

# The Servant Who Never Forgets

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's now read the Word of God from Isaiah chapter 49 and we'll read there verses 1 to 13. Isaiah 49 verses 1 to 13.

Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb. This is really talking about Jesus Christ.

The Lord called me from the womb. From the body of my mother he named my name. He made my mouth like a sharp sword. In the shadow of his hand he hid me.

He made me a polished arrow. In his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me, You are my servant Israel in whom I will be glorified.

But I said, I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for doing for nothing and vanity. Yet surely my right is with the Lord and my recompense with my God.

[ 1 : 06 ] And now the Lord says, He who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him.

For I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength. He says, It's too light a thing that you should be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the preserved of Israel.

I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers.

Kings shall see and arouse, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you.

Thus says the Lord, In a time of favor I have answered you. In a day of salvation I have helped you. I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners, Come out, and to those who are in darkness, Appear.

[ 2 : 30 ] They shall feed along the ways. On all bare heights shall be their pasture. They shall not hunger or thirst. Neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them.

For he who has pity on them will lead them, and by my springs of water will guide them. And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up.

Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of seeing. Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth.

Break forth, O mountains, into singing, for the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted. Amen.

And may the Lord bless to us that reading of his own holy, inspired word. We started this mini-series a couple of weeks ago, just to give myself some discipline, as I was preparing, reading through the book of Isaiah, and really coming to enjoy just the way in which Isaiah was used by God to prepare the world, as it were, for his servant to come, and to prepare the servant himself for coming into the world.

- [ 4 : 03 ] So a couple of weeks ago, I looked at Isaiah 42, 1 to 7, on a Sabbath evening. And then last Wednesday, we looked at Isaiah 49, verses 1 to 4.
- And then today, we're looking at 49, 5 to 6, in the morning, and in the evening, 49, 7 to 12.
- Today, the servant who never forgets. The servant who never forgets. That's the great thing that we've already said in the children's address.
- And when God spoke to the servant in these verses, he's basically saying to him, you can now serve me. You can now bring my people back to me.
- You can now save the whole world. And Jesus, of course, you will never forget. The servant who never forgets.
- [ 5 : 03 ] Interesting here in verse 5. Now the Lord says, this is the servant remembering what the Lord said to him. He never forgot what his father said, the Lord said to him.
- The Lord says, He who formed me from the womb to be a servant, to bring Jacob back to him, that Israel might be gathered to him. For I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength.
- He says, God says, It is too light a thing you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, to bring back the preserved of Israel.
- I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. This is what God said to him.
- See, this is the most amazing thing. It's God who is the busiest person in this whole universe. God is the one who is at work. He is the one who is at work in his servant, Jesus, and he's the one who's at work in the servants of the servant, Jesus, i.e. Christians.
- [ 6 : 15 ] God is so always at work, 24-7, every day of the year. He works even when we sleep. And God is the one that spoke to his servant here.
- Before he ever came into the world, he spoke to his own son, who would one day be born from his mother, Mary, and be called Jesus. This is what God said to him.
- And he never, ever forgot what God said. This is an amazing speech that we began looking at from verse 49, 1 to 4.
- He says, The Lord called me from the womb. And then he says, He made my mouth. He was going to have a preaching ministry. He made my mouth like a sharp sword for close encounters.
- He made me a polished arrow for this kind of ministry from a distance. In his quiver he hid me. And then he told them what this mission was going to be.
- [ 7 : 16 ] Through you I will glorify my name. What a great privilege. What a wonderful purpose to be used to expose and explain and reveal the glory of God.
- And you know that you've met Jesus Christ when you see the glory of God. That's what it means to become a Christian. You begin to see the glory of God.
- So if you're ever wondering, has God changed me? It's not so much that you see change in yourself. That's not always the case. You may sometimes feel as if you're battling against this sin and that sin.
- But what do you think of God? Has God taken on huge proportions in your life? If you've become a Christian and the servant has glorified God in your heart, then you begin to see God like never before in a way that you can't forget.
- He leaves an impression on you like a stone being dropped on the sand leaves a mark. The glory of God and all its weight leaves its mark on you and you never, ever forget it.

[ 8 : 31 ] That's one of the wonderful signs of being a Christian. Well, that's what Jesus is about. He wants to reveal the glory of God to people.

Is it going to be easy? No, he says. I said, I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing in vanity. It's as if he's been working so hard, putting in so much effort, preaching so much, preaching through the church so much.

And yet what happens? People are not responsive. People are rejecting him. They're turning away and he feels frustrated. Did you ever think that Jesus felt frustrated on earth?

