## Jesus, the Servant of God: Part 1

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Date: 04 July 2021

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[0:00] Isaiah 42, the passion and work of Jesus. So this is Jesus, the servant of God. What I would like to do in one way or another over the several meetings I'm taking over the summer, is just explore some of the things that Isaiah says about our Lord Jesus Christ.

And especially in the second part of Isaiah, when he speaks of him as the servant of God. But here tonight we're in Isaiah 42.

The points, the main points, the commission of the servant, the mission of the servant, the character of the servant, the success of the servant and the assurance of the servant.

Jesus, the servant of God. Isn't it true? Jesus is the most important passion and his is the most important work ever.

His passion and work were planned before creation, promised for millennia. The work was completed in stages, marked by the unexpected.

[1:19] And yet, never is there an anticlimax with the passion and work of Jesus. He is always more than we thought. The prophets, like Isaiah, they spoke to a world messed up by sin.

A world in which there was the rejection of God and of Yahu. They spoke to a world that was experiencing divine judgment in history and in time.

And yet, they were also conveying the promise that God's final work will not be one of judgment, but of salvation for his people.

That's true in so many of the prophets. It's true in Jeremiah. We often think of him as the weeping prophet. But he also spoke gloriously of salvation and the new covenant.

And it's also true, as we shall be seeing, in Isaiah. Probably more than any other book in the Old Testament. Isaiah sets forth the passion and work of Jesus.

But he sets forth that work. Once sin, disillusionment, repeated failure have been writ large over humanity in general, Israel in particular.

It's in that context where sin has been shaping everybody and bringing them down. They've rejected God. They're disillusioned.

Everything's wrong. That's the kind of world that Isaiah was speaking to you. And that's where he presents this beautiful message of Jesus, the servant of God.

We're going to be looking at these passages at one point or another over the next number of months whenever I'm preaching. Isaiah 42, 1 to 7.

Isaiah 49, 1 to 12. Isaiah 50, 4 to 9. Isaiah 52, 13 to 53, 12.

[3:33] And then finally, perhaps Isaiah 61, 1 to 4. So tonight we want to look at these passages.

This first of these passages. And you might wonder, well, why? Why are we exploring the ministry of Jesus in Isaiah when you think it might be so much more profitable to do it in the New Testament?

Well, the amazing thing is sometimes the Old Testament is clearer about what the coming Jesus was going to do.

What his passion and his work would entail. Clearer than even the New Testament, which records its fulfillment. God never intended you to close the Old Testament once Jesus came.

He intended you to go back and say, oh, this is what happened when Jesus came. So these passages are so worthwhile exploring.

[4:39] Let's look at just some things. We will not be able to look at everything in these passages at all. First of all, here the commission of the servant. Behold, behold, behold, my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit upon him. So here's God and he's drawing attention to the servant. He could have said to the people, look now at what sin has done in your nation.

Look at what sin has done in the world. Look at how things are so messed up. And left it there. And God would have been quiet in his rights to do that. But he doesn't. He says, look at my servant.

Take your gaze off these things for a moment and just look at my servant. Everything else is dark and hopeless. And that can be true in our day as well. Everything, everything can look so dark and hopeless.

You wake up in the morning, you hope things are better and you find that they're not. And it's in that situation that you have to listen to God when he says, behold, my servant.

[5:52] Look at Jesus. Listen to Jesus. See, he's my servant, says God. In other words, he's totally committed to God.

And God is totally committed to him. Totally committed to him. He's somebody who was chosen by God. We're told that.

Behold, my servant. To my uphold, my chosen one. It's not that Jesus chose himself to be the servant. It's God who chose him to be the servant.

We know that this refers to the second person of the Trinity. The son of God, who in all eternity has been chosen by the father to become the servant.

Once he takes on human nature as a son of Mary. He's chosen by God. And he's also somebody who's upheld by God.

[6:54] Behold, my servant, whom I uphold. See, this is the great thing about God. He doesn't just call somebody, having chosen them, and then leave them to it.

No. See, this is where God's commitment comes in. When God calls, when God chooses, he upholds people.

He keeps them up. It's a bit like when Moses was there at the battle. And Aaron and Har holding his arms up.

