

The Servant Leading us to Light

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to a chapter we read in Isaiah, chapter 42, and reading at verse 16, Isaiah 42, verse 16.

And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These things I do, and I do not forsake them. Now we can see here, this is one of the great servant songs from Isaiah.

We also find that in chapter 49 and chapter 50, chapter 52 from verse 13 right through chapter 53. And this recently, I think, it's not that terribly long, anyway, we looked at the beginning of this chapter, I think, at verse 3, but the first two or three verses of it.

And one of the things that Isaiah does here, as he does elsewhere, is he exalts God and brings us to see something of his greatness, his glory, his majesty.

[1 : 15] Isaiah's language, as we know, is a very rich language. And he's very descriptive. And if there's, I suppose, any particular sections of God's word that we wish to go to, so that we will have a greater insight into the glory and majesty of God.

The Psalms and the prophecy of Isaiah are probably two of the greatest writings in the word that highlight these very things for us. His glory and majesty, as we know, is great in so many different ways.

But probably the greatest glory that he takes to himself is in the salvation of souls. And sometimes we forget that.

Sometimes we mentioned that this morning, even as we're with the children, when you're going out with them and highlighting the different things, and you're saying, well, look at this, look at that. You can go to a little flower and speak and show them.

Look at the beauty. See how marvelous that is. And tell them that God made that flower. But also looking up into the sky at night and seeing the moon and seeing the stars and telling them that God made that by the word of his power and that he names every star.

[2 : 33] He counts them. He counts them and he has a name for them. It's quite amazing. And so the heavens declare the glory of God and we're aware of that. But sometimes we forget that really the most glorious, the most amazing thing is the salvation of a soul.

Because God is always saving souls. There are many things that people can do in this world. I suppose we could say not everybody could go and climb Mount Everest.

But some people do and some people can. Not everybody can run 100 meters in under 10 seconds. But there are some people they can do that.

Not everybody can dive down into the depths of the ocean. But there are some people who are able to do that. Not everybody can walk on the moon. But some actually have.

Not everybody can build a computer and all its components put together. But there are people that can. So that as you go around all the different things in this world.

[3 : 41] There might be the vast majority of people can't do. But there are people who can. But one thing that no person is capable of doing is saving a soul.

You can't save your soul and you can't save somebody else's soul. It's only God who can save souls. And that's something sometimes we forget.

And sometimes something we also take for granted. And that is what God has done through the Lord Jesus Christ. Now again in this chapter and at the beginning of this chapter we find that as Isaiah is highlighting the greatness and the glory of God.

One of the things that he highlights is God's great mercy and God's great service. You see this is what we said a servant song.

And sometimes we forget the servant or the servanthood or the servant that Christ is the great servant.

[4 : 47] But you see really everything that God is doing to us and God is doing for us is by way of service. Because God is attending to us all the time.

Do we stop and think that? You see it's in him that we live, we move and we have our being. And we have that because God is attending to us.

And all the time he is supplying and providing for us according to our needs. As we've often highlighted not according to what we want but according to what we need.

And so there's this constant service taking place in heaven for us and to us. And you know when a person becomes a Christian something of the servant, a servant heart comes, is born.

So that immediately when a person is born again they want to do something for the Lord. It's something, it's just a natural response that's within the heart.

[5 : 50] Lord, what will you have me to do? That was the question that was asked in the Bible. And it's a question I'm sure we've all asked at one point or another.

Or still ask. Because sometimes it's just this sense. And again it's the Holy Spirit working within us. This moving, this prompting, this convicting.

And you say, Lord, I feel you're speaking to me. What is it that you want me to do? It's a servant's heart. And it's an indicator, a sign of God working within us.

And so Jesus, of course, is the great servant. He served the Father and he also served us. And as we say, the more that we serve the Lord, the more like Jesus we become.

But then the prophet moves on through this chapter and there's this singing to the Lord, a new song. And so we come to our text and he says, I will lead the blind.

[6 : 51] And we have to ask ourselves as it unfolds for us, who are the blind? Well, I believe that the blind are those who are spiritually blind. Those who are without the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

And anybody in here tonight who does not have Jesus as Savior is spiritually blind. It's also true that all those tonight who love the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior were also once spiritually blind.

