**Sermon Isaiah 50:4-9a – 5 April 2020**

It is amazing how quickly a situation can change. It seemed that one moment Jesus could soon be swept to power as the promised Messiah King of Israel, then a few short days later he was being crucified, despised and abandoned by the same people who had entered Jerusalem with him on Palm Sunday.

How quickly a situation can change. A few weeks ago life was going on as usual for most of us. Some of you had plans to travel overseas, or travel in Australia, others were planning birthday parties, family gatherings, Easter celebrations and weddings. Then suddenly everything changed and we found ourselves in a world we hardly recognise.

The longer the lockdown lasts the more we start to think about the future. No one knows where this new world will end up. Our leaders don’t know, the experts don’t know. A situation like this hasn’t happened in any of our lifetimes. We don’t know how bad the pandemic become, how many people will get very sick, how many will die, how long will we have to stay isolated. We don’t know how will we adjust to this long isolation if it lasts for months? Then there is the question about the economy and our own financial futures. The forecasts on the possible economic fallout seem the change every day. No one really knows.

Yet in the midst of all this uncertainty we have a sure and certain hope.

In Isaiah chapter 50 we hear God’s servant speaking. This servant has been beaten, spat at, mocked and falsely accused. The situation sounds much like that of Jesus on Good Friday. The prophet may even be referring to Jesus in these verses. Despite what the servant is going through, he remains resolute and confident. Not in himself but in God. He says, “It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me. Who will condemn me?” (vs 9, NIV).

The servant gets his strength from his confidence in God, a confidence that comes from listening to God’s word every day. He says, ‘[God] wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed’ (vs 4 NIV). In the most difficult of times the servant relies on God’s unchanging Word. He listens to God’s word like one being instructed. Learning from God’s word, meditating on God’s word and applying God’s word to his situation, As he does this the servant gains strength, because the word of God sustains the weary.

Even though the whole world seems to have changed overnight. Even though the whole world seems to be like a rudderless ship being swept wherever some invisible virus is taking it, one thing has not changed. The word of God has not changed. The word of God stands firm and still sustains the weary.

While the whole world and our future seems to be uncertain, through God’s word we can be confident. Like God’s Servant and like our Lord Jesus, we can listen to God’s word every day. We can read and listen to God’s word like one being instructed. As we read about the servant in Isaiah we are reminded that God’s word will sustain us during these unprecedented times.

We can be certain that no matter how difficult things may become God’s word will give us strength. As we approach Good Friday, we read about our God who loved the world so much that he sent his one and only Son to die for us. If God loves the world so much, surely he will not abandon the world now, when we need him. As we approach Easter Sunday we can be certain that our current situation is not the end of God’s story, resurrection is the end of God’s story, eternal life and peace is always the end of God’s story. In these uncertain times let God help you, listen to his word every day and let him sustain you now and into the future.
**Amen**

Pastor Rolf Lungwitz