

Jesus, the Healer

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn, first of all, in our reading to Isaiah, Prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 42, and we're going to read the first four verses, and then in Matthew, chapter 12, reading the section where Jesus mentions these verses.

So Matthew, rather, Isaiah 42, 1-4. Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights.

I put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice. I'll 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. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth and the coastlands wait for his law.

Then in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 12, and we can read from verse 9-21. He, Jesus, went on from there and entered the synagogue.

[1 : 27] And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, Is it lawful to heal in the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him? He said to them, Which one of you has a sheep if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?

Of how much more value is a man than a sheep? So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand.

And the man stretched it out, and it was restored healthy like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him how to destroy him.

Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all, and ordered them not to make him known.

This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah. Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.

[2 : 32] I will put my spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

Bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory, and in his name the Gentiles will hope.

May God add his blessing to that reading from his holy word as we turn particularly to the section we read that, of course, Jesus referred to, that section of Isaiah 42, where that very much speaks of our Lord and Saviour who heals.

And as we see in the passage, again, three headings, three aspects of what we've read there in the prophecy, where Jesus is referred to prophetically as the servant, the servant of God, as it's referred to there as my servant.

And then not just servant of the Lord, but Saviour, Saviour of the world, come to save his people, to bring that true healing, to bring that healing that brings salvation.

[3 : 44] And then, of course, the one who does that healing, does so in strength of God the Lord. He is the one who is strong, who is all-powerful, who dispenses his justice as King, Jesus, the Healer.

And you know, as we read both these passages, I'm sure for many of you, these words spoke, spoke to your heart. Because in all your anxieties, in all your worries, in all your fears, and maybe even in all your insecurities, you know from God's Word that there is hope.

There is one hope. There is one helper. There is one who is higher than you are, than I am. There is one who truly does calm your troubled souls, troubled hearts.

One who truly does ease your perplexities. And that, of course, as the psalmist referred to, the rock, the one who is higher than we are, the rock, the Lord Jesus.

And it's the Savior here whom Isaiah refers to, a servant. And of course, not just in this prophecy, but other parts of Isaiah, Isaiah would foretell the coming of the Lord Jesus, the coming of the servant, the suffering servant, one who would come to heal, and the one who continues to heal, the one who came to rule the hearts of his people, and continues to reign in your heart, my heart.

[5 : 19] And it's really to this picture that we find here of Jesus, that we're going to turn our hearts and minds to this morning. And I pray that, again, as we absorb this Word, that the Word of God here will bring you comfort.

And to have that reassurance, as we were singing just a moment ago, the reassurance that the Lord is with you. The Lord's with you. And with you to keep you from being utterly, utterly destroyed, utterly in despair.

Because remember, you are watched over. But it's God's mercy that keeps you. God's grace that provides for you. And for that, let's give thanks and glory to God, even as we're reminded of that this morning.

So let's focus then, particularly, on these words of Isaiah, where we read of the servant of the Lord. The servant of the Lord.

You know, we live in a world that's so dominated by man-centered philosophy, man-centered thought, man-centered practice. You know, where the hero is elevated, the superman, the superwoman.

[6 : 34] You know, somebody who's made it good. Somebody who's climbed the ladder of success. The, if you want to use another word, the ubermensch, the supreme person. The survival of the fittest.

The triumph. Triumph of man and man. Now, if that sounds a bit like the stuff that you get in academic places, well, that may well be, but it certainly is not.

Because you see it all around. You see it in the media. You see it with all these influencers. That relentless drive and pressure to create the perfect man, the perfect woman, the person of success, the high achiever, the self-made man or woman, who apparently we've all got to aspire to if we're going to mean anything in this life.

But that's not the way of the Lord. It's certainly not the way of Jesus. Because Jesus came, yes, from perfection, the perfection of glory. And he came from heaven to earth to serve.

And it's the greatness of Jesus that we see here portrayed. Greatness in his meekness. Greatness in his humility. Because he came a servant to serve.

[7 : 45] He came to give. To give of himself. He came to transform lives. Your life, my life. He came to transform lives that were lost in sin.

Lost in hope. And he came to change. Change you. And change your life forever. And even for Jesus, when that meant the ultimate price.

