

Jesus is the chosen servant of the Lord

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[0:00] A passage which is all about the Lord Jesus. Of course all the Bible is about him in a sense but these passages speak particularly about the Lord Jesus. What finer thing could there be to speak about? What finer person could there be to talk about in a setting like this and the Lord Jesus Christ?

You know guys this week it's been very sunny hasn't it? I don't know about you I like sunny weather and I like waking up and seeing the sun streaming through my window at 5am.

When it's sunny outside you can often feel quite encouraged. You feel, well I don't know about you but you think well all's right with the world. The sun is shining, the sky is blue and you can feel quite upbeat and ready to face the day.

But if we're honest and if I'm honest with you sometimes even on the brightest days there's always that nagging sense in the background that things are not as they should be in the world.

Even on the best of occasions, happy family occasions like yesterday I was with my family, I saw my brother who lives abroad and my other brother who got married a year ago. It was a nice occasion. There's always that deep-seated sense that deep within something is not right with the world we live in.

[1:15] I don't know if that's familiar to you. You read the news, things in your family, things in churches, you look around and you think what is going on with the world? Things are not right. Things are messed up. Whether it's politics, whether it's conflicts in the world, whatever it might be, things are just not right.

And as Christians as well, we look around, don't we? We look at the city in which we live or I don't know what it's like in Wigan or wherever you come from, North Wales. You look around and you think what is going on?

People seem to be so godless. Evil seems to be winning. What will people think up next to do, which is an affront to God?

Today's passage will help us lift up our heads. Lift up our heads and be encouraged. Because we need that, don't we, as Christians? We're not to be a downtrodden, beaten down people.

Of course, we struggle. We have our weaknesses, but we have to look up and raise up and lift up our heads and look, here's the Son of Man. Here is the Lord Jesus. And today we can do that perhaps together.

[2:23] Last week we read about Jesus healing the man with the shriveled hand on the Sabbath. The Pharisees were not happy about this. They went out and they plotted to kill Jesus.

The actual, I think the King James has it like this. They went out, they held a council, they plotted, they got together, they gathered together. As we might have an elders meeting, they got together to plot the death of Jesus, who is healing people and doing good.

We read, don't we, in verse 15 of this chapter, that Jesus was aware of this. Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place.

What does Jesus do? He continued to heal the sick. Look at this, many followed him and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was. This must have made a big impression on Matthew.

He records it in his gospel and he quotes from one of the servant songs of the book of Isaiah. We looked at last year, didn't we, last summer, the servant songs of Isaiah. In chapter 42 of Isaiah, you can read the quote from which this is taken, the book from which this quote is taken.

[3:34] A song about a messianic servant figure who would come and sort out the mess the world was in, Israel was in. And Matthew, in this passage, he draws upon this and he says, this is the fulfillment of this prophecy.

This is the one of whom Isaiah spoke, fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. Today, in this short time together, I want to ask three questions about this passage. Who is this person?

What is he like? And what will he achieve? The first one, who is he? The identity of this servant. Well, first of all, I want you to notice, this is God himself speaking to his people.

This is the one who is speaking. Here is my servant. Let's be very clear about it. This is God speaking. Here is my servant. God is presenting his servant to the people. Over the centuries, God had raised up numerous servants.

And the prophets, Moses, they were servants of God. They served God in their time. David and all the others. But this is a unique servant. This is a servant who has been raised up for a special task.

[4:45] He's been chosen. He's been anointed with the Spirit. And he comes in the power of the Spirit. God sends him in a particular, unique way. So he's not just another prophet.

He's not just another king. He's someone unique and special. He is the servant, the messianic servant. We know, of course, don't we, this is the Lord Jesus.

I want you to ponder this. There was never a moment in the life of Jesus when he disobeyed his father. There was never a moment he disobeyed, he followed his own agenda, or he plotted his own course, or he didn't consult his father.

But every single moment of Jesus' life, he followed exactly the will of the father. He was 100% obedient. He was the perfect servant. You couldn't say that about Moses.

You couldn't say that about David. Even the best of them fall short of this ideal servant, the one who fully does the will of God at all times, every moment of his life. And, of course, we know, don't we, we're privileged to see the Garden of Gethsemane, that beautiful and horrible, in a sense, moment where Jesus cries out, not my will, but yours be done.

