

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
March 15, 2020  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 50:5-7; John 14:1-11  
Hymns: 149; 148:1-5; 755; 313:1

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

Sermon Text: Isaiah 53:7  
He was oppressed and He was afflicted,  
Yet He opened not His mouth;  
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,  
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

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

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: It is sometimes said that ignorance is bliss!  
Is that what was going on with Jesus? It happens with us often  
enough in life that we say we are willing to take on some  
responsibility but we find out later that we had no real idea at  
all of what that entailed. Is that what was going with Jesus  
when He went forward to Jerusalem where He would be taken  
by His enemies and suffer and die for our salvation?

Not in the least! In our text the Holy Spirit leads us to a deeper  
appreciation of Jesus as He presented Himself before the High  
Priest and Jewish council as --

**THEME: Our Willing Sacrifice.**

It was all about taking our sins away. Let me restate that: It was all about taking our sins upon Himself, and then taking them away. Jesus understood all that the Scriptures had foretold. He knew the words of Isaiah that we read as our Old Testament lesson this morning and He knew that Isaiah was writing about Him as the Servant of the Lord who was to come as our Sacrifice. He was willing to do all that was required: *"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth."* (Isaiah 53:7) That silent acquiescence was implicit in Jesus' willing obedience to His Father's will. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus had ended His prayers, *"Not My will, but Thine be done!"* That submission to the Father's will to gain for us salvation was evident all the way through Jesus' passion.

We see it as Jesus stood before High Priest and council. We learn there of His --

### **I. Silent Acceptance of False Accusations.**

In the Passion History we learn that Jesus was brought before Annas first. He was the previous High Priest whom the Romans had removed from office. Annas began by pressing Jesus to testify concerning His teaching. Jesus did respond to that question, reminding Annas that Jesus had always taught the crowds in public, including in the temple. Jesus suggested that Annas ask the people what it was that Jesus had taught. Here is an interesting point in the Passion History. As soon as Jesus had given this response one of the temple guards struck Jesus in the face for what he perceived to be a disrespectful answer offered to the High Priest. Jesus did challenge that blow because His answer was neither disrespectful nor improper. It was not to stand that Jesus Himself had done something amiss, and sinned against the High Priest. He had not sinned in His response!

After that Jesus was taken before the current High Priest Caiaphas and the Jewish council called the Sanhedrin. There many false witnesses were brought before the council accusing Jesus of many sins. And Jesus stood silent in the face of all these accusations. More and more false witnesses accused Jesus, but Jesus answered not a word. One may wonder, "Why not?" Why not protest His innocence?

This was how it was meant to be. The accusations arranged by High Priest and council were a fulfillment of the image of the scapegoat used on the annual Day of Atonement. That was

when the High Priest with hands placed on the scapegoat's head, would confess the sins of the people placing those sins on the scapegoat that he might symbolically take them away. Jesus was the fulfillment of that symbol. Caiaphas, by bringing all those false witnesses against Jesus, was laying all those sins on Jesus. And Jesus bore our sins that He might take them away.

It wasn't until the High Priest asked if Jesus were the Christ the Son of God that Jesus boldly answered with the truth, "*I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.*" (Mark 14:62) And that truth brought the High Priest's charge of blasphemy.

That was but the first phase of Jesus' silent acquiescence. The second began immediately after Jesus was condemned by this illegal nighttime meeting of the Jewish council. We see Jesus' --

## **II. Silent Acceptance of Cruel Mockery and Abuse.**

The temple guards along with others, perhaps even some members of the council began their mockery and derision. He remained bound, but they also blindfolded Jesus and struck Him with their fists and slapped Him, demanding to know if He could tell who it was that had hit Him. They spit in Jesus' face. In our Old Testament lesson the Spirit tells us that some were even ripping out chunks of Jesus' beard.

How long would any man put up with such provocation? When would the protests, even curses begin? Remember that Jesus only a few hours earlier had knocked them all backwards to the ground, and with only the power of His words, "I am He!" Jesus had the power to put an end to this abuse at any time, in an instant. But that was not what was necessary for our salvation. What was necessary was that He bear our shame and the guilt of our sin. And that He be oppressed and afflicted. Jesus was willing to endure all that for our salvation. He silently endured all that, and so much more!

The Spirit would have us appreciate Jesus' --

## **III. Silent Acceptance of His Sacrificial Sufferings and Death.**

**Isaiah 53:7b** "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,  
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth."

This begins with the Council meeting quickly at first light to formally condemn Jesus and take Him to Pilate's house. This was **very** early in the morning. They led Him away that they might pressure Pilate, the Roman governor, to condemn Jesus to death. Jesus maintained His silence. Now, it was the turn of the chief priests to make all the false accusations, accusations so transparent that Pilate could see there was no basis to them. Pilate marveled that Jesus gave no answer to any of these ridiculous accusations. He saw Jesus' innocence. He declared Jesus' innocence time and again.

Jesus was led like a lamb to the slaughter. No resistance. No violence. No protests. No cries for mercy. Acquiescence. Willing submission to the Father's will. Jesus spoke only to testify to the truth. His kingdom is not of this world. If it were His servants would fight. But there was no fight. Jesus was willingly going to the cross; willingly taking our sins upon Himself. Willingly then to receive the sentence of condemnation to tortuous suffering and death.

Through it all Jesus endured so much at the hands of sinful men, repugnant, vile sinners. And yet what does the divine record tell us? *"When He was reviled, (He) did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."* (1 Peter 2:23) That is as amazing as anything isn't it? Not once did Jesus threaten. Not once did Jesus throw an insult back at those who mocked and derided Him. He suffered so much in those hours. So much at the hands of the temple guards, then Pilate's guard, then Herod's men who put that purple robe on Him, and then back to Pilate's men who pressed the crown of thorns upon His brow and hit him again and again with the rod. He was scourged, which left Him a bloody pulp in extreme pain, and yet under all that duress, even after nails were driven through His hands and feet, all He had to say was *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* (Luke 23:34)

Why? You should ask, "Why?" To save you from all that. To save you from the sufferings of hell. The innocent Lamb of God was led as a lamb to the slaughter. No protest, no resistance. The

Willing Sacrifice for us. You've got to know that *"you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* (1 Peter 1:18-19)

"Oh, the height of Jesus' love Higher than the heavens above,  
Deeper than the depths of sea, Lasting as eternity.  
Love that found me - wondrous thought!  
Found me when I sought Him not." (The Lutheran Hymnal 342:2)

**AMEN.**

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Amen.

(Romans15:13)