The ultimate price of service. When he gave himself for you. And death. And death on the cross. And this is the servant whom Isaiah refers to here in these verses.

The servant who heals broken hearts. The servant who heals the lame and gives sight to the blind. The servant who rescues you from darkness and brings you into light.

But just to grasp how great Jesus is in his well, in his servant nature as the humble one. Well, this is what we see here in verse 1 of Isaiah 42.

[8 : 46] These prophetic words of Isaiah. Behold, my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom I delight. And who's speaking here? Well, this is God the Father.

This is the Father speaking of his Son. And the Father speaking of his Son equal in power and glory. Yes, Father and Son involved in your salvation.

And, you know, it's the Father saying of his Son, you're my servant. And you see that relationship that the Father has with his Son, that intense relationship.

But the Son isn't seen in any sense inferior. Yes, he's come to serve. He's come to obey his Father's will. And he's going to do that to win salvation for all for whom he's giving his life.

And for that salvation, God the Father set aside God the Son. Chose him, as we're told here, chose him. Chose him before even the world was created. And chose him to serve.

[9 : 50] To serve the Father in obedience to the Father. So that many are saved through the work that the Son gave in sacrifice of himself.

and this is the Son. This is the Son whom the Father so delighted in when Jesus was baptized.

Remember when Jesus started his public ministry, he was baptized and the Father called out, this

is my beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased.

You know, we read here in Isaiah, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. God expressing his delight in his Son even when Jesus was baptized.

the same Jesus at that baptism in whom the Holy Spirit descended on him in that baptism to indicate that power that Jesus was given to do the work that he was about to do to give himself for others.

This is the same Jesus whom Isaiah foretells here. The same Jesus who will bring in his reign of righteousness. Who will bring true justice for all to Jew and to Gentiles.

[11 : 04] It's the nations that Isaiah mentions here that Jesus speaks of as the Gentiles. This is the same Jesus who didn't draw attention to himself but was in his work giving glory to his Father as we read there in Matthew 12.

This is the servant whom Isaiah spoke of as the one who wouldn't cry out aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street. In other words, Jesus this is no arrogant man this is no arrogant man centred attention seeking guru who somehow come to win a popularity vote amongst fawning flattering followers.

Jesus is the servant of the Lord. Jesus who knows that eternal bond of fellowship relationship with his Father. Jesus who's come to do something wonderful something amazing.

He's come to bring grace. He's come to bring grace the grace of healing to troubled souls. He's come to bring the grace of salvation to soothe and to mend broken hearts.

This is none other than the savior of the world. This is the one, the Lord who heals souls. And we see that particularly emphasized in verse 3.

[12 : 28] Speaking of the one who brings salvation, healing a bruised reed, he will not break in a faintly burning whip, he will not quench, he will faithfully bring forth justice.

If you ever need encouragement from God's word today, read these words and read these words again and again and apply these words to your heart because these words are speaking of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus who speaks of his care, his compassion and his kindness. I mean these words reach to the very heart of man and speak to you and you who are in desperate need of salvation and you too who are desperately needing that act of healing, desperately need to know the joy of the Lord.

And these are words really for us this morning to take to heart and in taking them to heart to worship God, to worship him for the joy that his word gives, the promise that these words give and the affirmation that these words give us that God the father who sent his son, sent his son to heal, to restore.

Let's look at the words more closely. A bruised reed, he won't break, he won't break. What's Isaiah doing here? He's comparing the Lord's people with something that's so weak, something that's so fragile.

[13 : 57] He's comparing the Lord's weak, fragile people with something so weak and so fragile. He's comparing the Lord's people with something so common, a common sight certainly in these Middle Eastern days.

And it's the humble reed, the reeds that were so around the rivers at the time, and still today of course. And these particular reeds that Isaiah is referring to, they would have been bruised, another word maybe, crushed.

Reeds that were so easy, so fragile, so easily able to be knocked over, lying flat on the ground, just ready to be fully crushed, just got rid of as of no use, battered, battered by the weather, battered by animals, crushed by humans.

And isn't that analogy really so relevant in so many ways? I mean, again, just picture the scene, the imagery that Isaiah uses here. I mean, the reed, the humble reed, it's not got very much strength, the stock isn't very strong, it's easily bruised, it's easily crushed.

