Isaiah 50:7: The Determined Servant Hymns 275, Gospel Song/Holy, 392, 352

Few people rejoice at watching others suffer—most people recoil from such a sight—and yet, the interesting thing is, at the very heart of the Christian faith is the suffering of a Man—not just any Man, but God's eternal Son become flesh...

Furthermore, Christians are repeatedly exhorted to remember and reflect upon His sufferings—but it's important to remember, we are never told to reflect upon His suffering apart from the reason and results of His suffering—the reason for His suffering is His love, and the result of His suffering is our salvation—in other words, we must never lose sight of why He suffered and what He accomplished...

This passage describes our Savior's determination to endure this suffering—He set His face like a flint to enter Jerusalem, knowing full-well what awaited Him in Jerusalem—the unrestrained hatred of man, the full onslaught of Satan, and the unmixed wrath of His Father—thus, our subject this morning is—The Determined Servant...

I. His Determination Defined
II. His Determination Described
III. His Determination Applied

I. His Determination Defined

1. To "set your face like flint" is to harden your resolve, determining to do something, regardless how difficult...
2. The word rendered "flint" is found 4 other times in the OT and always refers to a literal flint, which is a hard rock...
3. Here is it used in a figurative sense referring to resolve and determination—the Messiah was determined to do something...
4. Thus the question becomes—what was our Savior determined to do—what task was He resolved to accomplish...
5. Well, from the context I suggest it refers to our Savior's determination to enter Jerusalem and suffer for our sins...
6. In verses 1-3, the Lord rebukes the nation of Israel, that among them there was not a single man to answer His call...
7. They had all sold themselves into captivity because of there sins—the entire nation was corrupt, without a single exception...
8. Beginning with v4, there is One who answers this call—there is one who is described as an obedient Servant...
9. Verses 5-6 inform us that this obedience would include suffering—He, in obeying God, would be terribly mistreated...
10. Thus, verses 7-9 describe for us the thinking of our Savior as He anticipated and endured this suffering (v6)...
11. We know from the NT, that this largely took place in Jerusalem, where He would be tried, beaten, and crucified...
12. Lk.9:51—"He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem"—He set His face like a flint—He resolved to enter Jerusalem...
13. He was determined to enter Jerusalem, even though He fully knew what awaited Him in Jerusalem—He had to go to Jerusalem...
14. Nothing could keep Him from it—not the temptations of Satan, the hatred of this world, or the wrath of His Father...
15. Matt.16:21—"From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day..."

16. Our Savior set His like a flint toward Jerusalem—He resolved to go to Jerusalem regardless what awaited Him...
17. Furthermore, when in Jerusalem, and the sufferings began, nothing could keep Him from finishing His work...
18. E.J. Young—"No temptation will deflect Him from His God-appointed course. Obedience to God's will looms paramount in His determination. He has set His face like a hard rock so that it cannot be turned to one side or the other..."

II. His Determination Described

1. Here I want to suggest several descriptions of our Savior's determination, mostly taken from Isaiah 50:4-9...
2. [1] It was an obedient determination—by this I mean, our Savior's resolve was fuelled by obedience to His Father...
3. It was His Father's will that He go to Jerusalem—this will was made known to Him in that eternal covenant...
4. V5—"The Lord God has opened My ear"—this phrase likely refers to the practice of opening or piercing the ear of a slave...
5. Within the OC, if a servant or slave loved his master and desired to remain his servant, his ear would be opened...
6. Ex.21:5-6—"If the servant plainly says, I love my master...I will not go our free...then his master shall bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear...and he shall serve him forever..."
7. John Gill—"It is expressive of his voluntary obedience, as Mediator, to his divine Father, engaging in, and performing with the greatest readiness and cheerfulness, the great work of man's redemption and salvation..."
8. V5b—"And I was not rebellious (or disobedient)"—He was not disobedient to the word and will of His Father...
9. [2] It was an informed determination—by this I mean, our Savior entered Jerusalem knowing what awaited Him...
10. Lk.18:31-33—"Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, Behold, <u>we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished</u>. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge *Him* and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again..."
11. [a] <u>He knew physical abuse awaited Him</u>, v6—"I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard..."
12. The struck His back with a whip, and they struck His face with their fists—furthermore, they plucked out His beard (this was both painful and shameful)...
13. Mk.14:65—"Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, Prophesy! And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands..."
14. Mk.15:19—"Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him..."
15. Mk.15:20—"And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him..."
16. [b] <u>He knew shame and humiliation awaited Him</u>, v6b—"I did not hide My face from shame and spitting..."
17. I find it interesting how frequently the NT writers recount our Savior being spit upon, Mk.14:65—"Then some began to spit on Him..."
18. Here in Isaiah 50:6, our Savior weds together shame and being spit on—being spit upon was a great disgrace...
19. Even in our day and culture, to be spit on is the height of shame and disgrace—it says, You mean nothing to me...
20. Brethren, can we even begin to imagine how degrading and humiliating this was for the Holy One of Israel...