And that's what we are by nature. We cannot see. There are many things we cannot see. One of the things by nature that we cannot see, we cannot see the wrath of God.

And that's a solemn thing. You know, if you or I were in a burning building, the moment that we became persuaded that this building was on fire, we would do everything in our power to get out of it as quickly as possible.

One of the worst things would be to be in a burning building and not know that it was on fire. And in a sense, spiritually, that's how it is.

[8 : 04] Because God's wrath has been revealed from heaven. In a little. It's been revealed to a certain extent. One day it's going to be revealed in its fullness.

And one of the things that we tend to forget is that our God is a consuming fire. It's a fearful thought. And that's one of the reasons we talk about blindness, is that by nature, we're not able to understand or to see that.

We're not able to see the wrath of God. We're not able. We don't have this apprehension. We don't have this sense of, what if, what if I die?

What's going to happen to me? So that there is a blindness that's part and partial of our nature without the Lord. But again, we're so often blind to God's mercy.

And blind to the opportunities that God gives us. Because you see, every single time we come under the word of God, this is another opportunity where we're able to come to meet with God and become united to God and where we're able to come to believe in him.

[9 : 24] I've been personal here to you tonight. You have to ask yourself this question. How often, how often, how many opportunities have I been given to become a Christian?

Have you ever thought that? If you here tonight have not come to faith in Jesus Christ, have you ever taught it up in your own mind and your own thinking?

How often have I sat under the gospel? How often have I read God's word? How often has God spoken to me in providence?

How often have I felt that this is God speaking to me one way or another? And yet, you've let every opportunity go by.

Maybe there have been times you've been shaken. Might have been times you've been stirred. But often, you've just put it aside. You've walked away.

[10 : 23] You've forgotten about it. It didn't mean too much to you. And so that's part of the blindness that's spoken about here. Remember this, God has placed you under the gospel.

Now that is an amazing privilege. Many people are not placed under the gospel. But he's done more than that. He's given you the desire to come out under the gospel.

Tonight, loads of people have the opportunity to come out. Not just in this particular church here, but in all the churches in town. Loads of people have the opportunity to come out.

But a huge number choose not to. Some choose never to come out. Even although the gospel is being preached. Even although the opportunities are there.

But you are in a place where you're placed under the word. And you have a desire. At whatever level that desire is, there is an element of desire that has brought you here.

[11 : 30] So that you are under the word. But what are you doing with it? Because that is the great question. Because it's a very, very solemn thing and a very challenging thing.

It's to sit under the word. To sit a lifetime under the word. And not do anything with it. Because as we said, every single time the gospel is preached.

Every time we preach, we offer. This is what the Lord wants us to do. To offer Jesus Christ. To offer him a savior. And you have to ask yourself, what have I done?

What have I done with all these opportunities? Well, tonight is another such opportunity. And tonight we ask that you will close in.

That you will accept Jesus. That you will receive him. That you will believe in him. These are all the different terms that we use with regard to becoming a Christian. It's receiving.

[12 : 27] Receiving a gift. Accepting the offer of Jesus as savior. It is believing in him. Believing in his name. It is trusting your life. You are all to him.

All these things come into play. And again, people are blind to the beauty of Christ. The attractiveness of Christ. You see, some people look on salvation simply as like an insurance policy. Maybe that's the way you think of it tonight. You know, you've heard enough over your lifetime to know that if you die, you're lost. And you say to yourself, you know something?

I've got to get this sorted before I die. And you kind of look at becoming a Christian as a kind of insurance policy that will save you from being lost. But being saved is far more than being saved from being lost.

It is being saved into. You're not only delivered from. You're delivered into. You're delivered into the kingdom. You're delivered into a new way of life.

[13 : 34] You're delivered into the joy of the Lord. You're delivered into the peace of God that passes all understanding. You're delivered into a new way where you have a new understanding of who you are, why you're here, where you're going.

You can't put a price on that. You're delivered into a new way of life. So you see, salvation is not simply a matter of just saving from. It is saving to.

And you know, it's one of the things that people who have been converted late in life, it's one of their great regrets. And they'll say, you know, oh, I wish, I so wish I had come to Christ when I was younger.

Because we come back to this wanting to serve. And they say, you know, there's just, I wish I, oh, why on earth did I waste all these years? And it's only now at the end of my days.

