

The Spirit Filled Servant

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[0 : 0 0] and 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 smoldering 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 law the islands will put their hope.

This is what God the Lord says. He who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people and life to 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 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, to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

[1 : 1 9] I am the Lord. That is my name. I will not give 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 as we hear God's word. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word, for this prophecy written hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, but yet true.

We thank you for this grand and great announcement. And we thank you that it has become a reality for us today.

We pray that your word would refresh us and change us, and that you would help us to see life and this world from your perspective, and that it would shape how we live.

So we ask for your help, the power of your spirit, to be at work amongst us, so that the words that we hear are your words, and changing us to be more like you.

[2 : 5 0] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, the story is told, some of you may have heard it, of a radio show host who at Christmas time rang around various ambassadors asking what they would most like for Christmas.

The first one that he called was the French ambassador. And his answer to what would you most like for Christmas said this, I would like peace and goodwill to all men.

The next to ring was the Chinese ambassador. He thought for a moment and then he said, I'd like to end hunger and disease throughout the world.

Then he called the British ambassador. What would you like for Christmas? There was a pause. I'd be very happy with some aftershave and a pair of new slippers.

Well, I think if we could have anything that we wanted, we'd all want something a little bit more than aftershave or slippers or socks that perhaps some of us got at our Christmas gifts.

[4 : 0 9] And like the ambassadors that also replied, we do want a better world than what we have. We want a world where everything is put right.

We want to be able to turn on the news and hear that there is no bad news. We want to be able to walk out onto our streets without fear or any worry.

We want to be able to wake up in the morning and know that everything is going to be okay. All our concerns are all taken care of.

Well, I want to give you the gift of someone this morning who can do just that. He brings justice to our disordered world and he gives grace to our broken lives.

He is the Spirit-filled servant. First, this servant has been promised. Look at verse 1 of chapter 42.

[5 : 19] Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. So this is not just any servant.

He stands above everyone else. This is God's chosen one. One in whom, verse 1, I delight. The servant is chosen because he brings to God great joy.

He pleases God. In other words, everything that this servant does and how this servant lives brings God great pleasure. God is thrilled.

God is delighted to see this servant at work. He is his prized servant. But not only is this servant chosen, this servant comes with great power.

Look at the rest of verse 1. He says, I will put my spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

[6 : 24] To be filled with the Spirit or to have the Spirit of God come upon him is to be filled with the power of God. The power of God to achieve the purposes of God and accomplish the plan of God.

So this is no ordinary servant. He is chosen by God for a special purpose. But who is this promised servant?

Well, this promise has actually been fulfilled. In one sense, we are told that the servant is already here. So look how it even starts in verse 1.

He says, Here, this is God speaking, Here is my servant. So the servant could be the people of God, the nation of Israel.

But the problem is, as we begin to read through the rest of Isaiah and as we read through the story of the Bible, we realize that God's people are not all that they should be.

[7 : 32] God does not always delight in them. So just have a look at chapter 42, verse 24. Because we see what happens to them.

In verse 24 we read, Who handed Jacob, that's a word to describe, a name to describe the people of God. Who handed Jacob over to become loot and Israel to the plunderers?

Was it not the Lord against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways. They did not obey his law.

So this is hardly a servant that God delights in or takes great pleasure in. His people displeased him. They failed to serve God as they should. So the servant is here, but it's not quite what we think.

So in another sense, the servant is here, but the servant is yet to come. So it says in verse 1 of chapter 42, I will put my spirit on him.

[8 : 41] So it's something future. So who is this spirit? Who is this spirit-filled person? Well, in time, as we begin to read through the scriptures, we see the plan and the purpose of God beginning to unfold.

Keep your finger in Isaiah 42 and jump to Luke. Luke's Gospel, chapter 2. And as we approach and as we come into the New Testament, we begin to see the Spirit of God coming as he promised, filling people, filling his servants and doing an extraordinary work.

