

Isaiah 50:1-11

"The Servant's Submission"

* By way of reminder, God has made a promise to the nation of Israel. It's there in Vs 25 of Ch 49, "I will contend w/those who contend w/you & I *will* save your children." There will be no elimination, no eradication of the nation. In fact, it's quite the opposite, God *promises* the *salvation* of their children. – He underscores it again in Vs 26 & there makes the declaration, "All flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior, & your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

But ladies & gentlemen, at the risk of being overly "rhymey", that doesn't mean there are no *ramifications* for their sins. No one gets a "free pass" in life, if we sow to the wind, we'll reap the whirlwind. But God's discipline doesn't diminish His love for us in *any* way! In reality, it's *because* He loves us that He disciplines us, seeks to root out the wicked ways & sinful tendencies found in us. In the book of Hebrews, we read it like this, "*My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.*"¹*

I say all that to say this, we're coming into a context whereby the nation of Israel is feeling forsaken of God, *forgotten* of God. They're going to be taken into captivity by the Babylonians, & while they're there, the temptation will arise to feel completely abandoned by God. But God reminds them in an incredibly endearing way that, that's never going to happen. He says, "Can a woman forget her nursing child?" He says, "I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands." Pointing undoubtedly to the greatest demonstration of *love* in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... When you're feeling forsaken by God, tough times make you wonder if He's perhaps forgotten you, overlooked or abandoned you, look no further than the cross. The cross of J.C. is the ready reminder of God's love *for* you, that He will never leave nor forsake you... It's w/these things in mind that we turn our attention to the 1st Vs of the 50th Ch...

Vs 1-2a

You get the gist, don't you? God is making it clear in no uncertain terms, "The problem isn't on *My* end, it's on *your* end! You're saying *I've* forgotten you; *I've* forsaken you. The fact of the matter is that *you've* forsaken *Me*, *you've* forgotten *Me*."

As you know, God regarded Himself married to the nation of Israel in that He was their God & they were His people. But they were unfaithful to God through the idolatry in their lives.

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Heb 12:5-6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& God had provided (in the law) a means by which a man *could* divorce his wife. This is what it reads, *"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,"*² & there are some additional instructions that follow, but that's the specific statement.

Now, those 2 words I underlined for you; "some uncleanness" became (over the centuries) the subject of much debate. Was it a reference to the fact that she wasn't a virgin when you got married, that she cheated on you... Or was it character reference, she's slandering you, insulting you, always being hateful to you? Does it mean you don't appreciate the way she cooks your food; she always burns your toast? – I'm telling you; it got crazy! & * Divorce in ancient Israel (much like in modern day America) was becoming a problem of epidemic proportions.

That's why Jesus brought clarity to the issue at hand. You might write it down so you can read it later, it's in Matt 19. But the Pharisees asked Him, "Is it lawful (justifiable) to divorce a woman for just any reason?" & Jesus told them, "Listen, in the beginning, God didn't make them male & females." He didn't create multiple options for Adam, it was 1 woman for 1 man for life. That was God's original intent. They were all, "Why then did Moses *command* to give a certificate of divorce?" He said, "Moses didn't *command* anything of the sort. He *permitted* it because the *hardness* of your heart." Meaning, you couldn't find it in your heart to work toward reconciliation because your heart is bitter & unforgiving. So God made an exception for you... & He explained that the exception was sexual immorality, that's the 1 area that God will make an exception for... Paul the apostle also clarified that if you're a believer & your spouse is unbelieving & the unbelieving spouse departs, you're not accountable in that situation. But this notion that you could just divorce your wife for no reason (you didn't like the way she looked at you or something) was never in the heart of God. *

Having said that, in our present passage, though it were true that the nation of Judah had cheated on God through idolatry. He could've put them away "justifiably", He says, "Where's your certificate of divorce? If you claim I've put you away, provide the document!" They couldn't because He hadn't.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Dt 24:1]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Same basic principle w/servitude. "If you think I've abandoned you & sold you off as if to take care of some kind of debt, then let's go, provide the proof..." * What's happening is they're making excuses, playing the blame game for the situation they've gotten *themselves* into, (which is common for people to do) & God's not having it!

This is what seems (to me) to be in view w/this idea, "Why, when I came was there no man? Why, when I called, was there none to answer?" Remember in the book of Ezekiel God said to the nation, *"I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord God.*"³ There was all this sin & transgression going on in the nation & God wanted to hold off His wrath, wanted to dispense mercy. But He couldn't find anyone who would pray & intercede on their behalf... Can prayer make a difference? You bet it can!

