

Undiscourageable

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I'm like you; I didn't even know it was a word until I was reading from a scholar named Gordon Poteat in *The Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. XII, p. 21). His comments seem to center around that word and to me are edifying. He wrote,

The prophet Isaiah, as God's servant, had to endure much gainsaying from the people whom he would save. It was because he was God's servant that he was undiscourageable in his service of men (cf. Isa. 50:4-9). Missionaries in their ministry of teaching and healing have often found suspicion instead of cordial welcome among those they wanted to help. Without the love of God in their hearts, without belief that their primary obligation was to him, they would hardly persist in their service. Jesus emancipated the thought of service from all taint of meniality and put it at the heart of his religion. We too often take that great word and reduce it to the level of service stations. If a high conception of service is to be maintained, it must be rooted in God.

Now let's note what Isaiah wrote that yielded the edifying observation just discussed.

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up (Isaiah 50:4-9).

Poteat had us think about the Scripture in reference to the prophet Isaiah and even us today as we might strive to serve the Savior amid adversity, but while that application is not misplaced, it is beyond question that Isaiah had the Lord Jesus in mind, especially as He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off His beard and spit on Him. Three observations from the text may serve to help us be "undiscourageable" when our faith is challenged. One, He had the tongue of the learned to speak encouraging words to the weary. Two, He had the ear of the obedient to submit to the will of God. Three, He had a face set like a flint with the help of God empowering Him to stand knowing God would cause His detractors to rot away.