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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
September 16, 2018  
17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: James 2:1-5,8-10, 14-18, Mark 8:27-35  
Hymns: 225; 398; 755; 309

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord  
and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 50:4-10

“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.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened My ear;  
And I was not rebellious,  
Nor did I turn away.

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>“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.

<sup>8</sup>*He is near who justifies Me;*  
Who will contend with Me?

Let us stand together.  
Who *is* My adversary?  
Let him come near Me.

<sup>9</sup>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.  
<sup>10</sup> “Who among you fears the LORD?  
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?  
Who walks in darkness  
And has no light?  
Let him trust in the name of the LORD  
And rely upon his God. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, The Servant of the Lord, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Obedience of Faith.

This is the thought that ties this morning’s worship together. There is an expression that we might use at times, that something is “one simple thought.” Well, this is one thought, but it is far from simple. It is really one quite complex thought.

In our epistle lesson this morning James wrote of faith and works going hand in hand, and that faith without works is actually not faith, that faith without works is dead. (James 2:17) So one may be challenged, “show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works.” (James 2:18) Obedience and works sound like a natural fit, except we have a complication with our flesh that our sinful pride likes to grab the credit for the works and claim righteousness because we have loved others. That then is not the obedience of faith. It is the paganism of work righteousness in which one worships self and not Christ.

The gospel lesson is the key to finding the string of thought that ties our worship together. The obedience of faith has to begin with a proper understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. If we characterize Jesus as merely a great teacher of love and good works, or if we characterize Jesus as one who calls us to stop sinning and to worship God by our obedience, we will miss the truth as much as many in the crowds who gathered around Jesus

hoping to see Him perform some miracle. That view of Jesus is both superficial and wrong.

Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus taught them what that meant; He had to suffer many things at the hands of His enemies and be killed and the third day rise again. Knowing and believing this about Jesus lies at the heart of the obedience of faith, a faith which only the Holy Spirit can work in our hearts through the gospel.

Our text then teaches us the key elements of securing this obedience of faith:

### **THEME: Faith Lays Hold of the Obedience of Christ.**

Our text reveals Jesus' --

#### **I. Obedience to the Will of the LORD for Our Salvation.**

**Isaiah 50:4-6** “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.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened My ear;

And I was not rebellious,

Nor did I turn away.

<sup>6</sup>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.

Jesus' perfect obedience to the will of God is often divided into two areas, one being His active obedience, His life of love and fulfilling the law of God, and the other His passive obedience, that He endured the cross and suffered death for us and our salvation. That division is clearly evident in these words of prophecy. However, we see a special emphasis on the obedience of Christ in verse four as it relates to Jesus' ministry, as it relates specifically to Jesus being the Christ. As we consider how Jesus was obedient

to the will of God the Father we also learn more about what was involved in Jesus being the Christ.

Last week as we observed our Christin education Sunday, we were reminded of how important teaching was to Jesus' ministry. It lay at the very heart of Jesus' ministry, and when He issued the Great Commission, teaching also lay at the heart of the Great Commission. Faithful teaching is always to be at the heart of every Christian ministry and mission. That is what the first verse of our text, words written centuries before Jesus was born into the world, teach us concerning the ministry of the Christ.

Jesus was careful, and Jesus was faithful in His teaching. Jesus didn't come up with an independent philosophy of spiritual wisdom. Jesus spoke the truth that as given to Him from God the Father in heaven above.

Jesus as the Christ, presented the right word at the right time in all His teaching. He proclaimed the law when it was called for, and the gospel where it was needed. Jesus would come into the world and preach the message of the Kingdom of God that directed people to true repentance, that they would be comforted by the forgiveness of their sins while also turning away from sin in their lives. Time and again Jesus was criticized for associating with sinners, but these were sinners who needed to hear that comforting word of God's love and forgiveness, even as we do yet today.

Jesus did not speak words independent of the Father. Our text declares that Jesus would faithfully teach that which He received from above. Yes, He was and is true God, the incarnate Son, and so His will and wisdom would always be in harmony with His Father in heaven. Here we see that it is more than harmony, it is obedience to the will of the Father. Jesus said:

**John 8:28-29** "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.<sup>29</sup> And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."

This obedience secures our righteousness and brings us the assurance of God's love and forgiveness and peace.