But here God says, "When I came, there *was* no man, when I called, there was *none* to answer!" The idea being, "Don't blame Me for the mess *you got yourself* into." "For your iniquities you have sold yourselfs, * & for *your transgressions* your mother has been put away..." Look at the last ½ of Vs 2.

Vs 2b-3

Judah wasn't going to be carried off into captivity because of God's *weakness*, but because of their own *sinfulness*! God reminds them, He has *plenty* of power. "W/My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness!" Pointing (most probably) to the Red Sea crossing, perhaps the Jordan River for the children of Israel's crossing. Or you recall during the days of their deliverance from Egypt, how that God turned the rivers to blood & all the fish were dying & stinking because the water had turned to blood...

But the point here is, let's not blame some insufficiency in God (as if it's His fault) when we're where we are as the result of our own sin. "I clothe the heavens w/blackness, & I make sackcloth their covering." The picture here is that heaven is mourning because of the sin, unbelief & rebellion in the hearts of God's children.

Now, in contrast we see the steadfast obedience & submission of the Servant of the LORD, (whom we discovered last week is God's Son, our Savior, J.C.)

Vs 4-5

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Eze 22:30-31). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We began learning of the Messiah's mission last week. Here, more details come to light. & As to where Israel/Judah were consistently rebellious before God, obstinate & stiff necked... *this* Servant (His Son) would be *submissive* on every level.

He would submit His *mind* to God & in so doing He would learn His word & His will.

*"He has given Me the tongue of the learned..." (Or the learner, meaning Jesus had the mindset of a disciple, always learning). People wonder what Jesus was doing throughout the "quiet years" before His ministry began. Was He a carpenter? Yes. He was also a Disciple, a *Student* of the Word of God. & By way of a quick application, if the *Son* of God, saw it as a non-negotiable necessity to study the *Word* of God, how much more should you & I make a habit of having it open before *our* eyes? As Paul told Timothy, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"⁴

To learn God's Word, it takes diligent work. Of course, your knowledge will increase by simply reading it (which is a must for the child of God). But if you really want to be a "learner", it's not going to happen by chance. You will have to be *intentional* in your efforts. Jesus took the time to study God's word. "He awakens Me morning by morning... to hear as the learned." (As the student). He spent time in prayer, meditation & contemplation of the Scriptures... why?

"That I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary." If we know the Word, we can administer the *right* Word, at just the right *time*. & Nothing hits more effectively than the right word (from the Word) at just the right time. So we study the scriptures & we learn how to love, encourage & rightly relate to others. We read in 1st Timothy, "*Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,*"⁵ *

*His *mind* was submitted to God. His *will* was submitted to God. (Vs 5), "The Lord God has opened My ear & I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away." We spoke about this last week. The "opening of the ear" (Found in Ex 21:5-6) looks back to a custom where a servant willingly became a bondsman to his master for life out of love for his master. The sign of the willing servant was a pierced ear, his ear was "opened" w/an awl against the door or doorpost. So, the reference here is that of the Messiah willingly submitting Himself to God the Father out of His great love *for* God the Father.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (2 Ti 2:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Ti 1:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Even though it would mean He would be subjected to things that He Himself didn't like. He says, "I was not rebellious". Listen, you know that "submission" isn't submission unless you're faced w/something you don't want to do or don't like to do, right? *Rebellion* is when I refuse to do something that someone over me, requests or requires of me & I say, "No, I won't do it." (For whatever reason that I deem justifiable w/in myself). If I always love what I'm asked to do, I'm not submitting to anything. It's when I'm presented w/a path that I'd prefer to avoid that I choose... submission or rebellion.

Jesus chose submission. *Turn w/me to the book of **Philippians 2** Vs 3-8

Vs 3-5

What is the mind of Christ? Doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility esteeming others better than yourself. (Doesn't mean they are, but you're giving them the preferred place). Looking out not for your own interests, but the interest (benefit) of others. How did that look in the life of Christ?

Vs 6-8

He submitted His life to God, to the point of death, even the death of the cross! * Job articulated a beautiful principle when he said, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."*⁶ He had such trust in the goodness of God that even if it cost him his life... He would continue to be faithful to Him. Job *said* it. Jesus *did* it. He submitted His will, even though it meant tremendous suffering.

& This is another thing that some people really struggle with (& some have doctrines against) that it could ever be the will of God that we would suffer. But you have to turn a blind eye to scripture to come to that conclusion. I understand that we don't like to hear it... *But God will teach us, refine us & purify us through the school of suffering. If Jesus suffered according to the will of God, how is it then that we think that we should only sail smooth seas?* Peter put it plainly when he said, *"Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."*⁷ God will call us to submission, even in incredibly difficult, sometimes painful circumstances... *Look at Vs 6.

