

“The Lord God Helps Me”

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:1—27:77

Palm Sunday / Sunday of the Passion

“But the Lord God helps me. Behold, the Lord God helps me.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

1a

Jesus was at the start of what would become a very bad / good week. It may have seemed like a festive Sunday morning, but you know what He was thinking. He was delivering Himself to the city that would, on Friday, crucify Him. He'd be in a grave before the week was out.

You heard the account written by Matthew. It was only an account. It hit all the high points (or, rather, low points), and it was nothing like the experience. It barely scratched the surface of the events of the Passion week. Also, Jesus knew His date and time of death. His divinity didn't allow Him to be surprised by any moment of the coming week. He knew what was coming (exactly every moment of it). And think for a minute what that would be like as you enter into a final week ... especially one going to be as violent as His was going to be.

You may not have expected Him to be in a good mood. He probably **wasn't**, as **dead serious** as anyone could use that term to mean (you know, the **dead** part).

1b

You may not be too positive-thinking about this coming week. With the corona virus, every day seems to be an escalation of the known numbers, and a week (wow) it could be TOTALLY different by next Saturday. I've heard of, so far, 1 known fatality among the people known in our membership. I'm anticipating that we may **all**, soon, know someone having contracted it or more. I hate to plan for next Sunday's **Easter** celebration (although I **have** a plan ... as **God, of course, did**). Mine may get tweaked between now and then because, between now and then, Thompson's Station might become different than it is now.

2a

None of the Lord Jesus' **feelings about His coming week** deterred Him from **stepping all the way into it**. As a matter of fact, Isaiah forecasted Him saying **this** of the week that **He had ahead** (from our Old Testament Reading, Isaiah 50): "The Lord God (the Father) has given **Me** the tongue of those who are taught, that **I may know how to sustain with a Word him who is weary [or frightened or uncertain]**. Morning by morning **the Father awakens**; He awakens **My** ear to hear as those who are taught. **He's opened My ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. I gave My back to those who strike, and My cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not My face from disgrace and spitting. But **THE LORD GOD HELPS ME**; therefore I have not been disgraced; **THEREFOR I HAVE SET MY FACE LIKE A FLINT**, and **I KNOW** that I shall not be put to shame."**

Jesus had "**resolutely set His face upon Jerusalem ... and the cross**". Today begins the week of sacrifice that brings **healing for all nations**.

2b

We do not know in what situation we will be in come next Saturday ... or through what challenges we will have to pass through on Friday, or before. Martin Luther, and the age of **Reformation / renewal and re-focus upon Truth and the Gospel of grace free from God's sacrifice in the Lord's death**, walked right through a pandemic of a plague (the Bubonic Plague of 1527). Irve and Iona Kline reminded me of Luther's encouragements in the midst of such a thing, so I pass that on also to you: "I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall **fumigate, help purify air, administer medicine, and take it**. I shall **avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence**. If God should wish to take me, He will surely **find me having done what He has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others**. ... If my neighbor needs me, however, I **shall not** avoid places or persons or person but **will go freely**. **THIS**, I believe, is a **God-fearing faith**, because it is neither **brash** nor **foolhardy** and **does not tempt God**".

So expounds **Luther** for himself and what he believed and planned at the beginning of a very bad / good week. ... And "**the Lord God helps me. Behold, the Lord God helps me**" ... in +Jesus' name. Amen.