Luke. So in chapter 1 of Luke's Gospel, verse 41, we've had the announcement from the angel to Mary that Mary is going to give birth to a son and she's going to call him Jesus.

And at the same time as her giving birth, her cousin, Elizabeth, is also going to give birth. So Luke, chapter 1 and verse 41.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit. So the Spirit is there working and in a loud voice she exclaimed, Blessed are you among women, Mary, and blessed is the child you will bear.

[10 : 23] So Elizabeth is pointing to the child that Mary is going to have. But not just Elizabeth. Look at verse 67. So her husband, Zachariah, he is also filled, verse 67, with the Holy Spirit.

And he prophesied, the Spirit comes upon him and he says, Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people.

He has raised up a horn of salvation. That is the strength of God is going to come and save us. So the Spirit of God coming on his servants to declare something about who Jesus is and what he's going to do.

Then in chapter 2, verse 25, we have Simeon who's in the temple and he was waiting for Jesus to arrive.

So read verse 25. Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel. That is for everything to be put right again.

[11 : 36] And the Holy Spirit came upon him. Verse 27, Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory to your people Israel.

So can we see the Spirit of God coming down on his servants, on different people, pointing and proclaiming and saying, Look at this Jesus.

And then we read in Luke chapter 3 and verse 21. This Jesus who was born, is now 33 years of age.

Chapter 3, verse 21. When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.

[13 : 01] And a voice came from heaven, an audible voice. You are my Son, whom I love. With you I am well pleased.

So here, at last, is the Spirit-filled servant, the Spirit of God coming down on the Son, on Jesus, the one in whom God takes great delight and pleasure.

You are the one I love. With you I am well pleased. the power of God coming down on the Son of God to achieve the purposes of God.

So what is this Spirit-filled servant sent to do? He was promised and he has come. Well, let's see what he is going to do.

Let's go back to Isaiah chapter 42. Two big things the servant will do. First, he is going to bring justice to our disordered world.

[14 : 08] So Isaiah 42, the end of verse 1. He says, I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

Now, every one of us here has experienced some kind of injustice, haven't we? I was playing a game of Monopoly last night with my family.

I experienced great injustice, stealing of money, all kinds of wrongdoing. We all understand what it is to face injustice.

But we're talking here about serious injustice, where people say things about you, discredit us. Maybe things have been taken from us in our lives.

And we all long for justice to be done. And when God talks of bringing justice, as he does here, it implies two things.

[15 : 09] First, it's about punishment. So correcting wrongs and making sure people receive the penalty for their crime, that's justice.

justice. But it's also about protection. So it's about giving people their rights and making sure that the vulnerable are treated fairly and given the respect that is due to them.

So punishment and protection, that is the justice of God. And that's the kind of justice we all long for, where every wrong has been put right and every right is upheld.

Well, the Spirit-filled servant is going to bring about that kind of justice. Have a look at what this justice will be like.

It's going to be universal. So look at verse 1 again. He says he will bring justice to the nations. Not just to one person or one country, but to the whole of the world.

[16 : 13] No country or leader or government will be excused. Justice will be done in every nation. No one can hide. No one will be immune.

Everything will be revealed. Everything will be exposed. Justice will be done. And it will be a faithful justice.

Look at the end of verse 3. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice. justice. We want the truth. Thus the cry of everyone who suffers injustice.

No more lies. No cover ups. No more spin. We want the plain truth. Well this servant is faithful in bringing justice.

He will uphold the truth. He will not be swayed by people's stories. It's not going to be like the banking inquiry or the investigations into FIFA where truth is hard to come by.

[17 : 18] It will be the whole truth and the absolute truth. So it will be universal, faithful and his justice will be eternal.

Look at verse 4. He will not falter or be discouraged until he establishes justice on earth.

The kind of justice that we're used to is people being sentenced for some particular crime they've committed and then they're being let off so many years for good behaviour and then the rest of the sentence being suspended.

