

Wednesday, March 8, 2023  
Season of Lent  
Day 13

### **Matthew 12:15–21**

- <sup>15</sup> Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill.  
<sup>16</sup> He warned them not to tell others about him. <sup>17</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:  
<sup>18</sup> “Here is my servant whom I have chosen,  
the one I love, in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.  
<sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel or cry out;  
no one will hear his voice in the streets.  
<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out,  
till he has brought justice through to victory.  
<sup>21</sup> In his name the nations will put their hope.”

### **Reflection**

In this passage we are reminded about the nature of Jesus’s ministry. Matthew tells us that Jesus is aware of the Pharisees’ plans to have him put to death. Jesus does not retreat from his mission, he simply moves on. He continues to proclaim his gospel and demonstrate it with power through healing.

Many who read the instructions that Jesus gives to those he heals, may think him a bit naive. Does he really think that no one will notice? What would people possibly answer when asked about their restoration? Jesus isn’t naive. But he does expect that credit will go where it is due; to God. While he knows he cannot avoid a reputation all together, he is acting to limit how widespread it becomes.

Jesus knows from the first that his ministry will meet with a clash. The voice of God himself speaks at his baptism using the language from the Psalms and Isaiah that informs him of his role as God’s suffering servant. He is Israel’s Messiah. Israel suffers, the Messiah comes to suffer on Israel’s behalf and in Israel’s stead. As the Isaiah quote says quite clearly, he is the servant.

The quote also tells us that the Messiah’s coming suffering is not for the sake of Israel alone. *All* the nations will benefit from his mission. Jesus is the bringer of justice, which is the basis for peace for all people. Therefore, peace and justice mark his ministry: he won’t quarrel, cry out, break a bruised reed, or snuff out a smouldering wick. His justice is quiet and sure. It binds up and heals; making the reed upright again and trimming and oiling the wick, bringing it back to full flame.

This will happen “till” he is victorious. Jesus delays his reputation in fulfillment of Isaiah; he is not bringing on the clash. But, he moves on knowing that the moment is coming and when it comes it will be the right moment that establishes justice (and peace) through victory. Clash, suffering, silence, justice, and victory is the moment of the cross. That is the destination our Lenten journey is taking us, as they seek a way to kill him. It is why our hope is in Jesus alone.

The church has often gotten it wrong, using the world’s own violence to try to establish the kingdom of God on earth. It has failed every time, causing harm to Jesus’s reputation along the way. If we are to be ambassadors of Christ and his kingdom, then we must quietly embody the kingdom bringing justice through Jesus’s victory. Only such as witness will bring hope to the nations.

### **Prayer**

Lord, we confess that we have used the power of the world rather than the power of the cross in an attempt to make others like us. When we have done this we have brought oppression and harm, not justice and peace. Forgive us, Lord! Help us this Lenten season to take up our own cross and follow you. When violence come, let us be the recipients and may our quiet suffering bring redemption and hope to the nations for your name’s sake. Amen.