

16 April 2019
Holy Tuesday

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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Holy Tuesday Meditation
Text: Isaiah 49:1-7

If Isaiah had a megaphone, he would have used it in this chapter. He wants the *coastlands* to *listen*. He wants the *peoples from afar* to pay *attention*. He wants all the world to hear this word. For this word is for all people. Because it is the Word of God, and about the Word of God made flesh, the long-promised, long-awaited Messiah. The Lord had promised a Saviour, and the Lord would send a Saviour.

And this we learn about this Saviour. He tells us that His weapon would be His word, His *mouth like a sharp sword*. But, he goes on to say, though a *polished arrow*, perfect, He would be *hidden away*. He would not stand out, or look like a Messiah. But, in Him, God would *be glorified*. He would bring glory to God through what He did.

But this will not be as expected. For, he goes on to say, *I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity*. And it seemed that way. Jesus was rejected by His own people. His disciples failed Him time and time again. And then finally He would be betrayed, arrested, convicted, humiliated, crucified, and dead. This is not despair, but the reality of what will seem to be. Yet, he says, *my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God*. He trusts that what is seen is not the reality. That in the end, there will be redemption.

And that is indeed what the Lord now speaks. For what He will accomplish is not just for Israel - that is *too little a thing*, he says, to just *raise up the tribes of Jacob* and *bring back the preserved of Israel*. He will be a *light for the nations*, and His *salvation will reach to the ends of the earth*. That is why Isaiah calls upon the whole world to hear this word. It is for them. The Saviour is *from* Israel, but *for* them.

And for you. For Isaiah's words have not just reached across the oceans from the Middle East to you today, but have also reached across the some 2700 years since these words were proclaimed. To tell you that you have a Saviour. The promised one has come for you. And though He may not have looked successful, His sacrifice is your salvation. And now through His Word, this salvation is given to you.

Still, though, it is tempting to judge what is happening to us on the basis of what we see. That when things are not going well that we have failed or that God has failed us. When we are struggling, that all has been for nothing and is vanity. But as with God's servant-Messiah, Jesus, there is more to it than that. There is glory hidden in the cross. There is

victory in what looks like defeat. There is success in what looks like failure. We, too, cannot believe what we see or what seems to be - but only rely on the Word of the Lord. For His Word is truth. His Word never fails. His Word accomplishes what it says.

And we will one day see this, though maybe not as soon as we would like. But one day it will be evident to all, the Lord says. For on that day ***Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves.*** The rich and powerful, those who seem like something, will fall on their faces and acknowledge ***the Holy One of Israel.*** If not now, then on the Last Day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess (Phil 2).

But this is happening now, too. For people high and low, rich and poor, young and old, sinners like you and me, upon whom the Word of God has worked, are falling down and worshipping the King. It is practice for the Last Day, so that when Jesus comes again, we will not be shocked or surprised, but will do what we've been doing all along: worshipping our Saviour, falling down before Him in repentance, and receiving His forgiveness, life, and salvation. For Jesus is not just the Saviour of Israel - that is too small a thing. He is your Saviour. And mine.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.