[5:52] And this is what he lived by. This is what he lived and died by. Not my will, but yours be done, Father. He was a servant in that he served God to the uttermost, and it led him to the cross.

What does it say about this servant? Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, raised up for this purpose, the one I love, in whom I delight.

It says in the King James Version, the one in whom my soul delights. What a beautiful phrase. I think sometimes in modern English, we lose the beauty of the King James English. My soul delights.

God's soul delights in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God delights in his Son in ways that words cannot express.

From all eternity, before the world was created, the Father and the Son loved each other, and the Father delighted in his Son, in his innate goodness. What I mean by that is the goodness that was in him for his own sake.

[6:52] I love my Son because he is my Son, not because of what he does for me. He doesn't do much for me. Maybe you will want to mold. But at the moment, I love him because he's my Son, and he's precious.

But think about the infinite goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father loved him, and loves him, because he is infinitely precious. And also because he obeyed his Father to the uttermost.

And the Lord could look on him and say, this servant of mine is absolutely righteous, and he is approved by me, and I'm happy to stand in front of all the people and say, this is my Son. Look at him.

Behold him. Isn't he glorious? He has my full approval. I delight in him. My soul delights in my Son, in my servant. Just in case you might think, well, Matthew was mistaken to make this connection between the servant of Isaiah and this servant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember the baptism of Jesus and the words that were spoken that came from heaven. Amen.

This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased. And of course we have that picture of the Spirit coming down in the form of a dove, anointing the Lord Jesus for the task of ministry.

[8:05] And those words, that's not an accident. Those words echo Isaiah 42. It's as though God is saying, this is the one. He's here. He's come. This is my servant, and my soul delights in him.

Dear friends, this is exactly what we are to do as Christians. Is it not? We take the Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot show him physically. We say, look to him. He is delightful. This is the one in whom God's soul delights. And because of God's grace to us, we also delight in him as well. The one that we scorned and ignored, God has given us affection and love for him.

This is our Lord and Saviour and our friend and our brother. We delight in him. We invite people. Come and delight in him as well with us. Isn't he marvelous? We want to commend him to the world.

You guys going out on the beach mission, you are commending the Lord Jesus, the one of infinite value and worth, the precious holy one. Come and see, isn't he good? Isn't he worthy of worship and praise?

[9:08] We are calling people to be a worshipping people. We're calling everyone in Brighton who will listen to worship this one and to agree with the Father that he is the faithful servant and he is worthy.

He is delightful. But there's another side to this as well. The one that God delights in, the one that God can approve, the only one in history that God can look at and say, I approve of him 100% because he is righteous and sinless.

Dear friend, this is what qualifies him to go to the cross. There was none other, is there? There's no other person that could do this who was qualified as righteous and delighted in by God who could be a substitute for sinners.

So this is a beautiful thing, but it's also a terrible thing to think that the Lord Jesus Christ, because of this, this qualified him for this awful but glorious task of dying on the cross. And think about this as well.

I don't mean this in any kind of insensitive way, but I want you to hear this with the spirit in which I'm saying this. The one that God's soul delights in, the chosen one.

[10:18] What happened to him? God watched his beloved son, this delightful one, being spat upon by men.

And he watched him being beaten and mocked. And he watched him being nailed to a cross. He watched him being flogged. He watched him hanging there in agony, this one that his soul had delighted in for all eternity before.

Now he saw him as a wretched man hanging on the cross as it appeared to us. Imagine if this was somebody that you loved. I say this with all sensitivity.

Imagine even a family pet. Imagine a pet that you've had in your family for years and somebody tortured that pet. Somebody, you found out that somebody had been abusing this animal and had killed it.

Wouldn't you be angry? Even if it wasn't your pet, you'd say, how dare somebody do this? How dare somebody be so cruel and heartless as to kill this helpless animal? People in Brighton get very vexed about fox hunting or about veganism and animal welfare, and I'm not saying that's right or wrong, these same people would ignore the fact that God's own son of infinite value, far more value than any animal, even any human, was brutalized on that cross, suffered and tortured.

[11:38] We care about justice for animals and perhaps we should, I think that's right, we should be concerned about that, but think about the injustice of God's son dying for sinners.

He didn't deserve it. If anyone didn't deserve it, it was Jesus and that's what he did for us. And that's not all, is it?

