

Isaiah 50:4-10. The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. ⁵ The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. ⁶ I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. ⁷ Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. ⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! ⁹ It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up. ¹⁰ Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.

Hear the Word that sustains the weary.

Trust in the Servant who saves you.

Rely on God who sustains you.

Imagine being in the middle of a complicated maze. You are twisted and turned around. You are hard-pressed and anxious as you labor to find a way out. Just when you think you have things figured out you run headlong into a wall. All the while as you are going about this difficult journey you are carrying a load that seems only to get heavier, and there are thousands of voices calling out for you to come this way or to go that way. Some voices are even taunting you for the choices you make. And one more thing... the lights are out, and you are in the dark. What do you do? Do you quit? Do you labor on?

Ever since our first parents sinned and fell into the darkness of sin, darkness has fallen over all of us. Sin grips us all daily and wraps us up in the tangled web of anxiety, worry, trouble, and despair. And as we struggle to set ourselves free, or at least continue on, we often become even more entangled, confused, frustrated, tired, and weary.

In the midst of the confusion, in the midst of the hopeless frustration comes a clear voice. It is the voice of your LORD. Listen as the servant of the LORD promises to come with uncanny determination to rescue us from the darkness of sin. In his compassion, in his relentless love and care the LORD speaks words that sustains those made weary by sin and pain and trouble. **Hear the Word that sustains the weary. Trust in the Servant who saves you. And rely on God who sustains you.**

The last few days we have heard once again the harrowing and heroic tales of first responders going out to those trapped and made weary and worried by hurricanes on

one side of the world and typhoons on the other. With great sorrow we read or learn of the devastation, but at the same time reports also come in that lift our spirits. Reports about those whom risked their lives to rescue others who were trapped by the storm. Obstacles that would divert their efforts are overcome as in their determination they are relentless in rescue efforts. Such news reports of valiant rescue, grit and determination, stir our hearts. To those who were helpless help came.

Consider how help comes to the helpless each day as we recall the valiant rescue mission that our Savior embarked upon for us. It is the good news of the gospel that stirs our hearts and breathes reinvigorating breath into our souls made weary by life in this sinful world. Hundreds of years before Jesus was even born into the world, the prince of heaven, the Son of God, was announcing his message of help and hope through his prophet Isaiah. Through Isaiah, the Savior spoke words that would promise deliverance, not only to a single nation, but also to an entire world inundated by sin and swamped by trouble and pain.

This is one of several sections of the book of Isaiah when the Servant of the LORD, our Savior, speaks directly through the prophet. These were words of sweet relief and to the people of Isaiah's day and they remain for us a tremendous source of hope and strength for us as well. Listen as the servant speaks the word that sustains the weary. ***The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.***

May the LORD open our ears, day after day, to hear this word that sustains the weary, the words of our Savior, that bring hope to the hopeless and sustains sinners in their distress. ***The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.*** God would send relief and rescue for his people. They would not languish in the darkness of exile forever, but they would live again in the presence of God. However, it is clear that these words of God did not only serve as a source of refreshing promise to his people who would be held captive in a foreign land, but he gives a message that would bring relief to all those held captive by sin.

The servant Jesus would come into this world, and he would live a life of perfect obedience for us, as our substitute and our Savior. He would come to set God's people free from the darkness and the slavery of sin and despair and hopelessness. The Servant would come and give hope and lead those lost in darkness to the light of heavenly glory. However, this servant, would not be born in some bubble that kept him isolated from the troubles and pains of this world. So he too would need, and be blessed by, the word of the LORD. Morning by morning, day after day, the Savior, would hear the word of the LORD as he was strengthened to live and eventually die for us. ***4 The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary.*** How

can we not think of how the boy Jesus was in the temple learning and speaking about the word of God. Jesus learned and was in the word of the LORD. Daily refreshed and built up in his mission to save. ***He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.*** ⁵ ***The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.*** The LORD would open his ears and the servant would listen, and even when it was difficult to listen and follow such a difficult command to suffer and die, the servant would be resilient in follow the Lord's instructions. For this was the will of God, this was the plan of salvation. The servant of the LORD would come to meet our needs, to achieve the righteous requirements of the law for us, and he would go to the cross to pay for our sins in full. On the way to that terrible cross he would be rejected, mocked, beaten, horribly mistreated and even spit upon. But that ugly terrible cross is a thing of wonder and beauty, when we by faith see how the servant of the LORD, sustained and strengthened by the Word, would willingly take on this all for us, and for our salvation. ***"I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting."*** ⁷ ***Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.*** ⁸ ***He who vindicates me is near.***