So the criminal walks free and the victim suffers. That's the kind of justice we get today whereas this servant that we're reading about he will not rest until justice is established until there is a foundation of justice where there is a new kind of order in this world that will last forever.

So the spirit filled Jesus is going to bring justice. The one who has the power of God to achieve the purpose of God and accomplish the plan of God.

[18 : 43] The second big thing it's not just justice that he will bring but he's going to bring grace to our broken lives. Grace is God's unconditional kindness that he gives freely to those who are weak and broken and undeserving.

It's mercy God's unconditional kindness to those who are weak and broken. He is gentle in bringing grace.

So look in verses 2 and 3 we've got justice going on and then right in the middle of all this justice and bringing things to right we see a servant of grace.

Look at verse 2. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. The bully shouts doesn't he?

The domineering cry out and shout people down and put people down. The unjust boasts from the street and says look at who I am and look at what I've done and look at what I have.

[20 : 02] We've all met that kind of person. They don't care about the weak or the vulnerable. They're aggressive. They're threatening. They're about building their own little empires and their own ego.

They trample on the broken only to get to the top. But not the servants. He comes with the power of God but yet he is gentle.

he doesn't shout. He speaks words of calm and comfort. He doesn't shout people down but he listens to the cry of those who suffer and who struggle.

So here is one who is understanding and gracious. He is slow to anger and rich in love towards the weak and the vulnerable and the broken.

But he's not just gentle. He is compassionate. Look at verse 3. A bruised reed he will not break.

[21 : 12] I don't think we use reeds much but in the time that it was written reeds were very useful for making all kinds of things. Maybe putting on a roof.

Maybe building a boat. So a bruised or a rotting reed is of no use to anyone. It's for the fire. It's considered useless, fit for nothing, of no value.

All it can be done is thrown into the rubbish heap. But look what it says. A bruised reed he will not break. The servant will not discard or reject those who are like bruised reeds.

He will not break us or destroy us. He is compassionate. Look at the rest of verse 3.

And a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. we might modernise it and say an old lightbulb he won't throw out.

[22 : 18] A lightbulb that doesn't work anymore or the candles that we've used for Christmas decorations and there's hardly anything left in it at all. Well it's fit for nothing, its purpose is over, it's chucked out, it's thrown away, it's discarded, it's useless.

But the servant will not push away or trample on those of us who are like a smouldering wick, struggling to survive in the struggles and the heartaches of life and all the pressures and the demands that come upon us.

He will not crush us or smash us, he is compassionate. You see what the world sees as hopeless and beyond use, the servant will take those people and he will restore them.

What the world sees as useless and without hope and everybody else is discarded and given up on, they're too broken, they're too sinful, their life is too much of a mess, the servant will take those people and he will renew them and make them right again.

So here is the promise of a spirit filled servant coming to bring justice, to correct, to bring protection, to bring punishment, but one who comes to bring grace to the broken and to the weak, to be gentle and compassionate.

[23 : 56] So how are we going to experience justice and grace? Well, as Jesus walked this earth, as the spirit-filled servant began to live his life, he brought justice and grace where he went.

He spoke up, didn't he, for those who were vulnerable and weak. He took the bruised reeds and the smouldering wicks. He had compassion on those who were shut out and who had nothing.

He fed the hungry, he healed the sick, he welcomed the leper that everybody else had despised, he took in the woman who everybody else had rejected, he accepted the sinners and those that everybody had thrown out and the outcasts, he restored the demon possessed, possessed, he came with gentleness and compassion, but he also came in justice, he condemned the selfish rich, he judged the hypocritical religious who looked down on everybody else because they failed and got so many things wrong.

So as Jesus walked this earth, the spirit filled servant came with justice and with grace. But that was only a sign of the greater justice and a deeper grace that we can all experience today.

You see, Jesus, the spirit filled servant, did not end his life by walking amongst people, he came to die for people like you and me and it's only when we look at the cross that we actually see justice and grace in all its wonder and all its beauty.