Because not only was he brutalized and tortured by men, but we read about something far greater, which is the mystery that even the greatest theological minds cannot really fathom and understand, is that on the cross of Calvary, Jesus was not just physically tortured, but God himself turned against him.

He turned against his own son. This was part of the agreement they'd made to save people. And the father subjected his son, as we understand it, to his wrath, to his judgment, the one that he delighted in.

He turned his face away from him. He just cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? What a terrible thing it must have been for that to happen, for the son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ, this faithful servant, to die and to suffer separation from his father for the sake of his people, because he loved you, Christian person.

[13:01] This all happened so that justice could be done, that God's just demands could be satisfied. Somebody had to pay the price, somebody had to suffer and the Lord Jesus said, I will do this for my people.

So great was his love, so great was his compassion and he did this so that sinners like us could also be delighted in by God, chosen by God, gathered in by God and sent out with the mission of preaching his gospel.

This is worth pondering, this is a fearful thing, this is a wonderful thing. The cross of Jesus Christ, the darling of heaven as he's sometimes called, was cut off for you and for me.

Here is my servant whom I've chosen, the one I love in whom I delight. That's the identity of this servant. Now let's look at the second question, what is he like?

Verse 19, he will not quarrel or cry out, no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. Then if you're like me, you read this, you think, well hang on a minute, didn't Jesus speak to vast numbers of people?

[14:26] Of 5,000 men plus women and children we presume, he must have been speaking pretty loudly in order to communicate. I think if his microphone wasn't working, he probably wouldn't be able to hear me in this room.

But Jesus was obviously crying out, he was doing public speaking and there were times when he caused a great stir. People said, who is this coming? So this is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth. When it says here, he will not cry out, it's not saying that Jesus never engaged in public speaking. The word crying out here has the sense of an aimless kind of sound, like a dog barking, a bird screeching, brawling, wrangling, haranguing, useless and pointless raising of voices.

When a dog barks can go on and on for hours, can't it? It can seem pretty aimless. Why is it going on? When an annoying bird is just screeching outside a crow in a tree, that's what it's like here.

Jesus would not do this, he would not cry out in this aimless way. What about this, a bruised reed he would not break? This is really interesting. There's a great book by Richard Sibbes, the Puritan, a bruised reed and I advise you to read it.

[15:38] I haven't read it myself, I still advise you to read it, I've picked it, a bruised reed. I mean to read it. What is a reed?

Go down to the nearest lake, you'll find some reeds. A reed is like not much more than a straw, is it? A tiny, feeble kind of stick thing that blows around in the wind.

Even a toddler could break a reed. Even a little duck quacking through the lake, through the reeds could actually break a reed in no time at all, it's just a very feeble, weak thing.

Imagine a bruised reed, imagine a reed that's already snapped, not quite broken but damaged. I think even, I don't know, a ladybird could break that thing. Something incredibly feeble and weak and vulnerable.

A smoldering wick, this is a lamp that's almost going out, it's smoking, there's a little bit of flame but it's almost extinguished.

[16:40] The slightest puff of wind, the door slams, a draught comes in and it's gone, it's out, it's gone for good. We are told, aren't we, Matthew tells us that God's servant will not break a reed like this and he will not snuff out, extinguish a smoldering wick.

These images are taken from, if you read Hebrew literature in the Bible, Jesus uses this a lot, hyperbole, exaggerated examples and speech to try and make a point.

A bruised reed is just a picture of something which is incredibly, as I said, incredibly weak and vulnerable. It's the same idea, you know, we have these expressions in English, treading lightly. When I say, I went to this place and I had to tread lightly, I don't mean literally I'm tiptoeing around like this.

It's an idiom, it's an expression that means something. We talk about, don't we, being quiet as a mouse and moving like a shadow. We know literally, we don't literally mean these things but these are examples, idioms to help us understand hyperbole.

What does it mean? What does it mean that the servant of God, Jesus, would not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoking wick? If I were to ask you, I think probably most of us, and I was like this before I studied this, would assume it's talking about Jesus' attitude to broken people and burdened people.

[18:02] And I think this is true because Jesus talks about the blessedness of being poor in spirit. Do you remember that in the Beatitudes? Blessed are the poor in spirit. In the Gospels, comfort is offered for those who mourn and there is a light for those living in the land of darkness.