And so, so the one who follows the Lord, the one person who professes the name of Jesus, in your core and my core, we're so weak, we're so lacking in strength in and of ourselves, can be so easily, easily bruised, easily pained, easily even broken.

[15 : 29] We know that even in every aspect of our lives, even hearts that grieve over our own sins and the sins of others. But the Lord's a merciful Lord.

And Isaiah gives us this word of promise, that God will not completely break the one who's on the edge, who's at that point of breakdown. In fact, more, more the way that Isaiah writes it here, God is

going to do more than simply prevent a meltdown, a total breakdown.

The word tells us here that God's the one who'll heal, that he'll bring help, that he'll restore the bruised reed. That's why Jesus quoted from these words and quoted again even from another passage in Isaiah, when Jesus spoke of himself as the healer.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he's anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight, to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

And that truth, excuse me, that truth that the Lord, our Saviour, isn't going to break the one who's already at that hair's breadth away from being utterly broken. Well, of course, you can apply that in different ways.

[16:55] To you whose sins have almost broken you, maybe you yourself have bruised yourself in your own heart through sin upon sin, God's promise is here.

He's not going to see you broken utterly. The one whom God has shown mercy on, even the one who cries out, Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Maybe that's you. You know that you're a sinner. You know you've offended a holy God. You know that you're bruised because you've bruised yourself. You've battered yourself with your own sin. And you know that there's no healing, true healing of your heart, other than through the healing that God the Lord brings and brings through that great salvation the Lord Jesus.

Do you know that? Come to him. Come for that healing. I know that joy of being changed, restored, transformed, and forgiven. I mean, think of the miracles that Jesus performed, even as we were thinking with the children just a moment ago.

to those who were blind, Jesus gave sight. To those who were lame, Jesus gave that strength to walk. To those who were demon possessed, he removed that evil from their hearts.

[18:14] These were acts of mercy, yeah, mercy in and of themselves in their immediate condition. Jesus was restoring physically and spiritually, yes. But there's these miracles that pointed to the true, full, spiritual healing that Jesus brings.

But of course, there are those who know that spiritual healing, who've been given that new heart, and you know the mercy and grace, the saving grace of the Lord Jesus.

But then when trouble comes, particular sufferings, particular trials, and maybe setbacks, and dark and difficult providences to face, and yes, there may well be a sense of brokenness and pain and a depth of sorrow, but you know that can only be restored by the grace of the Lord.

And when that's the case, remember, remember that the bruised reed he will not crush, he will not break. He'll help. It's what David sang in Psalm 40, we'll be singing at the end of the service, I waited patiently for the Lord.

He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet on a rock, making my steps secure.

[19:31] The bruised reed, he will not break. But then Isaiah goes on, he further emphasizes really the wonder of the God of mercy, where Isaiah speaks of that faintly burning wick, the smoldering wick, he will not quench.

again, Isaiah using a well-known incident from his day, the flax, the wick of flax, the wick that was in an oil lamp, and the flax is just giving a small amount of light and it's about to burn out.

Isaiah says that wick's not going to be snuffed, it's not going to be quenched, it's going to be reset, it's going to be put back into fresh oil, it's going once more to give strong light.

Again, you can see the analogy, you can see what Isaiah is saying here, you can see what a word of encouragement it is to you and to me, to all who in so many occasions are just like that smoldering wick, maybe even on the edge, almost burnt out, hardly any light shining for the Lord.

You who are his, the Lord our saviour won't allow that your light to be completely extinguished. And you may well be burning faintly, your light may well be very dim, but God gives the increase and he calls you to come to him and to be renewed in your heart so that, well as the psalmist cried out as we were singing in Psalm 18, you Lord will keep my lamp aflame, God turns my darkness into light.

[21:18] And this is the same Lord who shows his care, his compassion and his kindness. Even to you who at this maybe even this very moment are burning very very faintly.

But Jesus has that compassion and this is the same saviour whom Isaiah refers to here as the one who will faithfully bring forth justice. Now in Isaiah's day justice was dispensed by a king.

And often justice was a very cruel and oppressive kind of justice. But the justice dispensed by King Jesus is righteous, is compassionate and is given to you who are his.

Yes, we know that we deserve God's condemnation. But you know the justice of God in bringing salvation to you who are his and his great transforming power.