Jesus never wavered or cracked under the intense pressure of that suffering, instead with a steady hand and flintlike determination God's perfect servant would come to endure the suffering that we sinners deserved. Mocked, spit upon, and subjected to such cruel and awful activity and yet the Savior would push past these thorny obstacles to stretch out his hands to save us; for he was confident that this was to the Father's glory and for our salvation. ***I know I will not be put to shame,*** the Servant declares. Even though this servant of the LORD would have to endure the most painful and shameful death that mankind has ever devised, he put his trust in the LORD knowing that God would vindicate him. And so what looked like the most shameful of deaths would be transformed to glory for God would raise his servant from the dead. No one could accuse him or condemn him for any wrongdoing and through his perfectly executed rescue mission no one can accuse or condemn those who believe in him either.

We are rescued and saved by our God who would not give up on us. Help comes to the helpless. Hope and peace and new life has been given to the hopeless, and this good news lifts our spirits as we trust and rely on our God and in faith live our lives for him who died for us and was raised again.

In the midst of our daily confusion and frustration we might often be tempted to give up on our lives of faith; to throw God's commands to the wind and take on an 'anything goes' way of life to just pass the time. Weary from stumbling in sin we may grasp for relief in carnal pleasures. Despairing of our own ability to make things right we give into the rising tides of hopelessness. Pressured by rising opposition around us we

are told to let go of our hope, abandon the ways of God, because all of it is pointless. But our God speaks His Word that is pointed and powerful as he reminds us of his unfailing love. Our Savior is there for us, day after day, calling out to us, with his word that sustains the weary, so that we may live in communion with him now and forever in heaven.

After a rough day at work, after a dispute with your spouse, when the gut-wrenching diagnosis is given, or the mind-numbing problem remains unsolved, our Savior is there. When the cycle of sin sucks us back in, when guilt and shame seek to sweep us into despair. He is there with his relentless love. He is there calling out to us with his message of salvation. Day after day God calls out to us through his Word telling us that we are not stranded and lost in darkness, but there is hope, there is purpose, there is peace and rest for has called us to the light. Our Savior has come to rescue us, to sustain us. Victory and salvation and peace with God is ours through Jesus Christ. His words sustains the weary and we can trust and rely on our God as we live our lives for him.

And so daily, the LORD speaks to us with the word that sustains the weary, and we are renewed and strengthened to carry on and live for him who died for us and was raised again. For sinners like us we are not just given a new lease on life, but we have been bought and paid for by the precious blood of Christ. And so in the midst of our daily confusion, lives flooded by sin and its troubles there comes a clear voice, a voice that you can trust and rely on and follow. It is the voice of our rescuer, it is the voice of the servant of the LORD, our dear Savior, and he speaks to you with the good news that sustains and strengthens the weary. You are not alone. God is there for you. He speaks to you and me as he says, ***Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.***

Yes, life in this sinful world can be very much like wandering through a maze in the darkness, but the Savior calls to you, he wants you to come with him, to follow him as he leads you on the paths through this world of darkness. The journey may not always be light and cheerful. He will call us to deny ourselves; to avoid the sin that so easily entices and entangles; some along the way may criticize you for the path you are taking, your own conscience might accuse and compromise your way, but the Savior holds your hand and through faith he assures you that you can trust in him and rely on your God as you live for him. Help is given to the helpless. You are forgiven. You are saved. Lord open our ears each day to hear this word that sustains the weary. ***Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. Amen.***