And Jesus promises rest for the weary and burdened. These are the kinds of oppressed people that Isaiah is talking about as well. Read the book of Isaiah.

Read chapter 1. Look at the picture of the city. It's a terrible picture of a land that has been wasted and destroyed because of its wickedness, because of its waywardness, because of its idolatry.

That land is being ravaged by enemies and strid bare. And the people are oppressed. The people are burdened. And at the time of Jesus, the people had been, the common people had been ravaged by these years of apostasy and judgment and injustice.

They were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. But in Jesus, God had come at last to help his people. So this idea of broken and burdened people is full of, you know, everywhere in the Gospels.

[19:18] People who are oppressed. And think about Jesus' attitude to sinners and broken people, suffering people. You see his gentleness and compassion, don't you?

Think about the woman at the well of Samaria. Jesus doesn't lambast her. He doesn't criticize her. He gently deals with her situation. What about the woman caught in adultery?

What about the widow at Nain and different people that Jesus encountered and Zacchaeus, the tax collector? He's always very compassionate and gentle with those who confess their sin and those who are needy.

Jesus did not come that time, the first time, to judge the world but to save the world, to draw sinners to himself. But by contrast, we read about the Pharisees, don't we?

Their harshness, their judgmentalism, their legalism, the injustice, the burdens they put on the backs of common people. These were the kind of false shepherds that Isaiah speaks about who were supposed to be helping the people, guiding the people and yet they totally turned their backs on the people and added burdens to them.

[20:30] They were not doing what they were called to do. In fact, while Jesus was preaching these beautiful words and doing these beautiful things, they were plotting to take his life. What a contrast between these false shepherds and the shepherd of God, the good shepherd who came to draw these people back to the Father.

Well, I want to say to you, friends, in the immediate context of this, we have to be faithful to the Bible. We have to make sure we're not jumping ahead or reading things there which are not there. These things are all true about Jesus and his compassion for the poor and for the broken.

But in the passage here, it's not talking so much about that, I believe, in context. It's talking about the quiet and unobtrusive way that Jesus went about his ministry. After all, what was it that caused Matthew to link this with Isaiah?

It was the fact that Jesus told these people, don't tell anyone who I am. I've always thought that was very strange. Why does Jesus say to people, don't tell people who I am? Warns them, don't tell anyone about this.

You'd think that Jesus would want everyone to know. And yet time and time again, he says, don't tell anyone. And he withdraws to lonely places when the crowds want to make him king or want to stone him or kill him.

[21:50] Dear friends, we know, don't we, at the time of Jesus, most people were expecting a Messiah who would be a military leader, who would come and he would boot out the Romans by force and he would rally people to himself and he would establish an unprecedented golden age of righteousness and with him ruling in Jerusalem of all the people there dealing with the enemies and imminent judgment.

The people would have followed a man, a man of force, a man of power who had just raised up a rabble to fight with him to get rid of the hated Romans. They would have followed a man who would have grabbed every opportunity to get as much power for himself, as much influence, as much fame, notoriety, to be able to take on their oppressive enemies.

But this was not the way of Jesus. This was not the Messiah that God sent them. Think about Jesus. Think about the things he was not. He was not interested in crowds, human opinions, or human popularity.

He was not unnecessarily provocative. He did not wrangle with people. You know what I mean by wrangling? These kind of pointless arguments with people. He wasn't doing that, was he? He didn't wrangle. He didn't delight in controversy.

Jesus was not a rebel. He was not a man of force or violence. He did not strive to defeat his opponents and humiliate them. He did not use military or political power and try to climb the ladder.

[23:30] You see that, don't you, in politics? Somebody's the next big thing, the rising star, trying to get as much support as possible. We've seen that recently, haven't we, in the conservative leadership contest. People wrangling for power, trying to win people to their cause.

Not in the way of Jesus. And Jesus, forgive me for using this word, he did not use shenanigans, crafty little ways to try to get power and influence. He did not use deception.

He did not use manipulation. He did not rampage over the poor and the vulnerable in his pursuit of power. He did none of those things. And that made him very different from the Messiah they were expecting and wanting.

It makes him very different from the rulers of his day. It makes him very different from many rulers today. Modern leaders, despots and dictators, politicians, not all of them of course, but many of them would resort to these kinds of things to get power.

power. What did Jesus do? He always deflected attention from himself. As I said, he didn't want people to try and make him king by force or mistake him for the wrong kind of Messiah.