The same hair. And that's what God is doing for this servant. He's upholding him. And then he says, in whom my soul delights.

Isn't it great to know that God delights in this servant? God delights in Jesus. Now, because we saw that in the baptism, didn't we?

[7:51] The baptism of Jesus in the New Testament. This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased, with whom I am delighted. He is so satisfied with this servant.

He can find no blemish in him at all. And isn't it great that if you're a Christian, you're accepted in Christ. God is equally committed to you, chosen you, upholds you, and finds you delightful.

He's satisfied with you. He accepts you unconditionally in Christ. I mean, that's beautiful by any standard.

See, all human beings were meant to be servants. All Christians are meant to be servants. All office bearers, elders, and deacons are especially meant to be servants.

But this person, he's a unique servant. He's the only servant in whom I can be accepted by God.

[9:05] That's enough for me. And notice what else he says here. I have put my spirit on him. We said that God upholds this servant.

He's not just going to leave him to it. He's got a great work to do, a great function to fulfill. Something that will require incredible effort. And something that he will have to, once he starts doing it, he'll have to do it everlastingly, without end, for all eternity.

How could he possibly do that as a human being? Well, God says, I will put, I have put my spirit upon him.

This is where my commitment extends to. I will actually uphold him by the power of my spirit. I will uphold him by the power of my spirit.

Then he'll be able to carry out the functions that I want him to carry out. He'll be able to proclaim and speak. He'll be able to save and rescue.

[10:15] He'll be able to defeat all the enemies. Why? Is it because of some innate strength that he gets from being the son of David, the son of Mary? No.

I have put my spirit upon him. Remember Jesus. As we said a moment ago on the day he was baptized, the spirit of God came so willingly down upon him.

Once Jesus identified himself with the people in the waters of baptism. They were so concerned about their sins and Jesus meets them. His public ministry begins in the waters of baptism.

As soon as he identifies himself with them publicly, the spirit of God comes down from an open heaven. And do you know what?

He came down to equip Jesus and he's never left him since. And he never will leave him. He will never be without the spirit.

[11:17] He will always be the anointed one. The commission of the servant. Secondly, the mission of the servant.

What is the servant going to do? Who's been chosen by God, upheld by God and whom God finds so delightful.

He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will bring forth justice to the nations. Literally, he will bring judgment to the nations.

It's another word that can be used for justice. But this is the standard word, actually, for judgment. Not judgment in the sense of one act of condemnation or of approval.

But this is actually judgment in the sense of ruling. So the book of Judges talks about people exercising judgment.

[12:19] In other words, they are extending the rule of God. They're bringing the governance of God. And here, what is this servant going to do?

He's going to bring the whole world under the government of God. He's going to bring the whole world under the judgment of God.

He's going to rule over it. And that really is quite, quite precious. See, part of the problem with that in the day of Isaiah and long before and long since, is that people do not wish to live under the government of God.

They don't want him to be judged over them. They don't want his law, his will. They don't want his commandments. What does God do in that situation?

He raises up a servant. And this servant will restore the whole world so it will be governed by God, taking account of his will.

[13:29] Now, that's quite a mission. That's quite a mission. I'm heading to the age of retirement now. So we'll be retiring next year.

And Liz and I are praying, what will the Lord want us to do in this next phase of our lives? What would he want us to do? Imagine if he said to us, I want you to bring the whole world in all stages of time under the governance of my word and my commands and my will.

We couldn't do it. But we can serve under the one to whom that function has been given. See, the great thing about this servant, how would you begin this task?

I mean, how could you begin to bring the world, the nations under the judgment of God? Well, see, the great thing is, he does it by working in individuals, as well as by working in nations, as well as by working through the church, as well as by working through governments.

God works in the most wonderful of ways, but especially he works by changing people from the inside out. That's what he does. He brings people from the inside out to acknowledge God and say, I want God to be my judge, my ruler.

[15:07] I want that in Christ. See, the world in which we're living in, isn't it awful? I mean, when you think of the relationship between human beings and God, what would you say?

Are they really under the governance of God? Do they honour him? No. The vast, vast majority dishonour him.

The vast majority are ungrateful for all the gifts that he gives to them. The vast majority are unfaithful in ever so many ways, in every sphere of life, within the family, within the workplace, in governments.

