

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.
Schultz

Pentecost 17, September 23, 2012

Isaiah 50:4-10



Christ Mocked by a Soldier by Carl Bloch

⁴ The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. ⁵ The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away. ⁶ I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. ⁷ Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. ⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! ⁹ It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up. ¹⁰ Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on their God.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Science fiction – is imaginary – make believe. It is interesting, I think, to imagine how things might be in the future. There is a man named Ben Ripley who wrote a science fiction techno-thriller about some time in the future – where a person is able to live the final 8 minutes of a compatible person – within an alternate time line. A soldier named Colter Stevens--who last remembers being in a helicopter in Afghanistan – suddenly wakes up on a commuter train – the train I used to ride – on his way into Chicago. Someone on the train is going to detonate a bomb – killing everyone on the train. And that’s just a warning – before the detonation of a dirty bomb in downtown Chicago. Then comes kind of Ground Hog Day – reliving the

same 8 minutes over and over and over again – trying desperately to rewrite history – to undo the past – to make a new future. Wouldn't that be wonderful – if you could go back in time – and change it just enough to prevent some unspeakable disaster? To prevent someone from accomplishing some act of mass destruction? Today again – God's Word is a message of law and gospel. It is the promise that Jesus would come to suffer to save us. It is the promise that Jesus would be our Redeemer. Today God's Word encourages us:

Trust In The Name Of The LORD!

1. My sins are horrible

2. But Jesus is determined to save me!

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on – from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah. 17 times this year we are reading from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah. We read from Isaiah the first 3 Sundays in Advent – Isaiah 40 **Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.** Then the familiar Advent message about John the Baptist: **A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.** On Ash Wednesday we read from Isaiah: **For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities; rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. Isaiah 59:12,13** Here is the essence of our sin – our heart, our mind, our attitude – that says if the only rule in the world is don't eat the fruit from a single tree in the whole world – we will listen to a talking serpent and take a bite of that fruit. We will plunge the world into wickedness and death and eternal destruction. Easter dawn – sunrise on the day Jesus rose from the dead read from Isaiah chapter 12. **In that day you will say: "I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.**

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you!" 650 years before the fact – by grace alone – Isaiah saw how God's plan to rescue us would be fulfilled!

Today Isaiah writes: **⁴The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. The Sovereign LORD – this is the Creator God – who called the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets into existence simply by the power of His creative will. "Let there be..." – and it existed! The Sovereign is the King – the Ruler of Heaven and Earth. We can see His power. Appreciate His wisdom! Appreciate the one who made all this knows how to take care of it! Jesus who designed and engineered everything – knows how to maintain it and knows how to repair it. In this world where everything seems to be changing – and everything seems to be coming apart at the seams – remember who is always in control! Our Heavenly Father knows what he is doing. He hasn't made a mistake yet – and he's not about to make a mistake now. His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. His paths are beyond tracing out. We need to sit back – relax – and remember who is driving our little taxi. We have nothing to fear. We will be just fine!**

⁶I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. ⁷Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. At chapel this week at our Trinity St. Luke's Lutheran Grade School the text was Luke chapter 6. "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic." Luke 6:27-29 Who turns the other cheek? Who takes a shot and

doesn't instinctively hit back? Who is strong enough to take a hit – and not hit back so hard the person who punched you – will never punch you again? Who does that? Jesus does! Jesus' powerful example was foretold 650 years before the fact. And when the time came – Jesus took all those shots without even doing the turtle thing – pulling inside his shell. Jesus loves us so much he took the full force of the worst sinful people could do – in order to pay for our sins! When I was little we would visit my Uncle Paul in LaCrosse. Uncle Paul had been in the war. He had defensive wounds. Something exploded right in front of Uncle Paul and he put his arms in front of his face – in a desperate attempt to protect himself. Uncle Paul had in his forearms – the smallest pieces of hot metal melted into his arms. Literally years after the fact Uncle Paul's arms would ache when the weather changed – and from time to time – these small bits of metal would work their way to the surface – where Uncle Paul could pick them/scratch them out. Jesus didn't cover up – not that my Uncle was in any way wrong. But Jesus didn't cover up. He offered his back to those who beat him. They mocked him and spit on Him and Jesus didn't hide his face. Jesus endured all that – to pay the full price for all my sins and your mistakes.

⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! ⁹ It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up. Sometimes it seems like the people who mock and ridicule Jesus are so smart – so smug! It happens all the time. One of the latest attacks is a small piece of papyrus – from around 400 years after Jesus was born. It's supposed to have Jesus saying, "My wife..." As if Jesus had a wife – maybe Mary Magdalene. It's on a scrap of papyrus – smaller than a business card. And yet people with teach at places like Harvard say – "See! Maybe Jesus was married! Maybe he had a wife!" You can vote – if you think what the Bible says about David and Goliath is true or not. Some 11,000 people vote – and almost half think this whole business about David is myth or at least wildly exaggerated – or perhaps worst of all – "Who cares?" Turn on TV or listen to the radio and you will hear again and again – what extremists Christians are – how intolerant and hateful and dangerous we are. You need go no farther than

the parking lot up the hill from my house to see the bumper sticker, “What would Buddha do?” No farther than the parking lot just up the hill from Tivoli Island to see bumper stickers so angry and obscene that you dasn’t repeat them! People who attack God’s Word – who ridicule the Gospel – who mock Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross are everywhere. They are sure and certain evidence that Judgment Day is not far off. Then the Gospel will be vindicated. And those who attacked it – will be like a moth eaten sweater. They will not talk back to their Heavenly Father – who will cast them into eternal destruction – from which there will be no escape – ever!

⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! ⁹ It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up. Last Monday was the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam. Did you know that? Antietam – known in the South more by the name the Battle of Sharpsburg – was a terrible battle. The Army of Robert E. Lee was invading the north – marking into the state of Maryland! Major General George McClellan and Major General Hooker led the soldiers from the north. The battle swirled around Miller’s cornfield and Dunker’s Church. September 17th some 23,000 American soldiers were killed, wounded or missing. This was the greatest single day loss of American human life ever! Did you know that? Again and again it seems – we forget. Something is terrible when it happens – but then time passes by and pretty soon who remembers? Who knew? Two thousand years ago on a Friday afternoon – the Carpenter from Nazareth was crucified – literally crucified between two robbers – two malefactors – two evil doers.

¹⁰ Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on their God. Who of us fears – that is fears to offend – fears the LORD – has such love and respect in our heart that we would do anything to show Him how much we love Him? Who of us obeys the word of the LORD’s servant – that would be the Lord Jesus? In order to obey Him – we would need to listen to Him – and so? That would mean coming to Church – with ever increasing faithfulness. That would mean reading our

Bible and reading Meditations and reading Forward In Christ. It would mean coming to breakfast Bible Class at Perkins – at 7 a.m. on Thursday mornings – so we could talk about the Bible readings for Sunday and ask questions about them – and apply them. Then no matter how dark this world becomes – you will walk toward the light – the forever light of Heaven for Jesus' sake. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz