

# Untitled (51)

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Date: 10 January 2016

[0:00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. So I have a really important question for all of you this morning.

! Did any of you grow up playing dodgeball in school? Yeah? Yeah. Now, do any of the rest of you have the scars, whether physical or mental, to prove that that happened?

Now, growing up, I was small for my age, which made the days in gym class when we played dodgeball an absolute nightmare for me.

It was bad enough that I constantly risked getting my face smashed in by dodgeballs launched by people a foot taller than me. That was bad enough. But that honestly wasn't the worst of it.

No, the worst thing was the dreaded fear of being picked last. Ugh. When that happened, it was like being singled out for humiliation. Now, I longed for the day when I would be picked first, right?

[0:59] When the spotlights would shine on me. Epic music would be playing in the background. And that girl that I had a crush on but was afraid to talk to would see it all. Then I would valiantly lead my team on to victory.

Yeah, that never happened. Uh. But, the image of someone being singled out, or set apart, for good or evil is a powerful one, I think.

Our gospel reading for this morning kind of reaches its climax in an absolutely epic scene, where Jesus is singled out in an amazing way. It says, Now, when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven, You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased. Now, in these verses, we see nothing short of a vision, a manifestation of the Holy Trinity at work.

Jesus the Son being baptized, the Holy Spirit descending on him, the voice of the Father speaking, coming down from heaven, affirming that Jesus is his beloved Son.

[2:15] How awesome is that? So, the Father, for all to hear, for us to hear even today as we read the Scriptures, makes it clear who Jesus is.

Jesus is his beloved Son, with whom he is well pleased. Now, the words echo the beginning of our passage from Isaiah for this morning, found in chapter 42, and that's no accident.

Looking at verse 1 in Isaiah 42, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him.

He will bring forth justice to the nations. Now, see the similarity? Isaiah was given this prophecy before the coming of Jesus, but the prophecy is about the Lord.

It's what we call a messianic prophecy, a prophecy about God's coming chosen one, God's coming Savior, a prophecy, in other words, about the Lord Jesus. Now, look at the parallels between this verse and the account of the baptism of Jesus.

[3:22] In Luke, we see, You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased. In Isaiah, we see, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. Now, in Luke, look at the image of the Spirit descending on Jesus like a dove.

In Isaiah, it says, I have put my spirit upon him. See the connection? What we see happening at the baptism of Jesus is that Jesus is being identified as God's Son, God's servant, God's chosen one, the one with God's spirit upon him, the one that throughout the Old Testament, God had promised would come to save his people.

At the baptism, the Father is announcing, Here he is. Here is the one I told you I would send.

And that connection, that association between our two passages, really important. Because this prophecy in our Isaiah passage gives us such a clear picture of who Jesus is and what he came to do.

And what happens at the baptism highlights that for us. Sends us back into the pages of the Old Testament to find out if those things are so.

[4:42] Well, let's find out. Looking together at Isaiah 42, starting at the first verse. Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, and whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. The only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, with whom the Father is well pleased.

He is God's beloved Son, chosen from all eternity to save God's people. And he is the Father's delight. That is Jesus. The Spirit of the Lord is upon him. We see that in the account of his baptism, just like we see that in Isaiah 42.

He will bring forth justice to the nations, to which we say, yes, yes, he will. He will. One day through what Jesus has done, the whole earth will be filled with the righteousness of God.

Sin, death, and the devil will be conquered and vanquished. But we see in verses 2 and 3 that the one who will establish justice combines gentleness with mercy.

[5:52] Sorry, gentleness with justice. Mercy with might. It says, He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break.

And a faintly burning wick he will not quench. He will faithfully bring forth justice. The chosen one who will establish justice will do it with gentleness.

Not with screaming, but with the power of the truth. He won't break the bruised reed, won't break those who are hurting. He won't quench the burning wick, won't put out the hope of those who are struggling to hope.

No. He will reach out with tenderness and gentleness to those who are broken. He will bring hope to the hopeless.

And isn't that what Jesus does? It is. We know, of course, that the yoke of Jesus is easy and His burden is light. In the Gospels, we see again and again that Jesus is the friend of sinners, that He heals the wounded, that He shows compassion to those that others might ignore or disregard.

[7:10] And His healing touch goes out even to those that others consider too filthy to ever think about touching. He brings forth justice by mercy and by faithfulness.

Thank God. Has Jesus ever lifted you up when you were on the verge of breaking? Has He ever restored your hope and your joy when it seems that hope is lost?

He's done that for me. Has He done that for you? No. So we see that He will bring forth justice with faithfulness and mercy.

Not only that, that He will be utterly and totally successful. We see that in verse 4. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till He has established justice in the earth and the coastlands wait for His law.

In other words, we see that God's chosen will not quit until the job is done. Until the earth has been filled with righteousness.

[8:24] Until He tramples down death. Until He frees us from our sins. Until He writes His law in our hearts. And until we have eternal life and victory over the grave.

Nothing, verse 4 tells us, will stop the Lord's chosen one. As we know, not even death stopped our Lord Jesus. He is not only a merciful Savior, a faithful Savior, but He is an utterly victorious Savior. And there's no doubt in that. God, who cannot lie, who cannot fail, has said so, and so it will be. And that's what verse 5 reminds us of.

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk in it. That's the God that has said so.

We can trust Him. So what is it that God goes on to say? In verse 6, we see kind of a shift in our passage. What's going on here? God goes from talking about His servant, His chosen, to talking to Him.

[9:44] The Father here is speaking to His chosen one just as He spoke to Him at His baptism. I am the Lord. I have called you in righteousness.

I will take you by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations. Jesus was called in righteousness, was taken by the hand of the Father and obeyed the Father's will perfectly.

The Father gave Jesus as a covenant for us quite literally. The covenant in His own blood gave His body to be broken for the remission of our sins, washed us in His blood.

The new covenant is found in the broken body and in the mighty resurrection of Jesus. He is our light. The celebration of Christmas and Epiphany, we've seen that again and again.

[10:59] In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. We have seen His light, haven't we?

It frees those who are so deep in darkness that they are imprisoned by the darkness. And that's so true. Take it from someone who has been blind, from someone who has been in darkness.

Was blind but now I see. And me too. I once was lost but now am found.

The Father's chosen one, His servant, the Lord Jesus gives sight to the blind, sets the captives free, heals the broken, gives hope to the hopeless, shows mercy to sinners, and does it all in gentleness, in faithfulness and He will be totally, utterly, victorious in all things.

The only true God has said so and so it will be. Our passage ends with God's promise that these things will indeed come to pass, that God's chosen one will come and will accomplish everything that God said He will do, that God's chosen one will bring in something new which we know is nothing short of a new covenant in His blood.

[13:47] God wanted to give us a heads up there. Brothers and sisters, let's ask, do we believe what God has said about His chosen, His servant?

Remember that? We see that same theme in our passage this morning. Jesus, the Lord's chosen, is healing the broken, giving sight to the blind, setting the captives free, and giving hope to the hopeless.

That's how we do that. Brothers and sisters, we live in a world where we see a lot of hurting, wounded, broken people.

And that reality has been on my heart a lot lately. And from some of the conversations I've had recently with those in the congregation, I think it's on the hearts of many of us.

Can we do that? to show us how He might work through us in His mission to set people free from captivity and to heal the wounded?

[16:08] Because, my brothers and my sisters, we should have every confidence in His power.

Jesus, the Father's beloved Son with whom He is well pleased, has been victorious even over the grave and He will be victorious over all.

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