Because it's people, once they come into faith, they realize, no, this is not just about being saved from. It's being saved to. And experiencing all the blessings that God has for us and God is giving to us.

[14 : 42] And then we see, our text tells us, I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know and in paths that they have not known.

And leads in a way that they do not know. Now, I believe that this is talking, although we can be talking here about the whole way of the exile and the return back from the exile, if we were to follow it through and look at God's dealings with his people there.

But we're applying it to ourselves tonight. And this is, I believe, talking about the way of salvation.

And the thing is that a person can know the way of salvation from beginning to end.

If you're brought up in the Christian faith, and as a young person learned verses like, what must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

Or God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. You know these verses. And if somebody came to you in

the street and said, you know, I want to be saved and I have no idea what am I to do, you would be able to say, well, I'll tell you, it actually tells you in the Bible that if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll be saved.

[16:02] So you see, you can be here tonight and you can know, theoretically, you can know, as God's word says, but you haven't come to experience it yourself.

So there's a difference between knowing and actually being part of, of having experienced for yourself. And that is what the Lord is saying here.

I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known. And I will guide them. Now, there is only one way to be saved.

And that is, as we said, is in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. But when it comes to the actual salvation at a personal level, at an individual level, if we were to go around everybody here tonight who's a believer, some would have come to faith very young.

Some would have come to faith maybe in middle age. And some might have come to faith when they're elderly. I think we should stress that as things stand, the majority of people come not in old age, but they come probably the majority in their younger years.

[17:20] So it's something that we always need to be looking at when we're younger. But the thing is that the Lord has many different ways of leading people to himself.

There's only one way to be saved, and that is believing, trusting, receiving, accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. But the outworking of that is so different. Some people are led in so gently, so quietly.

The path that God leads them on is one where they would never be able to tell somebody else and be able to say, you know, I can tell you exactly the day I became a Christian.

I can tell you the day, I can tell you the hour, I can tell you the minute. Some people can, but lots of people can't. Because God worked very gently in their lives.

It worked, as it were, over a period. Yes, we're born again in a moment, we're regenerated in a moment, but the outworking of that is when we talk about conversion, when we talk about our experience in it, what we've gone through ourselves, then for some people, as we say, it's very gentle, it's very gradual.

[18:36] And just like the blind man, when he was asked, what happened to you? He says, I can't tell you. All I can tell you is this, I was blind and now I see. I can tell you how I was, and I can tell you now who I am, but this kind of, what exactly happened, I don't know.

There's a lot of people like that. Other people are brought in with a great sense of God's love. They're overwhelmed.

By a sense of God's love towards them. And they can't get over this. It almost breaks their heart. This powerful sense of God's love towards them.

Other people are brought in the very opposite. Some people are brought in with a fearful sense of their lostness. They're hurled, as it were, almost into despair.

They feel that they're almost plunging over a precipice. And they feel that they're dangling over a sense of lostness. And they're crying to God in mercy, for his mercy, that he will save them.

[19:47] Other people, it is through traumatic events within their lives. where their providences are so turned around, and where their lives are thrown upside down.

And every single person in here could tell how the Lord worked with them. And everybody would be different.

Although, there would be a lot, somebody might get up and say, well, this is how I was, this is, I'll tell you in four or five minutes how I was converted. And some of you would say, I can follow so much of that.

But there'll always be a little bit that'll be unique just to you. And sometimes you'll hear somebody speak about how they were converted. And you'll say, I really cannot follow that testimony at all.

It's so different to mine. But the thing is, the Lord is dealing individually. He's dealing personally. And he's leading you along paths that you did not know.

[20:51] He's taking you along ways that you had never been before. And that's what the Lord does. And again, that is also true with regard to our life in general.

The Lord is leading us. And we've got to remember that. That God is guiding us throughout life. And he does it in different ways. Sometimes he does it by closing doors and opening others.

Sometimes you're going along and all of a sudden a door closes. And it's like you're being diverted in another direction. The Lord does that. Other times he makes it so clear from his word.

This is not the way. And he'll send you in another direction. All the time, God's at work. God is leading. God is directing. But then we see something else.

I will guide them and I will turn the darkness before them into light. Isn't that wonderful? And again, that's what God does.