And idolatry. I mean, how many people, out of the number of humanity, even today, far less the whole of time, how many today have put something in place of God?

That's idolatry. I mean, so many people, even in the midst of all this Eurofootball, I mean, how many people find their heart filled with these things, to the exclusion of God?

[16:28] And of course, that's just the relationship with God. But then the relationship between human beings, do they take account of God's commandments, the Ten Commandments?

These commandments were intended to shape the life of communities. And do they? Do they really?

I mean, in many ways, the first four commandments are just pretty much ignored. They are the first to be ignored, culminating in many ways in the Sabbath day.

You give up the Sabbath because you've already given up God. And then every relationship with father and mother, the dishonor that takes place within the home there, the hypocrisy, the theft, the partiality, the greed, the self-centeredness.

I mean, really, how can someone be given the task of restoring such a world so that it will be under the governance of God, under the judgment of God, not just in one locality, not even one nation, but in all the nations.

[17:46] I mean, that's, that is some task. That is some task, but that's what Jesus is committed to doing.

Don't you minimize Jesus. Don't you bring him down. Don't you lessen the scope of his work. He's got an amazing job to do. You know, you sometimes worry about putting people into post because they, they will not have the shoulders to carry out the function assigned to them.

See, when Jesus rose from the dead, he was rising, committed to ruling over the universe for God. Absolutely.

Absolutely. He's there on the throne of the universe tonight. And he's bringing justice. He's bringing judgment. He's bringing individuals to acknowledge God.

In their relationship with him. And their relationship with one another. He's bringing people to love God. And to love their neighbor as themselves.

[18:57] Wasn't it great? A few weeks ago to hear Kate Forbes, in that famous interview with Nick Robertson, been quite open about it. I'm saved by Jesus.

I love God. I love my neighbor. And I'm doing it because I'm a Christian. Quite open. And surprisingly, at this stage, at least, the media were supportive.

On the whole. But she's just one of those people who have been touched by the mission of the servant. I mean, isn't that what you want?

Do any of you have unconverted loved ones, unconverted neighbors? Isn't this what you want? For them to be brought under the judgment of God. Justice come to them.

They will acknowledge God morning, noon and night. Read his word. Listen to all that he says. As families. As schools.

[19:57] All our lives lived to his glory. See, this passage doesn't tell us anything about precisely how Jesus is going to do this.

All we're told is, this is his mission. As the servant. So the commission of the servant. The mission of the servant. Then the character of the servant.

Isn't it strange? You know, when somebody is appointed to such an important task, the world would expect a certain type of fanfare. Certain type of celebrity introduction.

Somebody like this comes onto the stage of the world. Really, you would have all the news broadcasters there gathered around. Everybody would be including them.

Him on the Twitter feed or whatever it is. They'd all be there. And that's not the way it is with Jesus. When he entered the world's history.

[21:01] Initially. Nobody knew. Then a few shepherds knew. And then a few more knew.

But even when he died on the cross. He was largely unknown. He didn't come with pomp. And ceremony. He came with.

I'm not sure if that's the right word. But he came with modesty. And there's something beautiful about that modesty. There's also something strangely powerful.

About that modesty of Jesus. It also makes him approachable. You know the kind of person that's built up by the great fanfare.

You would feel very uncomfortable in approaching them. But Jesus, he does not cry aloud or lift up his voice. He's the kind of person. You don't feel you have to interrupt him.

[ 22:09 ] As you come to him. He's so approachable. He's so approachable. I mean, isn't that what you find as Christians? And if you're not a Christian tonight. Try this.

Go and speak to him. He's so approachable. He will always be ready to hear you. You don't have to interrupt. In any way. Maybe that's what he does not cry aloud.

Or lift up his voice and make it heard in the street. Maybe that's what that means. Or it could also mean in addition. He never cries out in frustration.

Or in exasperation. As if he's in danger of losing control. No. No. He's so calm. He is so patient.

Despite the task. And you know what it's like when you've been given a great task. You think. How will I be able to cope? Well, there's a calmness about Jesus.

[23:12] Oh, he knows what it's like. And there were stages when he was weeping. And he was sweating. In the Garden of Gethsemane. When a particularly difficult event was to take place.