Disappointed? Remember when he was coming down the hill and he looked on Jerusalem, the Jerusalem, the capital city where the temple of God was. And what does he do?

He weeps over that group of people and he says, do you know what? How often I wanted to gather you like a hen gathers her chickens under her wing.

[ 9 : 39 ] But you would not, he says. You would not. He felt he had labored in vain. But he never stops there.

Yet surely my right is with the Lord and my recompense with my God. It's the same for us. We may feel as if we're getting nowhere. We may feel as if every bit of effort just comes to nothing.

We feel as if we're just doing it all, sharing the gospel, talking to others about Christ, living the Christian life, and nothing really seems to come.

And yet in that situation, I'm sure just as it was with Christ, you turn to the Lord and say, well, that's all true, but my right is with the Lord.

He's the judge. He's the one who is able to see what's going on and my reward, my recompense is with my God. I'll trust him even though I don't see anything happening at the moment.

[ 10 : 48 ] That's what we'll explore on Wednesday evening in brief. In this section here, I feel as if the Lord is saying to the servant, you can now serve me.

Notice what he says. Now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant. See, he was prepared by God to be the servant.

So there's God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Before the world was ever made, they were there. They weren't lonely. One God, but three persons.

No aloneness at all. But God the Son couldn't become the servant in eternity. He had to be born from his mother Mary through the virgin birth in this world.

That's what we read. Now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant. There were things that God the Son could not do in service of God his Father until he was born as a human being into this world.

[ 12 : 05 ] And that's what happened. When he was born into this world, when he was born in the line of David, when he was born from his mother Mary, he became the servant.

He became the servant. God is the one that put that seed within the mother Mary, created the body, formed the body.

The Lord formed me in the womb of Mary. Isn't it amazing? It's God who's been doing all of this. It's God who actually created that body.

It's one of the greatest mysteries in the world, to my mind anyway, the incarnation. Some ways even greater than the Trinity. How can there be three persons, one God?

Don't understand it. I believe it. But how can God be divine and human? How can God the Son come into the womb of his mother Mary and then have a body created for him by God the Father?

[ 13 : 20 ] I don't understand how it all happens. I don't understand how this passion that results is one passion. But he's truly God, the Son, but also truly the servant who's the Son of Mary. But that body that he was born with, which we often celebrate at Christmas time, that body would not be there were it not for God.

Jesus did not make his own body. God the Lord, his Father, prepared that body for him.

And the way in which he formed that body, he intended it to be used for service. Okay? He didn't give him the kind of body in which he would just go into life, go through everything beautifully and easily and effortlessly.

He gave him the kind of body in which he would suffer, the kind of body in which things would be felt by him, the kind of body where tears would flow from his eyes, where his hands would be scratched, where his temple would have thorns pushed into it.

[ 14 : 42 ] He gave him the kind of body that would feel pain. He gave him the kind of body that would express emotions. And he gave him all of this so that he could serve God.

You see, the kind of body that God the Father gave to God the Son, the servant, is not like the kind of body that God gave to Adam in the Garden of Eden before sin came.

It's the kind of body that would feel the pain and all the suffering. You can now serve me.

There were things that Jesus could not do, that the servant could not do. No matter how willing God the Son was, there were things he couldn't do until he came from the womb of Mary, his mother.

He couldn't do it until then. And now that he's human, he will never stop being human. He will never stop being human.

[ 15 : 53 ] Even on the throne of the universe today, he is still with the same body that experienced this pain, but now resurrected. Never to feel the pain again.

You can now serve me. But why? What's the service? Well, he says here, you can now bring my people back to me.

The Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be a servant, to bring Jacob back to him, that Israel might be gathered to him. See, the world at that time was divided in two.

The first part is made up of the people of Israel, also called the people of Jacob. Jacob was his original name, and then he was renamed Israel, and then the twelve tribes came from them, and there was this one group of people, Jacob, stroke, Israel.

And then there was the rest of the world, all the other nations. So they're in one block, a massive amount of people. They're in one block, and then there's this much smaller group, Jacob, Israel, the people of Israel.

[ 17 : 13 ] So what does God say to the servant? I am giving you a body, I am forming you in the womb to do me a great work of service, and that is that you will bring Jacob back to me so that Israel will be gathered to him.

See, that's the thing. God wanted the Israelites to be brought back to him. The assumption is that they were one time around him, they were gathered around him, they were obedient.

So at the moment I'm reading the book of Joshua in my own private readings. And there's Joshua and the people of Israel, they're in the land of Canaan, and they're worshipping the Lord, they're loving the Lord, they're obedient to the Lord, they're serving the Lord.