[25 : 55] Because when we see Jesus dying on the cross, we see him taking my place and your place. He pays the penalty for all the acts of injustice that have ever taken place.

So the justice that we long for ourselves, the justice that we want upon everybody else and that we deserve, fell not on us, but fell on the servant, on his son, Jesus Christ.

Keep your finger in chapter 42 and jump forward to Isaiah 53. and here we have another picture of the justice of God falling not on us, but on this spirit-filled servant, the gentle, compassionate and pure one who takes the injustices on the world.

Look at verse 4 of chapter 53. This is speaking of the spirit-filled servant. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted.

He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed.

[27 : 38] We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the spirit-filled servant, the iniquity of us all.

So the spirit-filled servant dies for you and me. So when we look at the cross, justice is established at the cross.

And because justice has been done at the cross, that means grace now flows to people like you and me. Grace flows to us from the servant and he offers forgiveness, he offers a welcome, he says you can be now accepted, you can now be treasured as God's own child, no longer struggling under the weight of our own failure.

The servant will not break the bruised reed, he will restore me, the servant will not crush and blow out the smouldering wick, he renews me, he gives me a new kind of life, a new way to live.

And this is all ours and we can experience this because of our trust in the spirit-filled servant. back in Isaiah 42 verse 4, at the very end we read this, in his law the islands, that is the people groups, the nations of the world, will put their hope.

[29 : 19] Hope is the thing or the person we entrust our lives too. So the encouragement, the direction for us is put your hope, rest in this servant, the one who has the power of God to achieve the purposes of God, the one who brings justice to this world and the one who brings grace to our lives.

Trust in him and we will experience justice and grace today. God's love.

But it's not just about today. It is also to come, isn't it? Because living in this world as we do, and while we may yet know the spirit-filled servant, there is still so much injustice and heartache and pain and war and violence that is going on in our world every single day.

and there is still such a need for God's grace so that we do not sin anymore, where we do not fail anymore, where we do not mess up anymore.

We want things to be so right in our lives. So what we experience in a small part now is a taste of the justice and grace that is yet to come.

[30 : 49] because what we see happening at the cross is just a shadow of the final and ultimate justice that is to come. First, there will be justice to come when Jesus comes again.

As we finish, turn to Isaiah 65, where we get a picture of the justice and the grace that we will one day experience in all its fullness.

So Isaiah 65, verse 11. Isaiah 65, verse 11.

So this is speaking of God's future justice to come. But as for you who forsake the Lord and forget my holy mountain, so forget about God and his glory and God and his ways, who spread a table for fortune and fill bowls of mixed wine for destiny, I will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter.

For I called you, but you did not answer. I spoke, but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me.

[32 : 28] So this is speaking of a future justice when the Spirit-filled servant is going to come again and for all those who have refused him, who pushed the Spirit-filled servant out of their lives and rejected him, justice will finally come and it will be eternal and there will be no grace.

But for those who have welcomed, for those who have come like a bruised reed in a smouldering wick and said I am helpless and I cannot do anything, they will know and enjoy grace in all its fullness to come.

So look at the rest of chapter 65 verse 17. Here it speaks of the future grace that we will receive. Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind, but be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight, and its people a joy.

I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people, and the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years.

[34 : 00] In other words, no more suffering, no more death, no more heartache, no more pain. verse 25, the wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain. A picture of perfection, of harmony, and of beauty, and the world put right again.

Grace in all its fullness, with the spirit-filled servant ruling and reigning over all. Amazing grace.

The goodness and kindness of God in all its fullness, experienced for all eternity. humanity. This is the God who has come to us in Christ, not just a baby, but the spirit-filled servant, the one with the power of God to bring justice to our disordered world, and grace into our broken lives.

Let's pray together. Father, we long for justice to be done, and we thank you that when we've been punished, but because of your