21. But this spitting was only one form of shame our Savior endured—He was striped naked, ridiculed, and mocked...
22. He was wickedly and sincerely worshiped—He was dressed up as a King, complete with a crown of thorns..
23. [c] He knew the wrath of God awaited Him, Jn.18:11—"the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it..."
24. These were our Savior's words to Peter while in the Garden—He knew that with His arrest, would come a cup...
25. In other words—our Savior knew that physical pain and shame were not the greatest aspects of His suffering...
26. By a cup is meant His Father's wrath, which He would drink on the cross, or would endure while on the cross...
27. Isa.53:10—"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days..."
28. Here we find that our Savior's death was a sacrifice, wherein He was bruised and grieved, not by men, but by God...
29. V10—"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You (Father) make His (Christ) soul an offering for sin..."
30. Here we are reminded that our Savior did not suffer for His own sins—He did nothing to deserve this treatment...
31. His soul was made an offering FOR SIN—that is OUR SIN—everything He endured, He endured FOR US...
32. [3] It was a trusting determination—by this I mean, our Savior's resolve was driven by faith in His Father's help...
33. V7—"For the Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed..."
34. Now, I must remind you, that our Savior was two natures in one Person—He was truly God and truly Man...
35. Thus, when He speaks of His Father's help, He, in the narrow sense, refers to God helping His sinless humanity...
36. How did the Father help or assist His sinless humanity—well, He sustained that humanity by the Holy Spirit...
37. While His human nature was sinless, it was nevertheless created—it was human nature in fallen form (sin excepted)...
38. Thus, the Father promised to aid or assist Him, sustaining and upholding His humanity through His sufferings...
39. The Father did not leave Christ to Himself, but He helped Him—He strengthen Him through the Holy Spirit...
40. [4] It was a confident determination—by this I mean, His resolve had an eye of what awaited Him after Jerusalem...
41. V7—"For the Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed..."
42. Now, this of course does not mean, the Messiah is denying that He would be both disgraced and shamed in Jerusalem...
43. But He is here referring to any final disgrace or shame—Christ here affirms His resurrection and exaltation...
44. Though He will be disgraced and shamed by wicked men, in the end, the Father would justify Him before men...
45. V8—"He is near who justifies Me"—that is, declares Me openly to be righteous and free from all accusations...
46. Perhaps put another way—our Savior endured Jerusalem, as He looked past the CROSS and beheld the CROWN...
47. Heb.12:2—"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame..."

48. By "joy that was set before Him" refers to His crown—His return to His Father and the salvation of His people...
49. [5] It was a loving determination—by this I mean, our Savior's resolve was the result of love for poor sinners...
50. V6—"I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard"—that is, He did so willingly and because of love...
51. If you remember, the very essence of love is to give—because love desires the good of others, if gives of itself...
52. True love gives—"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"—love sacrificially gives...
53. Thus our Savior willingly gave His back to those who struck Him, not only in obedience to His Father but also love for His people...
54. And so this determination was an obedient, informed, trusting, confident, and loving resolve on the part of our Savior...