Choose you this day whom you will serve, said Joshua, shortly before he died. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people said, we will choose the Lord, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua challenged them, do you really mean that? He's a holy God, a jealous God, we will serve him. And do you know what they did? They did for the length of the life of Joshua, and then for the length of the life of the elders that survived Joshua.

[ 18 : 38 ] But little by little they drifted away. And the God sent his prophets to preach to those people who were drifting away. And they didn't listen.

And they ended up in exile in judgment. Well, God says, I want my people Israel to be brought back to me.

Not just physically, in Jerusalem. I want them to be brought back to me spiritually, personally. I want them to have a relationship with me.

I want to bring them home to me. I want them to have a God-centered life, where they love me with all their heart and soul and mind and strength.

I want them near me. Isn't that amazing that there is a God in the universe, and he actually wants a people to be associated with him.

[ 19 : 40 ] Even though he knows how much they have sinned, he says, I want them back. I want them restored to me. I want them around me. Yes, they failed me. You can think of people who have failed you and hurt you and so on.

Do you want them back in your circle? Do you want them back in your life? Of course you do, because you love these people, and that's what God does with the people of Israel.

He wants them back. That's why Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. These were all Israelites, and he wept over them because he loved them and he wanted them back.

How often would I have gathered you like the mother hen? Of course I would. I want you back. He wants them back. He wants them to be raised up, as he says in verse 6, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, to bring back the preserved of Israel.

I know, he says, that not all the Israelites will come, but I want the preserved to come. I want my people among these Jews to be brought back.

[ 20 : 52 ] And do you know this? The servant on the throne of the universe tonight, today, wants these Israelites gathered back to him.

He wants the Jews to be restored to him. He wants them to come to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And how it must pain him to see the Jews as a people, still distant from the Lord, waiting for a supposed Messiah, not believing that the servant has come to bring him back, to bring them back to him.

But he wants it. he wants it. And in my understanding of things, one day they will come back. One day the people of Israel as a nation will be drawn back to be part of the people of God.

I don't know when, I don't know for how long, but that's my reading of Romans 11, which we won't go into here. but it cannot be done without the servant.

[ 22 : 10 ] Unless they come to trust in Jesus, the Christ, who is already a human being, unless they trust in him, they will never be brought back to God.

There are some people in the world who say, ah well, there are two people. There's the Israelites, they can have salvation without Christ. They're the ancient people of God.

And then there are the Christian people, they need Christ for salvation. No. Jesus himself said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

And every single Jew, every single Israelite, who is restored back to God, must come through Jesus Christ. I don't know how God is ruling the universe, or what his timing is, but I'm absolutely sure that one day there will be a grand gathering of people, a revival among Israelites, and they will be brought back, they will be restored, they will be gathered around God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That's wonderful. But there's something even more wonderful. Notice what he says here in verse 6. It's too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, to bring back the preserve of Israel.

[ 23 : 55 ] That's too little. I want to do much, much more. I want to gather not just the Jews, not just the people of Israel, not just the elect, the preserved of Israel.

I want to gather the nations of the world. I want to make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach the end of the earth.

So what does God want? God wants Jesus to serve him and he does. What does God want? He wants Jesus, the servant, to bring the Israelites back to him and it will happen.

It's already happening and it will happen on mass in the future. But he also says, I want you to save the world. I want you to cast your net as wide as possible.

I want you to reach out to all the nations. I want you to bring the light of the gospel to every nation in the world.

[ 25 : 06 ] Why? Because I want salvation to be brought as he says here to the end of the earth. I don't want it to stop outside Jerusalem, ten miles outside.

No, I want it to go to Samaria. I don't want it to stop at Samaria. I want it to go up to Damascus. I don't want it to stop at Damascus. I want it to go over to Tarsus and Cilicia.

Then I want it to go to Asia Minor. Then I want it to go to Rome. And then Paul, the preacher of the gospel, what does he say shortly before he died?

I want to go to Spain and bring the gospel to Spain. And this is God the servant this is Jesus Christ working through people like Paul bringing the gospel out, out, out, out as far as he can.

And you know what? That still hasn't stopped. That still hasn't stopped. People are being reached with the gospel, with the light, with the light, with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 19 ] That's being brought to the people and the nations throughout the world, even today. God the servant is at work serving the world.

But you might ask, is this a change in God's plan? Did God initially intend just to save a few, to bring a few back to him?

Did he just intend to bring, you know, one nation back to him? And then later on changes minds, you know what, I think I'll do something different.

Not at all. See, when God called Abraham to himself, he says, I will make you a blessing and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through you.

This is through the seed of Abraham, who would one day be the servant, Jesus Christ. It was never a change of plan, not at all.