[24:43] People tried to kill him. He withdrew. It wasn't his time. He still had a work to do before it was time for him to die on the cross. Just when he appeared to be on the brink of greatness, he stepped back time and time again.

What kind of king is this? What kind of servant is this? What kind of leader is this? Quietly goes about God's business under the radar almost, serving people, individuals, winning hearts.

And then when the time was right, he went to the cross. He said, now is my time. My time has come. And he went and he died for his people. Let me say this. He did not win victory by shedding Roman blood or even Jewish blood.

But he won victory didn't he? By shedding his own blood. Very different from the Messiah they were expecting. A rampaging king. One of the most sobering things in the Bible is when Jesus says, when Peter tries to defend him in the garden, he says, do you not think I could call on my father who would send twelve legions of angels?

But this is your hour when darkness reigns. At any moment, Jesus could have called down God's power to smite his enemies. But he didn't do it. He had a greater purpose.

[26:00] What can we learn from this? Well, I want to put it to you tonight that we as Christians, we are not to be a provocative people. We are not to be a quarreling people. We are not to be a violent people.

We should demonstrate a Christ-like humility, gentleness, a boldness. Jesus was certainly bold, but also a winsomeness.

What does it mean to be winsome? I looked it up in the dictionary. Attractive or appealing in a fresh, innocent way. It's a lovely word, isn't it? Winsome. The ability to win people. Gentleness.

Recently, I was talking to a Christian from another church. He was very militant. He was saying, let's organise marches. Let's go to the Prime Minister's office and waggle a bony finger in her face and denounce, was Friza May at the time, denounce her and say, you are wicked.

Let's organise a march to confront gay pride, all this kind of stuff. But I want to ask you, is that the Christian way? I don't know. I'm not sure about that, whether that's the most helpful thing to be doing.

[27:04] Of course, there is a time to stand. There is a time to stand in front of leaders and testify, but there always has to be this quality of

Christ-like gentleness and humility amongst Christians.

We're not to be abrasive and strident, are we? There may be a time to exercise our democratic rights as citizens. We're not to rampage through society like a bull in a china shop, are we? To be like Jesus, didn't break a bruised reed, didn't snuff out, smouldering, where he quietly went about God's business, unobtrusively, surreptitiously, secretly almost, achieving God's purposes without being provocative.

Of course, we know that even Jesus ran into trouble and there were times when he debated with people, but he wasn't abrasive, he was gentle. Another thing we can learn as Christians, we should not fall into the same error as the Jews who wanted a political messiah.

We need to be very careful, don't we, that we don't put our expectations and hopes in someone who can come and somehow deliver this world from unrighteousness and wickedness before the Lord Jesus comes.

[28:26] I think in some parts of the world, this is more of an issue than it is here, but you get this on both sides of the political divide. You get some Christians who are so concerned about social justice that they don't really care if people actually know the Lord Jesus.

All that matters is transforming society and making everything kind of utopian and wonderful and of course we should be concerned about this. Christians should be at the forefront of this. And you've got other Christians, perhaps more in some other countries, who are so strident about moral issues, about things like, you know, same-sex marriage and moral decay that they're protesting about this kind of stuff.

Of course we should be concerned about this as well. We need to be salt and light in our society. But if we're expecting a kind of golden age of righteousness to Christianize society in this life before the Lord Jesus comes back, I think we're going to be very disappointed.

I don't think that's what we've promised. We are to work for the good. We are to exercise justice and Christ-like values, but we are not to expect that somehow this will all be dealt with in this life and somehow we'll have this wonderful Christian utopia.

You hear people talking like this, don't you? You say, if only we had a Christian prime minister. Well, that would be a lovely thing, wouldn't it? Would it solve the problem of human hearts? Imagine a group of me and my mates from other churches decided to have a kind of Christian coup.

[29:50] You know, overtaking the government. We're going to kind of use a non-violent method. We're going to kind of take over the government, oust all the ungodly people and establish a Christian dictatorship. And let me say this, we laugh, but it has been tried before in some places or in some different ways.

It doesn't work because people's hearts are not changed. You could control the military and make people do things in a Christian way on the surface, but you would never really get to the heart of the matter, would you?

