

Isaiah Ch42v1-9 - God's Chosen Servant

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Please open your Bibles to Isaiah 42.

! Isaiah 42. We're taking a little break from our studies in 2 Corinthians.

We're going to go back to that in the new year, so we can look forward to that. But over these next few weeks, we're going to be looking specifically at chapter 42 of Isaiah.

On your Bibles, it may have a heading, The Servant of the Lord. They're traditional readings leading up to Christmas to help us to prepare for Christmas and the coming of Christ.

So we're going to be looking at Isaiah 42 over three Sundays. This morning, we're going to look at the first nine verses as we prepare ourselves for Christmas as it approaches.

[1 : 17] So let's read, and then we're going to pray, and then we'll look at God's Word together. Isaiah 42, verse 1.

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight.

I will put my spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets.

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice.

He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching, the islands will put their hope.

[2 : 17] This is what God, the Lord says, the creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people and life to all those who walk on it.

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness. I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison, and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

I am the Lord. Lord, that is my name. I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare.

Before they spring into being, I announce them to you. Well, let's pray together.

Our Father God, we come to you as the creator God, the maker of heaven and earth, the God who gives us breath and gives us life.

[3 : 50] And so we come humbly before you, asking that you will speak to us through your word, and you would help us to see your servant in all his glory, and that as we gaze in wonder, we may be transformed more into his likeness.

We pray this for our good, and for the glory of God. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. We interrupt this program with some breaking news.

Today, world leaders met and have agreed a peace plan that will mean the end of all wars forever. Each country will be provided with financial security and political equality.

Freedom will be enjoyed by all. Fear will be confined to the past. Would you believe it? It sounds great.

[5 : 14] We would love it to be true. But could it actually happen? Well, 800 years before the birth of Jesus, there was some earth-shattering, world-breaking news.

God, through the prophet Isaiah, made an announcement. Verse 1. Here is my servant.

And look at the end of verse 1. And he will bring justice to the nations. Wow. Is it really true?

Who is this promised servant? Well, we're going to look at three things from this text. The servant's call, the servant's mission, and the servant's identity.

Call, mission, and identity. So first of all, the servant's call. Look at verse 1.

[6 : 23] Look, listen. Here is my servant. And two things will mark out this servant from everyone else.

First, this servant has been sent from God. Look at verse 1. Here is my servant who I uphold, my chosen one.

This is no ordinary person. This is God's appointed servant. Verse 5. This is what the Lord says. The creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it.

I, the Lord, have called you. God, who created the world, who rules the universe, who sustains each person, has chosen and called forth his servant.

[7 : 31] But more than that, this servant has been empowered by God. Did you see that at the end of verse 1? I will put my spirit on him.

At the creation of the world in Genesis 1, verse 3, we read that the spirit was hovering over the waters. He was there with creation power.

Well, it's that same creation power that is now given to his servant. That is immense power. The power to speak things into existence.

So God has sent and empowered his servant. Why? Look at the end of verse 1. To bring justice to the nations.

You see, if I can turn the page, I'll tell you. this is a servant for the peoples of the world. This is world-breaking news for all the nations.

[8 : 41] This is God's chosen one, my servant in whom I delight, my chosen one whom I uphold. He is my treasured one, my loved one.

Can you see the glory behind this world-breaking news? God is giving of his best. He is giving of all that he has. We can say he is giving of himself.

Giving his servant to a world that is broken. To a people who have persistently squeezed and pushed God out.

God announces to the world, here is my servant. He intervenes with kindness and mercy.

So that's the servant's call. But what will this servant do? Second, what is the servant's mission?

[9 : 43] Well, there's two parts to his mission. First, he will bring justice with gentleness. Look at the end of verse 1 again.

He will bring justice to the nations. Middle of verse 3, in faithfulness, he will bring forth justice. He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth.

death. The recent petrol bombing of a house in Offaly that we all saw about on the news was brutal and sad.

Four-year-old Tighe and his Aunt Mary killed. The family cries for justice. And of course, that cry for justice goes out around the world every day in a million of ways.

the people of Palestine and Ukraine. And we feel it in our own hearts as wrong and hurts have been done to us. We long for justice.

[10 : 54] You see, justice implies two things. It's the punishment of wrongs, but it's also the restoring of rights. It's literally restoring order where there is disorder.

it's putting things back to the way God intends things to be. It's a world where there is no longer any need for justice because everything is put right.