Vs 6-9

Listen, I trust that what I'm about to say is already plain to you all. But the submission of Jesus wasn't some nontangible, ethereal, or theoretical principle.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Job 13:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Pe 4:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He submitted in every aspect of His being. It wasn't just an inward, mental submission. Submission cost Him dearly, *physically!* "I gave My back to those who struck Me. My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame & spitting." & As we progress through Isaiah, we'll note w/what chilling detail these prophecies expose the great sufferings of the Messiah.

Jesus was beaten on the face, spat upon. I'm not sure there's a greater disgrace agreed upon by the entire human race that you could do so someone than spit in their face. I'm not saying there aren't worse things you could do, but there's something about spit that we universally agree upon. & To spit in someone's face is completely degrading.

He gave (& we need to note the word "gave") His back to those who struck Him. He didn't *have* to do it. He *chose* to endure it out of His great love for you... & for me.

& In ancient Israel the beard was like a man's dignity. Not only would be incredibly painful to have chunks of your beard ripped out of your face. But beyond that was the intentional public embarrassment & humiliation. (You might jot down 2nd Sam 10 for a little deeper insight on that). But He made Himself of no reputation, didn't seek to safeguard His dignity, but suffered shamefully (voluntarily) that we might be saved...

But again, we note His unshakeable confidence in the Father (Vs 7), "The Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, & I know that I will not be ashamed." Speaking of the ultimate vindication in the resurrection & exaltation that was to follow. **"Therefore I have set My face like a flint"*, pointing to the resolute determination of Christ to do the Father's will.

Perhaps you recall, Peter tried to talk Him out of it. Jesus was coming to a place where He began to be more & more cognizant of the cross (meaning it was finding it's place in the forefront of His min) & in turn He would speak to His disciples of it. How He would go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed & raised the 3rd day. & We read, *"Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!' But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.'"*⁸

Remember the mind that was in Christ Jesus? Nothing of selfish ambition or conceit... "Save yourself!" That's the mind of Satan, that's the mind of men... "Give yourself for the benefit of others..." That's the mind of Christ.*

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 16:22-23). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Write it down, read it later, Luke 9:51. Nothing would turn Him away from fulfilling the Father's will. May God help us to have the same resolve, unrelenting trust in the goodness of God, come what may... & An unshakeable determination to be about our Father's will & to *finish* the work He's given us to do. Not a passive resignation to "fate". But a confident assurance knowing that God will help us, therefore I will not be disgraced, I will not be ashamed.

Vs 10-11

Vs 10 is sort of reminiscent of what I was speaking to you of last week. We spoke of J.B. being in jail, not really understanding what was going on & Jesus encouraging Him to trust Him, even though he didn't understand why he was going through the tough times he was being subjected to. *He feared the Lord, obeyed the Lord, but was "walking in darkness" he "had no light" (meaning he didn't know the "why" behind the "what" was happening to him). But the exhortation remains. Even if you have no light, you feel like you're "in the dark", trust in the Lord, rely upon your God.* ✱ – Faith will cause us to trust in the Lord even when we can't "see" how it's going to work out. We're "in the dark" on this one... It's been said, "Never doubt in the dark what God has told you in the light". **Close**

The alternative is to create your own light... To walk in the light of your own making. This isn't a positive thing. Think of the profane fires of Nadab & Abihu (Lev 10). The idea here is to trust in the name of the Lord rather than your own efforts before God (which is like profane fire).

Let me put it another way. You can trust in God's Word or your own ways. It's one or the other. It's better to be "in the dark" trusting in God, than to walk in the short-lived light of your own understanding.

God's word is a lamp unto our feet & a light unto our path. Jesus is the Light of the world... Trust in Him, trust in His word. Don't try to live life by your own rules, what you *think* rather than what God *says*.

To live according to your own light is to be lost, to lie down in torment, lost eternally. God gives us fair warning. Fear the Lord, obey His voice, trust in the Lord & rely upon God.

It's not altogether different from what we read in Deut 30 & I'll close w/this. *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days;"* ^{9*}

⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Dt 30:19-20]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Prayer Points:

Father, increase our faith. That we obey Your voice & cling to You, for You are our life... & the length of our days. Lord, cleanse us on the inside, renew that 1st love relationship we had w/You. Pour Your Spirit out fresh & be glorified in our lives. Help us to have that *servant's submissive* heart toward You... & we'll give You praise.

Come into the Light of J.C. or seek to walk in your own self-sufficiency, those are your choices. God has set before you life... & death. Choose life. Jesus is the way, the truth & the Life & no one comes to the Father except through Him.