And it never works. Every time this has been tried, it's always been an abject failure. Yes, we should have Christian politicians and leaders, but we can't expect somehow to completely revolutionize society in this life.

What God wants is for us to do what Jesus was doing, which is to win hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ and then society will be changed. One by one, person by person. As people come under the lordship of the Lord Jesus, submit to him, obey his word, then society will be changed.

We're not just to try to change what there is already. We're here to kind of change the hearts of people or God is here to change the hearts of people. We're the agents of that as we preach the gospel.

[31:05] That's not what he asks us to do. He asks us to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus. We should, of course, pray for revival. We do pray in our church for revival.

We pray for a greater work of God, a greater measure of God's blessing. But this is balanced by a realistic understanding that until Jesus comes, there will always be a lot of things wrong with the world. Until Jesus comes again, evil may appear to have the upper hand.

Evil may appear to be winning. As I said, in this gospel age, Jesus Christ is just the same. He's still like the servant who goes around not breaking the bruised reed or snuffing out the smouldering

where he goes quietly about his business through his people, winning hearts, winning souls, changing lives one by one.

We also reminded that as Christians, we ought to be very careful with broken people, damaged people. Brighton is full of damaged people, whether they appear to be broken or damaged or not. It's full of people like that. Every town is. Have you ever met somebody who appears to be so broken by life, you look at them and you think, what has life done to you?

[32:26] What has happened to you? You think the smallest thing could break you completely. It wouldn't take much to push you over the edge. You poor, poor person.

I'm thinking about people that have been victims of the sins of others, perhaps some kind of abuse. When I was growing up, I used to do this youth club.

I met people who had been abused, people who wrecked their lives through poor choices and sins, people who have done nothing really to deserve what's happened to them, humanly speaking. Some people who might feel they're too bad to be forgiven by God. You do meet people who say, God could never forgive me. I've done such evil, I've had an abortion. I met people like that before. These people are not just victims. We're all responsible for our own lives. We all have to come to God and repent and be reconciled to him through Christ. But people have suffered.

[33:26] We should be ready as Christians to offer encouragement and support and restoration for people through Jesus. The Lord Jesus will never turn away anyone who comes to him in faith and repentance.

He's gracious with people. He deals gently with people. He doesn't crush them. Yes, of course, people need to be challenged. There is a way of doing this, a gentle way, a winsome way, a Christian way which does not crush people.

It offers grace and hope and restoration. And the same goes for Christians who are weak in faith, who feel that my flame is just going out, just burdened, tired, oppressed, perhaps facing challenges and opposition.

Christians who've strayed into sin and completely shit-wrecked their faith and messed up their lives. How are we to deal with these people in the Christ-like way, gently, compassionately, lovingly, offering restoration, challenging them, helping them to get out of the mess if possible?

Look to the Lord Jesus. The church, dear friends, of Jesus Christ is the best place for this to happen, for broken souls and damaged people to be restored as far as is possible in this life.

[34:47] There is a special burden on pastors and elders to do this work, to bind up the brokenhearted, to help those who are weak and struggling. It applies to you.

Those of you who are husbands, this is your job for your wife, to restore her, to help her, to comfort her, your children. But wherever you are, whether you're a pastor or an elder or just working for the Lord in some other way, you have a role to be compassionate and to help people find the Lord Jesus.

Final thing tonight because we're running out of time. Time flies, doesn't it? What will he achieve, this servant? It says here, doesn't it? Verse 18, he will proclaim justice to the nations.

Injustice is a major theme in the book of Isaiah. His society was riddled with injustice and that term injustice is not just about, you know, miscarriage of justice in a court.

It encompasses a whole range of different things which were displeasing to God. Violence, oppression, idolatry, unrighteousness, all these are part of this term injustice.

[35:59] Things messed up, things out of kilter, things as they should not be, as they ought not to be, which God condemns through his prophets. I'll give you one example, Isaiah chapter 10.

Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.

Just one example of many in Isaiah where the Lord God condemns oppression and injustice. And this was still going on at the time of Jesus. The people were living in a messed up, judged society. Things were broken, things were not as they should have been. The coming Messiah was to come and deal with this and bring back righteousness and bring deliverance.

The land was groaning under its burdens. The people were saying, how long, Lord, till you come and help us? Keep your promises to send your Messiah, your chosen servant, to save us.