His own death. His own experience of the torments of hell. Yes. But even there it was also measured.

He quotes scripture. It wasn't just crying out at all. Lifting up his voice. In exasperation of frustration.

With all the problem people that he will be dealing with. Down through the ages. Even with the demonic forces that confront him. He will not cry out.

Or lift up his voice. Or make it heard in the street. Patience. Humility. Steadfast. Even when things are difficult.

[24:15] More than that. A bruised reed he will not break. And a faintly burning wick. He will not quench. He will care.

This servant. This ruler. He will care like no other. See there are some people. And they're very good at looking after those in power.

Because that will enrich their own power status. And they're quite happy to pass by the weak. The broken. The abused.

The worthless. But Jesus. This servant. He doesn't. Break these people. They may be bruised. And they're so fragile.

Just ready to be broken. And what does he do? What I said about him here. He won't break those people. He won't break those people.

[25:15] Who are so fragile. There's barely anything there. They've been abused. They're worthless. They're broken. They're weak. They've messed up.

Big time. And there's scarcely anything. But he won't break them. He's so compassionate. It's like the burning wick.

Growing up in Lewis. Before we had electricity in the homes. We used to have the tilly lamps. And the tilly lamp would be. It had its wick. And then you would light it. And it would burn. But then as it went down.

As it nearly burnt out. There'd be hardly anything there. It's just ready to be extinguished. And God's saying. There are people in that kind of situation.

The light's almost out. They're just totally at the end of themselves. And what does he do? He cares.

[ 26:19 ] He has compassion. He reaches out to such people. I think that's partly. And John Calvin I noticed. Took it this way.

When Jesus was baptized. And the Holy Spirit came upon him. To empower him. This was the Holy Spirit empowering him. To have no pomp or ceremony.

To be calm and patient. Caring and compassionate. What was the picture of the Spirit coming upon him? Like a dove. Like a dove.

This is Jesus. This is gentleness. This is Jesus. And what's also said about him in verse 4. He will himself.

He won't grow faint or be discouraged. In Hebrew actually. It's the same two verbs. It's the same two verbs. He won't fall apart like a reed.

[27:19] He won't die out like a wick. It's not that he won't be in a similar situation. And this is the thing about Jesus. He will suffer.

He will be able to minister to those who are suffering. So when he's reaching out to people who have barely anything at all. He knows what it's like to be at that point himself.

For all the power of the Spirit of God. He will know what it's like to have been in such situations. He will be able to sympathize with you and all that you're going through.

Because he knows what it's like to be there like a reed ready to splinter. But he won't grow faint.

Like a reed ready to be extinguished. But he won't be discouraged. He'll keep going. So this is not the picture of somebody who just has immense spiritual strength.

[28:24] Everything goes swimmingly for him every day. No. No. Look at the public ministry of Jesus.

Read the four Gospels. And you know that is not so. You know that is not so. But he keeps going.

He will not faint. He will not be discouraged. A faintly burning week he will not quench in others. But he himself will not grow faint. He won't be discouraged. He'll keep on going.

He'll keep on going. There's nothing going to stop the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing. He will keep going. He will manfully rule.

For God his Father. Tonight. Tomorrow. Next week. Next year. Next century. For millennia.

[29:27] For eternity. He will not faint. He will not be discouraged. The character of the servant. Then the success of the servant.

The success of the servant. Notice what is said here. The end of verse three. He will faithfully bring forth justice. In verse four.

He will not grow faint or be discouraged. Till he has established justice. Or judgment. Same word. Till he has established God's judgment in the earth. And the coastlands.

Wait for his law. He won't give up. Till the task is complete. Now.

We've got to be careful here. Will Jesus always be caring and compassionate, calm and patient. Irrespective of what people do. The answer is no.

[30:24] If people are rebellious and hardened. Then this Lord Jesus. As we know from Psalm 2. Has a rod of iron. And he will break them. Of course he will.

He will bring God's judgment. God's rule. But for those. Who want to look to God. And feel utterly ashamed. These are the kind of people.

That he will reach out to. With this amazing. Amazing character of his. And these are the people. Who will experience. This positive side of his judgment.

He won't pass over evil. No. But there will be a group of people. And what will they do? They will wait.

