

1 Face Like Flint . . .

- Isaiah 50:5-7

2 Scripture Reading

- The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. 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. 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. (Is 50:5–7 NIV)

3 Introduction

- Italian film director, Sergio Leone was a very interesting person.
- While he was Italian, he didn't like to make Italian movies.
- Instead, he liked to make American Westerns—especially those where the hero turns out to be someone who lacks conventional heroic attributes.

4 Introduction

- One of Sergio Leone's favorite actors was an individual who was noted for displaying little emotion, apart from his trademark teeth-gritting grimace.
- In fact, Sergio Leone made this actor a star and the name of this actor was . . .
- Clint Eastwood
- Some of the movies that Clint Eastwood starred in for Leone was "The Man with No Name," "A Fist Full of Dollars," and "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly."

5 Clint Eastwood

- Leone once explained why he chose Eastwood for those roles:
- "At that time I needed a mask rather than an actor, and Eastwood had only two facial expressions: one with the hat and one without it."

6 Body Language

- Joe Navarro is a former FBI agent whose specialty was interrogating suspected foreign spies.
- In retirement, he offers body-language analysis skills to professional poker players, schooling them on how to read their opponents' mental states.
- His book, What Every Body is Saying, is a best seller.

7 Body Language

- Body language is a kind of nonverbal communication, where thoughts, intentions, or feelings are expressed by physical behaviors, such as facial expressions, body posture, gestures, eye movement, touch and the use of space.

- The main types of body language are . . .
 - Facial expression,
 - Body Posture,
 - Gestures,
 - Handshakes, and
 - Tone of voice.

8 **Body Language**

- One of the main reasons why people seek to understand people's body language is so they may gain an advantage in knowing what's on the other person's mind.
- Nobody likes to be lied to and if you could tell what the other person is thinking then you might not be fooled or taken advantage of.
- That is why so many poker players want to be able to discern non-verbal communication cues because if you know your opponent is faking, then you'll have an advantage.
- This would also be helpful in sales, law enforcement, and in the court system.

9 **The Suffering Servant**

- However, according to Isaiah 50, the "Suffering Servant" wasn't trying to put on a poker face.
- He had a look on his face that was undeniable.
- No one needed an expert on "Body Language" to help them see that this individual was focused, determined, and resolved.
- In other words, he had squarely set his face forward like flint.

10 **The Suffering Servant**

- This "Suffering Servant" described in Isaiah is no other than Jesus Christ.
- So focused on going to the cross, he says, 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. (Is 50:6 NIV)
- What inner strength produced this fortitude?
- Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. . . . I know I will not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. (Is 50:7–8 NIV)

11 **The Suffering Servant**

- The Hebrew word for "vindicate," here, is closely related to the word for "righteousness."

- A vindicator, in this sense, is not simply one who swoops in and plucks the victim out of a dangerous situation.
- The vindicator confirms that the victim is righteous and has been suffering unjustly.

12 **The Suffering Servant**

- For the Suffering Servant, it's important to him that he not be put to shame, and for that reason he absorbs his enemies' abuse stoically.
- He desires this not only for his own sake, but also for the sake of the one he serves.
- He knows his suffering is not just a personal ordeal, but also a public witness.

13 **Honor-shame**

- In ancient times, Israel was what sociologists call an “honor-shame” society, where self-worth was not built on self-esteem, but on group-esteem.
- Therefore, if you didn't meet their expectations you had no other choice than to be shamed and dishonored.
- This was the case unless, you had one who could vindicate the righteousness of your cause over and above the group.

14 **Example of Vindication**

- Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. (Psa 37:4–7 NIV)
- Here we see that we are to delight ourselves in the Lord and wait patiently for his vindication because he will uphold the righteousness and justice of our cause. So then don't worry or fret when evil people attack or slander you behind your back.
- So then don't repay evil with evil—for judgment (vindication) is mine says the Lord. [See Romans 12:19]

15 **Vindication**

- The reason why Jesus so firmly rode into Jerusalem with his face set as flint, was because he was confident that God would not allow him to be put to shame.
- Therefore, Jesus did not compromise his message or his mission.
- He did the will of God knowing that it was not in vain, his work and ministry would be vindicated no matter what the Jews or Roman officials said or did.

16 **Vindication**

- Vindication is also the hope of God's people.
- We live in a world where we don't really fit in.

- As the Apostle Peter says, we are aliens and strangers in the world (1 Pet 2:11 NIV).
- Nevertheless, us Gentiles are not orphans, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household (Eph 2:19 NIV).
- With this in view, God will vindicate our true worth before those who look down on us and mock our faith.

17 **Vindication**

- You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. (Psa 23:4–5 NIV)
- According to this Psalm, God is in the vindicating business.
- He is out to prove our worth against the actions and opinions of others.
- In fact, he is out to turn shame away from us and place it instead on those who hate us for no good reason.

18 **Vindication**

- In Psalm 17, because of his enemies, David cries out to the Lord and says, Hear, O LORD, my righteous plea; listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer — it does not rise from deceitful lips. May my vindication come from you; may your eyes see what is right. (Psa 17:1–2 NIV)

19 **Vindication**

- In another Psalm from David, he identifies those who find vindication from God.
- Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior. (Psa 24:3–5 NIV)

20 **Vindication**

- Again David says, May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, “The LORD be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant.” (Psa 35:27 NIV)
- In fact, according to Isaiah, vindication is the heritage of the Lord for his people, as he says . . .
- . . . no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the LORD. (Is 54:17 NIV)

21 **Resolutely**

- When Jesus set out for Jerusalem for the last time, he knew what to expect.
- Luke describes it like this, As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51 NIV)
- Resolutely means to be admirably purposeful, determined, and unwavering.
- In other words, Jesus' face was set as flint to go to Jerusalem.

22 **Determined to go to Jerusalem**

- On many occasions, Jesus warned his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and the third day be raised to life.
- 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. He who vindicates me is near. (Is 50:7–8 NIV)
- Jesus' vindication would be his resurrection.

23 **Not Abandoned**

- I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. (Psa 16:8–10 NIV)
- Jesus went to Jerusalem because he knew that God would not abandon him.
- Even though on the cross he said, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?” (Psa 22:1 NIV), it was only temporal.

24 **Not Abandoned**

- Yet later the “Suffering Servant” rejoices in his God and says, You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. (Psa 22:23–24 NIV)

25 **Body Language and Faith**

- Next week is Palm Sunday and will mark the time that Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time.
- Jesus knew what was going to happen yet everything about his “Body Language” showed that he was trusting God.
- He knew that the Father would vindicate his cause and give him the name that is above all names. So he went forward in confidence and with courage.
- In the same way, let our “Body Language” show our confidence in God has well.

26 **Not Abandoned**

- We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Cor 4:8–9 NIV)
- Just because we have those in our family, or at work, or even in our society who don't value our moral positions and faith—even persecuting us for it, doesn't mean they will have the final say.

- God has promised to vindicate our commitments to him and whether in this life or in the life to come, we will be honored in front of our enemies.

27 **Conclusion**

- So then, let our “body language” reflect this reality.
- God has promised to never leave us or forsake us.
- Therefore, let us be all the more resolute in taking up our cross and carrying it, for God’s reward will be great.
- May our faces be set like flint and everything about us show this confidence in God.

28 **Final Word**

- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:2 NIV)
- Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Heb 12:3 NIV)
- God vindicates His people!