

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. (v5)

Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14--27:66

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature & to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will & in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- Isaiah 50:4-9a

⁴The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. ⁵The Lord God has opened my ear, & I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. ⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, & my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult & spitting. ⁷The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, & I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. ^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. Read the other “servant songs” from Isaiah. The context is the Babylonian Exile (500s BC); what do you think is going on with this servant? *See Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 52:13-53:12; see also 61:1-3; John 12:37-41. Hint: use a study Bible, Wikipedia, & a Bible commentary, if you have one*
2. What verbal images in vv4-6 suggest Jesus’ humiliations during Holy Week? What words suggest that the Servant was always faithful to God? *Thanks, Light on the Lessons! © 2017, Lutheran Bible Ministries. All rights reserved.*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Holocaust survivor Dr. Victor Frankl introduces readers to the concept of “redemptive suffering” in Man’s Search for Meaning. In a nutshell, unavoidable suffering is reframed from pointless to significant when a future good or virtuous outcome can result from its path. (*Cf. American Cancer Society’s “More Birthdays” campaign, or a couple whose “hard times” result in staying married, raising children, & encouraging others.*) Think back on five periods of significant suffering in your life; without trivializing or instrumentalizing them, what worse outcomes could have resulted & what better outcomes did occur? Note: “living to tell about it” is good outcome. *See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logotherapy#Discovering_meaning*
4. “Redemptive suffering” is also a Christian theological concept which directs one’s sufferings to Jesus’ own & finds spiritual union with him. Now reflect on those 5 instances above in spiritual matters; what worse outcomes could have resulted & what better outcomes did occur? What did you learn about God & his grace? *See 2 Corinthians 11:16--12:10, esp. 12:9; Galatians 6:17; Colossians 1:24*

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. So called middle-class values, especially “respectability” (with the neighbors), can often be at odds with the demands of the cross (v6); what do you think makes this so? *See Proverbs 29:25; Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23; Luke 20:46-47; Galatians 1:10*
6. How does worrying “what will the neighbors think?” prevent you & your congregation from “loving your neighbors as yourselves”? *See vv8-9; Psalms 56:4, 11, 118:6; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 8:31*

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Palm Sunday of Our Lord's Passion

04.02.23

Series: Death & Resurrection

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Redemptive Suffering

The Body of Christ bears his life-giving cross together with one another.

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
& I know that I shall not be put to shame; (v7)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Christ humbled himself & became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him &
gave him the name that is above every name. (*Philippians 2:8-9*)

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