For his law. Isn't that amazing? There are going to be people. Not only in Israel. But throughout the nations.

[31:24] And the coastlands. And the islands of our world. And because of this servant. Because of the things he will do. They will wait.

For his instruction. They will wait. For his Torah. They will wait. For his command. For his proclamation. Of God's will. And of course.

That's exactly what has happened. I mean. Here you are tonight. What are you doing. On this Zoom session. You're waiting. For the word of God.

Preached by a servant. Of Jesus Christ. You read the Bible. You read the Gospels. You read the Old and New Testament. What? You're waiting. For the law of God.

It governs your life. What do you do. When things are difficult. In this life. And you go through times of suffering. What do you do? You go to his instruction.

[32:21] To his Bible. To his law. You wait upon it. You wait on it. You don't run ahead. You've learned.

To wait. On his law. To expect. There may have been a time. When you didn't care about God's commands. And there may be somebody here tonight.

That's not a Christian. There may be some of you young folks here tonight. You're not Christians. And you may have your own world views. And God's commands don't fit in very well.

Listen. Why don't you come under. God's judgment. God's rule. Through Jesus Christ. And then you also.

Can profess your faith. In him. This is your way of saying. I wait. For God. I wait on his law.

[33:21] I want to live my life. To his glory. Dispensing with the idols. Giving your life over to God.

You've heard the voice of the shepherd. You become one of his sheep. And your ear is open. To the shepherd's voice. And you're saying. Yes. I want it.

And I want it every day. I want the voice of the shepherd. This is. This is it. You have been brought by the servant. Under the government of God.

That's his ministry. And that is also the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. I am a servant of Jesus Christ. I want to go out in Jesus's name.

To extend the rule of God. The kingdom of God. And that's the same for every Christian. And it will be successful. It will be successful.

[34:23] This is not a mission that will fail. It will not fail. One day. You will not be able to count. Just how many people. Are under God's rule. You won't be able to count.

More. A multitude greater than man can number. It's not going to be a few. Not going to be a few hundreds. It's not going to be a few thousand or a few million.

Yes. It's big. It's going to be a whole race. Of people. Who will be brought back. To God. All of them. Under the work of this servant.

Oh how much we owe. To the servant. He will have success. He will see. Of the travel of his soul. As I say in 53.

And he will be satisfied. Yes. He endured the cross. For the joy set before him. He knew. He knew.

[35:21] That there will be a people. Brought back to God. Through his ministry. The success. Of the servant. So we looked at the commission of the servant.

The mission of the servant. The character of the servant. The success of the servant. And then briefly. The assurance. Of the servant. This is what you find in verse 6.

This is what the creator God. Says. To the servant. He speaks to him now. In verses 1 to 4. He was speaking about him. Now he's addressing him.

Wouldn't you like to hear. What God the father said. To God the son. About his ministry. Once he becomes. God's son. In the flesh. 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. To open the eyes.

[ 36:20 ] That are blind. To bring out. The prisoners. From the dungeon. From the prison. Those who sit. In darkness. Some of these themes.

We will see. In some of the other. Servant songs. But notice this. The Lord. The creator. Is the one. Who's at work. Restoring his universe.

And he calls. The servant. I have called you. In righteousness. I have called you. In righteousness.

What I am doing. In and through you. Is right. And it accords. With my standards. In righteousness.

And it will take place. In the right place. And it will happen. At the right time. And it will all be. For the right. Glorious purpose.

[ 37:14] I have called you. In righteousness. Don't ever fear. That what I have called you. To do. Will somehow work against me. I have called you.

In righteousness. Sometimes you think. Surely God. Couldn't save. This person. Or that person. Such rascals. Such evil people.

Surely God. Couldn't save them. Through Christ. No God said. I have called you. In righteousness. I will take you. By the hand.

And keep you. Guided by God. Kept by God. See. He doesn't just. Tell us. That he will equip.

His servant. With the spirit. He. He tells his servant himself. It's as if there's this conversation. Between God the father. And God the son.

[38:12] And God says to him. I'll take you. By the hand. And I will keep you. Now. When we do that.

With our own children. When we ever. Have the opportunity. To take them. By the hand. And keep them. It's because we knew. They needed it.