[37:05] And then at the right time, the Lord Jesus was sent, full of the Spirit, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, proclaiming justice to the nations, offering a message of reconciliation to God, the year of the Lord's favour, restoration for a burdened people.

And have you noticed there's a wider scope here than just Israel? God's not interested in just restoring the land of Israel and the people of Israel. He will proclaim justice to the nations. There was a global scope to this message of justice that encompasses all nations beyond the borders of Israel.

Jesus proclaimed justice. He proclaimed a time when judgment would come, when things would be put right. Is judgment good news?

Is the establishment of justice good news? Putting things back in their right way? Well, I think it is good news if you're on the right side of God. But if you are an agent of oppression, if you are someone who is not right with God, who is walking in disobedience to him, it's not good news at all. Because you know that when Jesus proclaims justice, you know that your doom is proclaimed as well. If you are a sinner walking far from God, walking in injustice, then you know that bringing of justice, that day of reckoning, will mean your doom, your judgment.

[38:30] But for the people of God, the people who are reconciled to God, who are crying out for deliverance, it is very good news. Verse 20 says this, till he leads justice to victory.

As I said at the beginning, friends, 2,000 years have passed. We're still acutely aware, aren't we, that not all is right with the world. Injustice is rampant.

Let me just read what I wrote here. Suffering is widespread. People look for answers in all kinds of places and find none. The wicked flaunt their wickedness. They parade it.

They just don't care. In our city, in our country, there's a deep sense of hopelessness, brokenness, pointlessness, confusion. People turn away from God.

They turn away from his laws. What a mess they get themselves in. People look for answers. They can't find any answers. They go anywhere but to God for the answers, to the only one who can give them an answer. And most people are trapped in this cycle.

[39:38] They do not know what the answer is to all the problems that we face as a society, as a world. They have no clue. The Christian hope, dear friends, is that Jesus will make good on his promise.

He proclaimed justice the first time. He will come back again to lead justice to victory. He promised to do that. He will do that. He will come at a time which only the Father knows and he will come and he will establish his kingdom.

He will come not as a meek servant but as a conquering king. And when Jesus comes, all will be well and all manner of things will be well.

Evil will be vanquished. Wrongs will be righted. God's enemies will be judged. And the world which has been wayward and sinful since the fall, all those millennia ago will be put right.

That's what it means. He will lead justice to victory. He will come and establish a righteous order, put things back in their place, restore the years the locusts have eaten. That's what the Lord Jesus promises to do.

[40:53] And we look forward to that judgment and say, Lord Jesus, come and bring your justice to this world because we badly need this. The meek shall inherit the earth. Those who mourn shall be comforted.

The earth will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. And Christ, the Lord Jesus, will come and he will reign on the highest throne and everyone will acknowledge him as King of kings and Lord of lords.

And dear friends, this is the only hope for humanity. This is what you know. You're privileged to know this. And this is what we proclaim. The Lord Jesus is coming back.

He will lead justice to victory. Many people think the church is irrelevant. They think it's just a, we've got an old message they've rejected. We know that.

We've heard that. We don't want to know. It can't offer us anything we need at all. But actually, the church of Jesus Christ, whatever church it might be, is a repository, is a place where the truth of this

coming king is guarded and taught and proclaimed.

[41:58] It's a place where justice is practiced. The principles of the kingdom are lived out. And when God's people go out and telling people this is what is going to happen, the Lord Jesus is going to come and establish justice.

Just to conclude, it says this in verse 21, in his name the nations will put their hope. What are you putting your hope in? That quiet servant who moved around and did the work of God did something far greater than the national revival for Israel because he dealt with the wicked hearts of men.

Through his atoning death, Jesus made it possible for sins to be forgiven and for people of all nations to be reconciled to him. And I want to encourage our friends from the beach missions, you go out this week, you'll encounter people from many different nations.

In Christ, these people can put their hope. We say to them, come with us, delight in this Messiah. Delight your soul in the one that God delights in.

And one day, when the Lord comes again, we will have the joy of seeing them with us, rejoicing as we see our Lord coming to establish his kingdom, to deal with all the wickedness and unrighteousness, all the things that are wrong which burden our hearts, to put things back as they should be in a way which honors him, brings glory to God.

[43:29] Thank you, Lord, for your word tonight. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.