God's chosen servant will bring justice. He will be faithful and not fail. He will not rest, verse 4, until he establishes justice on earth.

Every evil act, every unkind word, every jealous thought will be punished and every wrong will be righted and every loss will be restored.

But look how this justice will come. The servant will bring justice with gentleness. Look at verse 2.

[12 : 10] He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. Well compare that to the noisy voices of the world leaders today.

Those with power shout people down and silence the voice of the needy. They look to dominate and promote their own agenda. But here we have a servant who is different.

Verse 3. A bruised reed he will not break and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.

A rotting reed by a river is so easily snapped, isn't it? Just by the squeeze of a hand that is broken in two and thrown away because it's of no use.

The same is true of a smouldering flickering candle with the slightest puff of air. It is extinguished and discarded. It's got no purpose.

[13 : 17] Now isn't that how we often feel in this broken and disordered world? Life's experiences have battered us so much we feel like that rotting reed with no strength to stand.

Don't you feel like a flickering candle barely staying alight? Crushed and weak and broken? Fearing that the next disappointment or trial will finish us off for good? Well here we have a gentle servant who comes with the strength and the power of God himself.

He comes to strengthen the weak and fan into the flame those with smouldering lives. God's chosen servant comes with awesome power but he comes with gentleness not to trample on people.

He uses his power to restore and renew those who are broken and crushed. This is the servant's mission.

[14 : 37] He brings justice with gentleness. grace but there's a second part to his mission. He will give grace for the hopeless.

Let's pick it up in the middle of verse 6. God speaking to his servant says I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people.

Now to make a covenant is to commit to a relationship where two people or two parties make promises to one another.

Just like a wedding the soon to be husband and wife make a promise to commit to each other. Or like the members of a church members promise to commit to each other.

That's what it means to make a covenant. Now God had entered into covenant with his people. All through the Old Testament there was this promise I will be your God and you will be my people.

[15 : 50] But the problem was the people kept breaking their promise and if you were to read Isaiah chapters 1 to 39 you would see that all the way through.

So when God confronts them he says this Isaiah 24 verse 5 the earth is defiled by its people they have disobeyed the laws violated the statutes and have broken the everlasting covenant.

You see just like people of old we can never keep our promise to love God with all our heart. we always wander and so we need somebody who will come alongside us and who will actually stand in for us to represent us and that's what this servant will do.

In grace he will make the promises on our behalf so that the covenant is never broken. Now the question is who will the servant do this for?

Well he will do it for the hopeless and the helpless. Let's read again from the middle of verse 6. God speaks to his servant I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.

[17 : 22] Well the Gentiles were the nations of the world all people groups and all languages to open eyes that are blind to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

What do the blind the captive slave and the person in the dungeon all have in common? Well they all need help.

They can't change their situation. Their situation is hopeless helpless and they are helpless. You see verse 7 is a picture of all of us.

We are all blind to our need. We are all captives to self and to sin. It is like we are living in a dark dungeon. We need someone to come and open our eyes to set us free and release us to be the people that God has called us to be.

And that is what the servant has come to do. Just flick on a couple of pages to Isaiah 49. Isaiah 49 and verse 8.

[18 : 44] Here God is again speaking to his servant. We pick it up at the end of verse 8. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land, to reassign its desolate inheritance, to put everything right again, to restore order, to say to the captives, come out and to those who are in darkness, be free.

Let's go back to chapter 42. you see, this is good news for the nations. You see, we live in a world where everything is based on the strong, the clever, the wealthy.

We're always measured by our performance. We're always trying to hit our own standards and everybody else's standards. But what if we are so broken and so messed up that we can't reach those standards?

what if we can't perform to where God calls us to be? Well, here we have a gracious God who comes to us in the person of the servant to those who are hopeless and helpless, a servant who will

say to you, I will stand in for you.

I will take the blame for all of your broken promises, and you can enjoy a life of unbroken promises. Here is the servant's mission, who brings justice with gentleness and brings grace to the hopeless.

[20 : 39] So we have the servant's call, the servant's mission, identity, and the servant's identity. So who is this servant?

Well, I think we all know who he is, and I sure would very much like to meet him. But let's take ourselves through Scripture and see who this servant is.

We're given a hint in verse 9. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare, before they spring into being, I announce them to you.

God is saying through Isaiah, I am announcing what is going to happen before it happens. I'm telling you about my servant before the servant comes.

and what God promised all those years ago has now been revealed. Look with me, please, to Matthew chapter 3.