I remember. In stormy. Lewis. In midwinter. Going to school. And during the day.

An awful storm. Broke out. And I was wondering. How would we be able. To walk home. There were no school buses. In those days. And the north of Lewis. Can be frightening.

In the winter. And I came out. Of the school gates. And there was my father. And. A sister and I. Took hold. Of his hand.

[39:09] One in each hand. And bent over. And plowed. Into the wind. All the way home. He took hold. Of us. By the hand. And kept us.

Why? Because we needed it. Why does God. The father. Say this. To God. The son. Why does God. The Lord. Say this. To his servant.

Because he needs. To hear it. He needs. To hear it. Jesus. Needed. What happened. On the mountain. Of transfiguration.

God's heavenly hug. Before he went. To the darkness. Of the cross. He needed it. I'll take you. By the hand. And I'll keep you.

You know. That Jesus. Still needs. God the father. That's why. He's at his right hand. He's not at a distance. From him. Jesus.

[40:07] Hasn't grown out. Of his need. For God. The father. Nor at all. I will give you. As a covenant. For the people. A light. For the nations. He's going to bring.

God's commitment. To a people. He's going to bring. His commitment. To all the nations. Nations.

Of the world. Through the servant. Somehow. Which he doesn't explain here. He's going to be a covenant. To them. It's not only that he's going to.

Rescue them. It's not only that he's going to. Save them. But he's going to do it. In some way. That is so personal. To him.

Something about this servant himself. He is going to be a covenant. He's not just going to make a covenant. It's not like Moses.

[41:09] He's going to be the covenant. He's not just going to bring light. To the nations. He's going to be. Light.

To the nations. And whatever that means. And we'll explore it later. It must mean this. That you can never. Have God.

Without Jesus. You can never have God. Without the servant. It's not as if. Jesus brings you. Into a relationship with God.

And then he can step aside. No. No. He's the covenant. He's the light. He's the one. In whom you. Came out of the prison.

He's the one. Through whom you. Came out of the dungeon. You were once in darkness. You're now in light. You were once in captivity. Now you're free. But you always need him.

[42:10] To be free. To be in the light. To have a relationship with God. This is eternal life. That they might know you. The only true and living.

God. And. Jesus Christ. To me has sent. It's not you. Is this a story.

If you were writing. Your biography. Would you say. You came. Under God's judgment. You came. Under his governance. You came. And was accepted.

By Jesus Christ. Brought into a relationship. With God. Darkness behind you. You're living in the light. And even though things are very difficult.

You're still in the light. You still know where to go. You and I might be crying out. Over all sorts of things. But we know.

[43:09] We know where to cry. You. And that's. That's the way it is. So. Behold. My servant. I do hope.

That you will. Take a look at Jesus. As Christians. Boy. Just take on board. The beauty of what's said here. And if you're not a Christian.

Boy. What are you waiting for? Isn't this. A marvelous. Salvation. You want to go and live your own life. Disrespecting. Dishonoring God.

Not living under his judgment. Or his rule. There are consequences. For you doing that. You can only do that. For a relatively short time. And then the consequences.

Start falling. Oh. Much better. To have a life. Freely lived. In service to God. Where you see

[44:07] He is my king. He is my Lord. There's no reason. For you to. To hold back. Don't say you're too young. Young girl.

Young boy. Don't say you're too old. You just come. Okay. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

You told us to look at your servant. And we have looked. And we have seen. And. Ah. We love. We love. Him. And we love.

What you are doing. Through him. It makes such sense. Lord. Of our own testimony. And it makes such sense. Of what's happening. Throughout the world.

That you've planted churches. In all the nations. What a wonderful. Work. Our Lord Jesus is doing. From the throne. Of the universe.

[45:03] Lord. Lord. Oh Lord Jesus. The servant of God. Oh indeed. Work mightily. Work through us. By your spirit.

Whom you poured out. Upon the church. And we pray. That you would bring glory. To. To God. That every knee. Will one day. Not only bow to you.

But that you will hand the kingdom. Over to the Father. Lord. Help us. We pray. As we are part way. On the journey. Just now.

And we are apt ourselves. To lose sight of things. Please Lord. Lead us. To the rock. That is far higher than I. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.