God's love. So just summarising these blessings of the saviour that we find here, just think what they're telling you. They're telling of the wonderful grace of our saviour, our lord.

[22 : 27] That undeserved grace and mercy that keeps you from utterly falling. And it preserves you even when you're at that hair's breadth away from utter despair.

Because it's been said in so many occasions, I said to myself on so many occasions, the lord is too kind to be cruel. And yes, there will be these days times of dark and difficult providences.

And even at these times you may well be echoing the words of Psalm 88, verse 7, where the psalmist cried out, your wrath lies heavy on me and you overwhelm me with your waves. But even in these particular times, I pray that you'll know the loving kindness of the saviour who came to bring healing and of course, that healing, that full healing, is going to be fully given to all who are his in the glory of heaven.

For there will be and are no more tears, no more pain, for the former things will have passed away. And it's that prospect that awaits you who are his, that prospect of that eternal glory.

But it's that reality for those who have passed from earth into heaven. It's all because of the Lord, the healer, Jesus, the healer.

[23 : 50] Jesus, who in his healing touch has enabled you to enter into the glory of heaven, that place of eternal sinless perfection. These are just wonderful words that tell us of the wonder and grace of our saviour.

But Isaiah isn't finished, he's not finished yet with this wonderful description of the Lord who heals. You see that finally in verse four where we see the strength of the king, where we're told he will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth and the coastlands will wait for his law.

I mean, the wick may be dim, faintly burning, but the king has no dim presence. Why? Because he is light, he's the light. the bruised reed may well be crushed, but the king, king Jesus, won't be overwhelmed by the work that his father has given him to do.

These words that Isaiah gives us here, don't they just sum up the power of Jesus, that power to bring his true and eternal grace to you and to me who are sick in sin and in suffering.

Because when Jesus came from heaven to earth, he came with that full commitment to save all who are his. He didn't come in weakness, he came in power.

[25 : 18] He came as the light of the world to shine into the hearts of his people, to shine his love and his beauty. It's what John the disciple, John the apostle said when he spoke of Jesus and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we've seen his glory, glorious of the only son from the father.

Full of grace and truth. And when Isaiah here speaks of the servant of the Lord, when he speaks of Jesus not being discouraged, well he's actually using exactly the same words as he uses when he speaks of the bruised wick.

The word that really essentially means crushed. Now yes, when Jesus was on earth, yes he was in that sense, bruised, crushed for iniquities.

But that crushing was only for a moment. That crushing was under the hand of the father. And Jesus fully accepted the will of his father that he must accomplish.

Jesus' will was never crushed. And when you hear his victory cry, you know, when he's bearing the sin of the world and he cries out, it's accomplished, it has not been crushed.

[26 : 29] But he says it's finished. And he commits his spirit into his father's hands. Jesus was a willing sacrifice. He gave of himself to establish justice.

That justice of God and rescuing sinners for himself. And the whole earth will know that justice, the justice that saves, the justice that brings undeserved compassion and care.

And so as we really come to the close of our thoughts then on the Lord who heals, I pray that you, each one of you, will know that healing.

And that you'll know the healing of the Lord Jesus. And if you know that healing, that you'll seek to bring healing to others. That your words will be words that are seasoned with grace.

And that your actions will be actions that reflect the Lord Jesus. And that you'll seek to raise others up rather than tear them down. And if you have been or even are these bruised reeds and smouldering wicks, and you've known the healing touch of the Saviour, I pray that you'll bring to other bruised reeds and smouldering wicks, that you'll bring the comfort of the Saviour, that you'll reach out in care, compassion and kindness, and you'll do it in the name of Jesus.

[27 : 52] And you'll do it not for any praise of self, but you'll do it in love for him who first loved you and gave himself for you.

Amen. And let us pray. Lord, we're reminded of your great love and grace, your mercy, that you will not break the bruised reed, that you will not crush the smouldering wick.

Lord, forgive us for the many times when we have not been as Christ and seeking to heal, when we have sought our own glory rather than the glory of you. But help us, Lord, to be those who shine, shine for you in this dark world.

With any, Lord, even here this morning who are bruised, reeds and smouldering wicks, Lord, have mercy upon them and give healing.

Healing, we pray in the name of Jesus, we ask. Amen.