**Isaiah 53:7-9 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 8He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. 9And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.**

 We’re back in the book of Isaiah tonight. As a reminder, Isaiah was written around 740 BC. He prophesied around both the current events facing Judah and the coming Messiah. More than 700 years before Jesus, Isaiah gave prophecy that is incredibly detailed! In it, we understand the providence of God. We understand that God is in control. He knows the ending from the beginning. God is all knowing and all powerful… we either believe that or we don’t. God knew the details of the future so completely that He pronounced names…

God knows us that well too. Nothing that is happening is random… Satan wants us to believe that the Victory is still in question and, in honesty, an awful lot of American Christians are living like they believe the devil. In Matthew 10:29-30 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. There is nothing, nothing, nothing that occurs that God has not foreseen. We cannot understand everything right now… that’s where Faith comes in.

Around Easter, we studied Psalm 22 and saw the details in the Psalm that was written more than 950 years before Jesus. Details about the way the soldiers cast lots for His clothing. Details around the people sneering and jeering. Psalm 22 revealed to us the scene at the Cross. Now in verse 7 of Isaiah 53, we read **He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.**  In Luke 22, Jesus has been seized and taken to the high priest’s house for questioning. Recall that Peter denied Him, all His disciples have deserted Him. In verses 63-65 of Luke 22 we read, Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, “Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?” And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him. Sounds like affliction and oppression. In Luke 23:10-11 we read, And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. Sounds like oppression and affliction. Jesus has endured the accusations of those who hate Him… but, worse yet, He has endured the silence of those who claim to love Him. Martin Luther King has a quote attributed to him. In it he says, “In The End, We Will Remember Not The Words Of Our Enemies But The Silence Of Our Friends.” Christ was oppressed and afflicted, deserted and forsaken, for my sake and your sake. Does He hear silence from us even as He calls us friend?

Still in verse 7, Yet, He opened not His Mouth. In Luke 23, verses 8-9 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. In John 19:8-10, Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” Jesus gave no defense… He didn’t protest or demand His rights. He didn’t tell Pilate how mistreated He was and what a victim He was. When asked of the charges, He offered no defense! Jesus confirmed Truth – Pilate asked, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “It is as you say.” The Sanhedrin asked, “Are You then the Son of God?” Jesus says, “You rightly say that I am.” He confirms Truth, but offers no defense.

The world today could use a little less defensiveness and a little more confirmation. We’re not called to defend or apologize for Christ. Christian’s are called to speak Truth. I’m reminded of Judges 6 – Gideon has torn down the altar of Baal. The people want to kill him. Joash says, “If he is a god, let him plead for himself.” Our God defends Himself. He makes His defense known.

Verse 8 **8He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.** Jesus was crucified for our sins. 2 Corinthians 5:21 reminds us For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Galatians 3:13-14 confirms 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. He, who knew NO sin, was made sin… redeeming us from the curse He was not subject to by becoming a curse. Boy, if that doesn’t stop us in our tracks, nothing will. He was willing to die so that I might live! He laid down His life that we might gain life everlasting.

Verse 9 **And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.** He hung between two criminals, one on the right, one on the left. Realize that the Sinless died while on this sin-filled earth. Since the Fall, the world has been diseased with sin. In Israel, there was a dump called Gehenna. When a person died, considered unworthy of proper burial, like a criminal or like a rejected Savior, they were dumped in Gehenna and left to simply rot. Had a wealthy man not stepped forward, one has to believe Jesus would have ended up in the grave with the wicked. But, look at Luke 23:50-53 Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. Being a council member, Joseph would have been wealthy and well respected. Notice that the tomb where Jesus was laid was hewn out of rock and NO ONE had ever lain before. No wicked person had been in the tomb prior to the pure Lamb of God. Tombs of this day were reused! The body was laid and allowed to decay. In a year, the bones were collected, placed in a box, and moved into a back area of the tomb so the tomb could be reused. It’s very important to understand that Jesus was the first.

Isaiah 53 continues to confirm the Truth of our Savior. Oh how precious it is to know that Christ is confirmed hundreds of years before He was born. He is verifiable. We need not blindly believe. We need only study and seek. Those who don’t see the revelation of Jesus in the Old Testament have simply shut their eyes and their minds to the Truth. Willful rejection of Jesus is the only unforgivable sin… one cannot ask for forgiveness through Jesus if one does not first acknowledge Him Lord.