

Isaiah 49:1-6

Epiphany 2; January 15 & 16, 2017

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to eavesdrop in on a conversation where God the Father is speaking to God the Son? Wouldn't it be interesting sometime to be a fly on the wall in heaven when God the Father was talking with each other? Well, Isaiah had that opportunity. And in our text for this morning, the prophet records a conversation between God the Father and God the Son. In that conversation, God the Father discusses the plan that he had for Jesus. He says to Jesus: **"You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."** As that plan would be carried out through time, it would reveal the glory of God. As we continue in this season of Epiphany to look at the glory of Jesus, let us take a look at this glory that Isaiah describes in our text.

Almost every employer will tell you how important it is to have the right person in the right position. Jesus was that person. Not long after God had finished created his perfect world, that perfect world would be destroyed by sin. But God had a plan as to how he could once again restore his creation to perfection. That plan was Jesus. Even though things weren't going all too well for Israel as Isaiah wrote these words, God had a plan in place 750 years before Jesus would be born. Jesus says through the prophet: **"Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the Lord called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name."**

God the Father was not going to send his Son into battle with Satan in this world without giving him a weapon to fight with. Jesus continues, **"He made my mouth like a sharpened sword...he made me into a polished arrow."** God provided his Son with something so powerful that it could slash open any human soul to perform spiritual surgery and save that life eternally. What is that tool? The Bible tells us: **"The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God"** (Ephesians 6:17). Jesus did not hesitate to use that tool in his ministry.

When he saw sin in people's lives, he would not hesitate to cut through the heart with his Word. He called sin, sin. It didn't matter who that person was. It didn't matter the position that someone held. His words would hit a bullseye every time. Yet, with that same mouth, he would use his words to calm storms, heal the sick and raise the dead. He would not hesitate to bring his message of forgiveness to anyone. No matter the sin, he wanted to wrap his arms of forgiveness around. You see, Jesus was the only one who could carry out such a task.

Yet, this task was not going to be easy. Look where it got Jesus. From an outside perspective, look where Jesus stands on Good Friday. Jesus describes his work: **"I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God."** After 3 years of preaching perfect sermons, and speaking in front of thousands of people, doing amazing miracles, his closest 11 followers would abandon him and the 12th would betray him. This would happen after Jesus would ask his Father: **"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."** (Luke 22:42) Not only would he be abandoned, he would be crucified front and center of everyone. He pretty much looked like a failure. It looked like he spent his strength in vain and for nothing.

Ever feel that way in your life? Ever struggle with a sin? Just when you get it beaten down, it pops up like a wack-a-mole. Ever feel like a failure? You try so hard, and you never seem to get ahead. You had the perfect opportunity to tell someone about Jesus, and you blew it. You didn't even reach out with a welcoming and comforting hand. Satan brings one temptation after another, and you just keep failing. Take heart. You have a Savior who understands how it feels. He went through the same temptations that you have faced, and yet he didn't sin. He was the Father's perfect Servant who was the right person in the right seat.

The story of the Bible is not all about humanities' desire to be with God; it's primarily about God's desire to be with the people he created. It's about God's desire to be with you. Jesus never hesitated in carrying out this mission. He NEVER gave up. The Father speaks about mission, when he says: **"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."**

When you were younger, did anyone ever ask you the question: *"What do you want to be when you grow up?"* You wished people would stop asking that question, because you had no idea. Maybe you still don't today. Jesus knew from the time before he was born what he was going to do. He was going to be your Savior. How could he do that? How could he do that job knowing all that was going to happen to him? He was going to restore sinners with their God. He loved this world too much to not be that kind of Servant.

"Remember whose son you are." Those were the parting words a father gave his son to remember as he left home for his first year of college. This father wanted his 18 year old son to remember that he was his son and whatever he did would reflect on his family and his upbringing. *"Remember whose son you are."* We often forget whose sons and daughters we are, don't we? The Bible reminds us: **"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."** (Gal. 3:26) When God brought you to faith, he made you members of his family. He didn't have to. But he did because he loves you so much. That's what Jesus, the Father's Servant, came to do. He came to restore you to him.

I wonder what God the Father and the Son talk about these days, as they wait for us to join them. I have no doubt they look back and find great joy in the plan they accomplished in this world. May you also find great joy in the plan that God has carried out for you as well. Amen.