Let His life invade our own by the power of the Holy Spirit and walk by faith and not by sight.** The beatitudes sustained with a word those who were weary (Matthew 5:3-12). His parables did the same.

And from whence came these words? Every morning His ear was open to heavenly Father. *³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.* Mark 1:35 His spiritual ears were awake to hear instruction. Every day was lived in obedience to the Father. God opened His ears to hear and He received and obeyed what He heard.

"Why is it that we have such a hard time hearing the voice of the LORD? Jesus told us that His sheep listen to His voice (John 10:3). Could it be that we are not surrendered to obey and therefore our ears are not awakened? If our hearts are determined to do what we want, rather than to obey our LORD, we have rebellious hearts. If we want our ears to be awakened, we must first surrender our hearts to serve in any ways the LORD would direct us. If you are weary, Jesus has a word to sustain you. Surrender your heart to do His will and your ear will be awakened. Follow His example."⁴

⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. Isaiah 50:5 This is the example. Jesus' heart was one with that of the Father. While His natural will did not desire to suffer (Mark 14:36), His heart was for the salvation of

Commented [PW9]: John 8:34 (ESV)

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

Commented [PW10]: Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Commented [PW11]: Matthew 11:28 (ESV)

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Commented [PW12]: Matthew 5:3-12 (ESV)

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Commented [PW13]: John 10:3 (ESV)

³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

Commented [PW14]: Paul Wallace *Through the Bible Again* Vol 1. Sept 18

Commented [PW15]: Mark 14:36 (ESV)

³⁶ And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

mankind and yielded fully to the will of the Father. That is key to hearing! What He heard He obeyed no matter the cost. When God called was there a man? Only one! Jesus of Nazareth, the God man!

Not being rebellious and turning not backward had a painful toll. ⁶ *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.* Isaiah 50:6 Oh how He gave His back to those who strike. They literally tore the muscles to shreds. Here are a few verses from the Gospels that describe the fulfillment of this verse. ⁶⁷ *Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him,* Matthew 26:67 ¹⁹ *And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him.* Mark 15:19 He could have paralyzed every one of them with one word. But He didn't. He demonstrated a greater strength. The power of love for His Father and love for them held Him from action. That's power! Compared to that power the power those soldiers demonstrated was nothing. He would soon utter the words, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus could not do that as a mere man, and neither can you or I. ⁷ *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.* Isaiah 50:7 It was the help of His heavenly Father that enabled Him to set His face like flint (Luke 9:51). He warned His disciples in advance just what He would endure (Mark 10:34). He knew because it was written of Him. Having quoted from one of the Isaiah passages about Himself (Luke 4:17-19), we see He knew the passage we are looking at today as well as the other Suffering Servant Songs.

Jesus knew the final outcome of obedience to the Father is fruitfulness beyond human comprehension. That is why He knew the final outcome would not end in shame, but joyous victory (Hebrews 12:2; Psalm 22:29-31). The world will call us names and belittle us for standing for the truth of the Word of God, but the end result will not be shame for us, but for those who resist God.

⁸ *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.* Isaiah 50:8 Jesus alone can confidently say this. Remember the time He challenged those who were attacking Him to convince Him of some sin He had committed (John 8:46). Who among us would dare to make that claim? Someone might be arrogant enough to do so, unless we told them their wife could testify. The very presence of Jesus was so holy that no one dared to accuse Him to His face during that encounter. Some would be so arrogant as to do so later, but all their false accusations were shown to be slander when God vindicated Jesus by raising Him from the dead.

Some resist Him even today, but when they see Him descend in His glory every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (Matthew 24:30). He was vindicated in the Resurrection and will be vindicated in the Second Coming.

Commented [PW16]: Luke 23:34 (ESV)

³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Commented [PW17]: Luke 9:51 (ESV)

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

Commented [PW18]: Mark 10:33-34 (ESV)

³³ saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.

³⁴ And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."

Commented [PW19]: Luke 4:17-19 (ESV)

¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Commented [PW20]: Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)

² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Commented [PW21]: Psalm 22:29-31 (ESV)

²⁹ All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive.

³⁰ Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;

³¹ they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

Commented [PW22]: John 8:46 (ESV)

⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

Commented [PW23]: Matthew 24:30 (ESV)

³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

⁹ 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. Isaiah 50:9 God the Father helped God the Son in human form by empowering Him with the Spirit. Jesus listened and obeyed. That is when we are helped by God. No voice could declare Him guilty of even one sin. Even Pilate declared there was no fault in Him (John 18:38). Every human body that would stand up and resist the Lord will grow old and wear out.

Clothing in Jesus' day was quite costly. People took great care of their clothes because it was so expensive to replace them. Even then, clothes wore out and moths would eat holes in them. That is the human condition. Try to fight aging as we may, we wear out. Will mortal man contend with the eternal Son of God? We do, but how foolish we prove ourselves to be. Jesus could look at His critics and the Roman soldiers and know their bodies would soon be worm food. People think so much of the physical being, but it is so short lived. The next time you are tempted to be angry with someone, remember, that person will soon return to dust just as your body will. Our souls will be forever in one place or another. That should give us a different perspective.

¹⁰ Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. Isaiah 50:10 Now God asks us if we fear the LORD and obey the voice of His Servant, Jesus. Have you listened to Jesus' words in the Gospels? He tells us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). He tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). He tells us that we must be born again (John 3:3).

Are you walking in darkness? Do you know what life is all about, or are you still trying to figure it out? There is light in Jesus who declared Himself to be this Servant, the light of the world (John 9:5), who suffered for you. You can trust in His name, that is, to trust in His nature. He is love. He will not mislead you. He loves you and will guide you if you will trust in Him. He is the only reliable One.

The chapter ends with a reference back to something Isaiah prophesied earlier. If you have a fear of the righteous judgments of God then the previous verse invites you come to His light and rely on Him. But if you have no fear of God's righteous judgments, you are relying on yourself or some other spiritual power, like those mentioned in 47:14. Astrologers and mystics were predicted to be consumed like stubble. At the flash of a flame they would be gone.

¹¹ Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment. Isaiah 50:11 There is only one provision for sin, the Suffering Servant. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). All other efforts to be spiritual are a delusion. They only lead to hell. Jesus suffered for you so that you could experience His deliverance, have light to see in the darkness of this world, and be sustained through life by His encouraging words. He's calling. Will you

Commented [PW24]: John 18:38 (ESV)

³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."

Commented [PW25]: Mark 12:30 (ESV)

³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Commented [PW26]: John 3:3 (ESV)

³ Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Commented [PW27]: John 3:3 (ESV)

³ Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Commented [PW28]: John 9:5 (ESV)

⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Commented [PW29]: Isaiah 47:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Behold, they are like stubble; the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before!

Commented [PW30]: John 1:29 (ESV)

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

answer? Jesus answered the Father's call to save humanity. Will you answer Jesus call to come to Him and walk in His light?

Questions

- 1 How does man become separated from God?
- 2 What are the roots of the first amendment to the constitution?
- 3 Will you answer when God calls?
- 4 What powerful thing can God do?
- 5 Who is speaking in verse 4? What does He have for us? Why?
- 6 How do we follow that example?
- 7 What were the initial consequences of Jesus' obedience?
- 8 What were the ultimate consequences?
- 9 Why was that so?
- 10 What is the warning in the final verse?

Jeremiah 3:6-10 (ESV)

⁶ The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore?”

⁷ And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

⁸ She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.

⁹ Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree.

¹⁰ Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah 3:12-14 (ESV)

¹² Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever.

¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the LORD.

¹⁴ Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.