This is the **active** obedience of Jesus as the Christ, and the next two verses, 5 and 6 teach us of the perfect **passive** obedience of Jesus as the Christ. The Lord GOD opened Jesus' ears spiritually, so that Jesus, also according to His human nature, understood what lay before Him, and Jesus would not and did not resist or rebel against that will of GOD. It was necessary for Jesus to endure all that He spoke of to the disciples in our gospel lesson and so much more. In our text we are told of the cruelty the Christ was to endure, that Jesus was to endure at the hands of His enemies. Those words, "*I gave My back to those who struck Me,*" (v.6) speak of the scourging Jesus would endure. And then think of how painful it was that Jesus gave His "*cheeks to those who plucked out the beard;*" (v.6) Yes, they ripped chunks of Jesus' beard right off of His face, and they thought it funny. Jesus had the power to put a stop to it at any time, but He didn't. In obedience to His Father's will, in obedience to His Father's will for your salvation and mine, He didn't. He endured! And then "*I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.*" (v.6) And so He suffered for our sins, for those very sins committed against Him, for those who sinned against Him that night, and then the following day that we call Good Friday.

This is a lesson about obedience that ought to be very powerful, that make an impression upon our hearts and minds. There was only one reason for Jesus to be obedient to the Lord GOD in all this, including both Jesus' teaching and Jesus' suffering, and that reason is you. *He loves you with an eternal love and desires your salvation.*

That's obedience for us to both observe and emulate. But how can one be obedient like that? While our obedience will not be a perfect obedience this side of heaven, nonetheless we can learn the how from Jesus, for His was an --

## **II. Obedience Built upon a Firm Trust in the Lord.**

Jesus was confident, not even just in Himself as the Son of God. Jesus lays before us the confidence of faith, and so the obedience **of faith**. The Prophet Isaiah foretells by inspiration what it is that lies within the heart of our Lord Jesus. What is revealed to us is a heart that absolutely trusts in God the Father. He trusts that in spite of the humiliating circumstances of His sufferings and death on the cross, He will not be disgraced. It is this trust that is evident in Jesus when He set His face to go to Jerusalem where He would suffer and die. It was this trust that gave Him such determination that He would set His face like a flint in going forward to His suffering and death. Jesus' trust that He would be justified in His resurrection was as solid as a rock, as hard as flint! Jesus knew where His help was to be found, in the Lord GOD, the master of the universe, the GOD of our salvation.

Now follow along as we read these words again, take out your Scripture sheets or look down at your Bibles and follow along and read and hear with understanding, this is YOUR GOD, the GOD of your salvation!

**Isaiah 50:7-9** “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.

<sup>8</sup> *He is near who justifies Me;*

Who will contend with Me?

Let us stand together.

Who *is* My adversary?

Let him come near Me.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

Even as Jesus' obedience was built upon such a firm trust in the Lord, so shall the Spirit of our God build within us such trust and confidence of faith that we also may walk in the obedience of faith according to the wisdom and power of our Redeemer GOD.

Now in the final verse of our text the thought flows from Jesus as the Christ to you and me for our walk in life. In the Christ we learn:

### **III. Obedience that Leads Us from Darkness to Light.**

**Isaiah 50:10** “Who among you fears the LORD?

Who obeys the voice of His Servant?

Who walks in darkness

And has no light?

Let him trust in the name of the LORD

And rely upon his God.

Now we hear the Lord’s call to us, that we might be blessed by the power of His grace. What we have just reviewed should indeed fill us with awe and wonder! This is how the Lord our GOD reveals Himself to us, wretched sinners that we are! He reveals Himself to us in this grace that we might be delivered from the darkness of sin and death. If indeed what you have heard this morning fills you with holy awe at the grace and power of God to save, then hear the voice of his Servant. Hear the voice of Jesus calling you to be His own, calling you to life and salvation in His name.

We are the people who have walked in darkness, for it is as the Scriptures declared later in Isaiah:

*“Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,*

*And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you,*

*And His glory will be seen upon you.*

<sup>3</sup>*The Gentiles shall come to your light,*

*And kings to the brightness of your rising.”* (Isaiah 60:2-3)

The prophet speaks to **us** in both these places. There is a foundation laid here for us in our text that we might walk in the light of the Lord. That foundation is Christ in all He is and in all He taught, and in all He did and still does for us. Jesus trusted in God and was not put to shame. Jesus was victorious over death and the devil. Jesus’ victory is ours through faith in His name. Jesus would lead us out of darkness into light. And the Holy Spirit declares through the words of the Apostle Paul, “You were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

These words speak to us of the obedience of faith, obedience that comprehends the truth of all Jesus is and did, an obedience that learns to trust in GOD as the Spirit builds us up in truth and grace. This obedience shall be evident in our walk in life, that is in our manner of living, “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*” (Ephesians 2:10)

By the Spirit’s grace and power may our **Faith Lay Hold of the Obedience of Christ!**

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.