III. His Determination Applied

1. Here I want to finish our consideration of our Savior's determination by suggesting, three practical exhortations (in other words, having heard about His determination, how should we respond)...
2. [1] Let us determine to obey God regardless of any opposition we endure—Christians must imitate Christ's determination...
3. That is, we too must set our face like a flint with regards to any and every task assigned us by our heavenly Father...
4. One of the tragedies of our present age, is the lack of determination to stick with or finish what we've started...
5. Few people stay in jobs, churches, friendships, and marriages—when things get tough, they give up and leave...
6. But this is very unlike our Savior—for though He was given a very difficult task, He stuck with it to the very end...
7. But I hear someone say—You don't know how difficult my predicament is—my spouse, parents, or pastors...
8. And I would answer, No, you are right, I don't know—but I assure you your calling isn't more difficult than His...
9. We must not allow anything to distract us—not the temptations of Satan or the difficulties of the task before us...
10. But you know, there's one calling that every Christian is called to, and that's to endure to the end of their lives...
11. Just as nothing would keep our Savior from Jerusalem, so we must let nothing keep us from the New Jerusalem...
12. [2] Let us determine to trust God in the midst of our afflictions and trials—every Christian will suffer like Christ...
13. Perhaps put another way—all Christians will of necessity, as Christ's disciples, follow Him into Jerusalem...
14. Now, don't get me wrong—there is a very important sense in which no Christian will every enter Jerusalem, because Christ entered for us...
15. But, don't the Scriptures teach that all Christians, without exception, must carry a cross as our Master did before us...
16. V10—"Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God..."
17. To "walk in darkness" means to walk in the valley of the shadow of death—it's to walk without the light of God's countenance...
18. It is to live without a sense of God's love and acceptance—it's to walk through this dark and merciless world...

19. Notice, the possibility of "walking in darkness" all the while "fearing the LORD" and "obeying His voice"...
20. Now, verses 4-9 speak about our Savior undergoing this darkness, even though He perfectly obeyed His Father...
21. He "walked in darkness" as He endured the affliction, mistreatment, and shame of a wicked and godless world...
22. Furthermore, He "walked in darkness" when on the cross, the Father turned His face from Him (with regards to the awareness of His love)...
23. Thus, by "darkness" is meant any season of intense affliction and/or trial, wherein God may appear distant...
24. Oh my friends—I know that some us have been walking through such darkness to some degree or another...
25. Some of us because of health problems, intense temptations, and/or families issues, are walking in darkness...
26. Thus, we are exhorted to respond within this darkness, the same way He did, by trusting and relying on God's name...
27. This is the same way our Savior was able to walk in the darkness He did—He trusted in God's Person and Promises...
28. [a] He promises to be with us, v8—"He is near who justifies Me"—that is, the Father was always near Him...
29. Although everyone else left our Savior, the Father was always and ever with Him—He was always near Him...
30. And so too, although friend and family may leave us, our Father is always and ever with us—He is near us...
31. [b] He promises to help or assist us, v9—"Surely the Lord God will help Me"—just as He sustained Christ's humanity, He will sustain ours as well...
32. Our Father does not expect us to walk in the darkness by our own strength—but He gives us grace to endure...
33. [c] He promises to vindicate or justify us, v9—"Who is he who will condemn Me? Indeed they will all grow old like a garment; the moth will eat them up..."
34. For us this means, our darkness will not last—but there comes a morning when all things will be made new...
35. [3] Let us determine to rejoice in Christ who endured our pain and shame—while His determination must be imitated, it first must be trusted...
36. [a] Saints—we must ever remember, our determination is dependant upon His determination, and not the other way around...
37. This means—we will endure because He endured—we set our face like a flint, because He set His face like a flint...
38. [b] Sinners—I suggest that our Savior's determination provides you with the two things you need—obedience and suffering...
39. Obedience—we all find ourselves, by nature, in v2—"Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I called, was there none to answer..."
40. Suffering—we all, by nature, have sold ourselves into slavery, we have divorced ourselves from God our Maker...
41. V1—"Thus says the LORD: Where is the certificate of your mother's divorce. Whom have I put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, and for your transgressions your mother has been put away..."
42. In other words—don't blame Me for your predicament—you divorced Me and sold yourselves into slavery...
43. It was your transgressions that caused this—you have no one to blame but yourself—man's sin is man's fault...
44. And yet, in vv4-9 we have described for you, an obedient sufferer, who perfectly obeyed and willingly suffered...