[21 : 53] Matthew's gospel, chapter 3. Matthew chapter 3, starting in at verse 16.

this is the baptism of Jesus. And just look at the language that is used. Chapter 3, verse 16.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water, and at that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, love, and a light on him.

And a voice from heaven said, this is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased.

he Isaiah 42, the Spirit of God comes on Jesus with power and the Father echoes what Isaiah had said and identifies Jesus as the servant. Look, this is my servant. This is my son whom I love, whom I uphold. With him I am well pleased. I delight in him. In fact, as Jesus begins his ministry, it becomes abundantly clear. Look at Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12.

[23 : 36] And verse 15. As Jesus went about his ministry, let's pick it up in the middle of verse 15.

A large crowd followed him and he healed all who were ill. Is not the promise of renewal and restoration and putting right everything that is broken? Verse 16. He warned them not to tell others about him. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah. Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight. And I will put my spirit on him and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out. No one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break. A smouldering wick he will not snuff out. Till he has brought justice through to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope. Let's go back to Isaiah 42.

The spirit of God comes upon him in power. You see, Jesus is the gentle servant with power. He comes into this earth to serve people like you and I. And he has done that supremely on the cross. As Jesus was led to his death, he does not cry out. As he is mocked and beaten and stripped, his voice is not heard. On the cross, Jesus is bruised and broken for us. On the cross, the life of Jesus is snuffed out and extinguished for you and for me. Through his death, he establishes justice as he suffers for our sin and gives us his life.

With his blood that is shed, he makes a covenant that can never be broken. Here he comes with grace and gentleness, with awesome power for the hopeless and the helpless. Here is my servant given for you.

How can we know this Jesus? How can we experience his gentle grace in our life?

[26 : 29] There are three things that will help us to experience the gentleness and grace of our servant. First, we are to look at the servant. Look at verse 1. Here is my servant, whom I uphold, who I lift up, my chosen one in whom I delight. God is saying to us again, look at my son. Behold his power.

His majesty, his greatness, his glory. And how do we see him? Well, we open up the word and we gaze afresh and we read the words of scripture like Isaiah 42 to meditate and reflect on who Jesus is, to know him and to delight in him. Because this servant is for you, not against you. He will not trample on you or crush you, but he will lift you up and restore you. See his son, the wonders of his grace.

Gaze and look at the servant. But not only must we look. We must also trust the servant. Look at verse 4.

He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching or in his word, the islands, the nations will put their hope. You know the teaching that we listen to most of all, the words that we most trust is our own word. The message is very simple. Listen to self. We always

know what's right and best, isn't that it? But no, God says, don't listen to yourself. Don't listen to the words that come around you, but listen to the teaching of Jesus. Trust in his word because his teaching will not crush you. It'll not snuff you out or break you. His word will heal you and restore you. So he says, listen to my teaching and put your hope in him. Refresh your trust in the faithful servant. His words will nourish you and feed you. They are good for your life. So let us together look at the servant. Let's trust the servant. And then third, let us worship the servant. Look at verse 8. God is speaking. I am the Lord.

That is my name. I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. That was true. God says, I will not give my glory to another. You will not worship anybody else but me. But we know who the servant is.

[30 : 12] The servant is God come in person. Jesus is God walking on this earth with flesh and bone. So worshipping the Lord Jesus is not a contradiction. Time and time again, the New Testament writers command us to praise God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. So the invitation is for us to come and worship the servant afresh. We sing, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

As we get close to this Christmas, I encourage myself and I encourage us all to look at the servant to trust his word and to worship him in adoration. For he is a servant who has come to you in grace and gentleness to renew and restore. Embrace God's chosen servant. Love him and you will not be disappointed.

Let's pray. What a marvelous and wonderful gift that you would break into this world by the person of your Son, the God with all power and all authority to stoop so low, to serve us, to give his life for us, that we might have life. Father, would you help us, please, to wonder afresh at Jesus.

By your Holy Spirit's power, help us not to trust our own words from within, but to trust your word to us, knowing that from your word comes life itself.

And may we live lives of worship, of serving you and honoring you and speaking of you as we go into a world desperately needing to know Jesus, the servant. Help us now, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[33 : 05] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, we are going to worship the servant as we sing this song together from the squalor of a borrowed stable.

So we come and worship him. Let's stand together as we sing. Amen.