[ 27 : 23 ] God always wanted to save the world. God always wanted his glory to be seen by people in all the nations of the earth.

But more than that, do you know why, do you know why he wants the people of the world to be saved?

It's because he looks at his own son and he says, you're amazing. You're amazing. It's too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob to bring back the preserved of Israel.

You're so precious. It's not enough that I should use you just to save this one nation of Israel. No, that's too little.

As he says in verse 5, I am honoured in the eyes of my Lord. He so honours me that he actually wants to use me, not just to save one nation on earth, but the whole world.

[ 28 : 35 ] See, when Jesus came into this world, was he honoured in the eyes of people? Not always. What did they do to him? They crucified. But was he honoured in the eyes of God, the Lord?

Very much so. Very much so. Jesus always pleased his father. I always do what pleases him.

He was honoured in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord looked at him. The Lord looked at Jesus. He loved him for all his obedience throughout eternity and all his obedience since he became a human being and he says, I honour you.

I honour you. More than that, he says, I strengthen you. My God has become my strength. Jesus knew he had power.

Jesus knew he was strong. And he knew that he was so strong that God would use him to save people of all nations.

[ 29 : 45 ] This is how highly God thought of his own son in human nature, the servant of God.

It's too light a thing, too little that I should use such as you to save the people of Israel. I've got to save a whole universe because one day they're going to look like you.

They are going to be so beautiful. They're going to be so obedient. They're going to be so honorable in my eyes. They will all be conformed to be your image.

They will be like you in their character. They will be like you in their thinking, in their loving, in their worshipping. they'll be so like you in all the nations of the earth.

I want to see a whole human race with people like you, my servant, with people like you.

[ 30 : 49 ] I want to save a whole world. Listen, if you're not yet a Christian, if you're not yet a Christian, don't ever feel as if God is keeping you away.

No, no, no. God lets this world go on till this very moment so that more people will be rescued, so more people will be saved.

It's not just for the Jews, it's not just for the Israelites, it's not just for the nations in the past, it's for the nations in the 21st century, it's for the people in West Lothian, it's for people whose lives have been messed up.

God actually wants to save the likes of us, the likes of you. He wants to rescue you. That's why he made Jesus the way he made him, so he could die for us, so he could rescue people like yourselves.

Listen and come, listen and come to this amazing God who is at work in his servant. See Jesus, he'll never forget.

[ 32 : 12 ] He'll never forget what God said to him. He'll never forget what he has to do for Israel and he'll never forget what he's doing for the nations of the world.

He's at work. Matthew 28, after he rose from the dead, enthroned over the universe, he said to the church, he says to the disciples, go, he says, I have all authority in heaven and on earth.

I'm now going to serve God. How am I going to serve God? I'm going to ask you, he says, to these twelve disciples from Galilee, Jews, go out, he says, and make disciples of all nations.

Just go out to every nation. I want them to be saved and you know what? I'll be with you to the very end of the age. I want people to be rescued.

The end of the age hasn't come, has it? And the reason it hasn't come is because somebody is still to be rescued.

[ 33 : 31 ] Somebody is still to be saved. Somebody is still to be brought in. There will be a mother crying out over her daughter or her son.

There will be grandparents trying to reach loved ones with the gospel. There will be people who are sharing the gospel with their neighbors. And it may be that it's these people that will come in.

If you're here today hearing this gospel, this good news, come because Jesus exists to serve God by saving people like you.

May the Lord bless his word. Let's pray. Our heavenly father, we are so thankful that you are the one who is at work and that you do not keep changing your plans.

You are the one Lord who conceives a thing from the beginning and will always carry it through to the end. how great that our government in this world, the government of this universe, is not in the hands of any king who changes his mind.

[ 34 : 54 ] You never make a U-turn. You never alter the course of things. You will fulfill all your promises and you even say no one who comes to me will be cast out.

No one. Oh Lord, we believe you. And we pray, O servant, Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you would bring in the preserve of Israel.

We pray that many among the Jews will be rescued. And we pray, Lord, that the light of the gospel would reach the nations. We pray that there be songs of salvation, sung by people not only in the darkest parts of Africa, but the darkest urban territories and rural hinterlands of our own generation.

Lord, rescue, we would pray, save, we would pray, show the glory of God, we would pray, in our own day, in our own world, in our own lives, in our own neighbourhoods.

Lord, will you work, you will never forget, you will never forget what your Father asked you to do. And we just pray, Lord, help us to be involved in whatever you want us to do, so the gospel will reach those who need it.

[ 36 : 27 ] Draw us in, Lord, overcome the work of Satan who wants to keep us blind. Overcome him, Lord, and draw sinners to yourself.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.