[21 : 52] This is what happens when a person comes to faith. We begin to see things as we never saw them before. That's one of the wonderful things.

Maybe tonight as a Christian, you've forgotten just how wonderful, how awesome it was when first you believed. how you saw life differently.

How things became new. You saw things in a different way, in a different light. Well, that's what God does. For instance, church itself takes on a whole new dimension, a whole new meaning.

You come to understand something of what the church is. That the church is the body of Christ.

That you are united in a wonderful way to every believer. Every believer, every brother, every sister belongs to you.

It's communal. We have moments of maybe seeing that in a more practical way at the time of our communion when we sit at the Lord's table and we share bread one with another.

[22 : 57] We share the cup one with another. We're taking together. We've got this sense of identity and sense of belonging, sense of community. It's a wonderful thing.

We belong to one another. But it is true we belong, every believer belongs to every other believer in this world.

And so you have a greater sense of what the church is. But even at a more individual or at a more sort of level at maybe what we would term a congregational level and as we look at church with regard to the building and coming to church again when you become a Christian that takes on a whole new meaning.

Maybe you came to church regularly but you came out of duty. Maybe when you were younger you were dragged along. But as you got older you maybe came out of duty.

You came because it was the way you were brought up. But you know when you come to faith that changes. And church becomes important because when you come to church you're coming to meet with God with the living and through God the God of heaven and earth the God who is going to speak to you.

[24 : 13] And you know every time we come to church we should be saying to the Lord Lord open mine eyes that I might behold wonderful things out of your law. Please don't come to church prayerless.

Always come with a prayer in your heart because the Lord is able to take the most ordinary things and to make a feast in your soul.

Just as the Lord took the fish that young boy who had the bread and the loaves and the fish Jesus was able to make a huge feast out of it.

And so he's able when you come to church he is able to make to make a feast out of it. Do you know one of the worst things you can do is to come to church and not ask the Lord for anything.

Just to come in and to go out. And sometimes people go in and out and they say I didn't get anything. You say well did you ask for anything? Hmm maybe I didn't. So we shouldn't be surprised if we don't get anything.

[25 : 15] But we come yes in order that our own souls will be fed our own souls will be nourished and built up but we also come to worship God to acknowledge him to give him thanks to praise him.

Isn't it a wonderful opportunity that God's people can come together and they're saying collectively Lord you know what I want to do? I want to tell you how much I love you.

I want to tell you through the worship today here's this special time we're coming and we're acknowledging your sovereign power and greatness and I want to tell you that.

And we do it through song through the word that we sing the word he's given us. And again another thing where the Lord puts his light is into his word.

His word again is more precious to us than anything else. The psalmist said it's more precious than gold. The psalmist also said it was sweeter than honey.

[26 : 19] The word is termed a hammer that breaks. It's termed a sword that pushes. It does all these things. And that's one of the things when the Lord's light comes into our heart that he does

that with the word.

It challenges us. Sometimes it makes us feel really uncomfortable. Have you ever felt that you come under the word and you say oh I'd rather turn the page there I don't want us to read that. There are times like that. Maybe there are times when we haven't been as we ought to be and we open the word and it's rebuking us. And we say I'd rather find something nice rather than that but the Lord challenges us.

He disciplines us through the word. He brings the word to bear upon our experience and that's the light coming into our life. Again that word is directing us in the way to go.

That word is reminding us who we are and who he is. And I'm sure tonight if there was anything that you were to say I dare not lose I would hate not to have surely if you're a believer tonight the word of God is that.

[27 : 40] I think I mentioned this before I knew an elder and he was starting to go blind and he knew he was going to lose his sight completely and he spent all the time that he could the spare time that he could learning the Bible memorizing and I know the older you get the harder it is but that's what he tried to do because he knew the time was going to come when he couldn't read it anymore.

It was years and years ago and that's what he was trying to do was memorize chunks of it so that he would be able to rehearse and meditate over God's word.

That's how precious it is when this light shines on into our heart and then the Lord says I will turn the darkness before them into light the rough places into level ground isn't that great and particularly those who come in under upheaval and whose worlds have been turned upside down that's what the Lord does he makes the rough places into level ground and then he says these are the things I do and I want to highlight that if you're here tonight without the Lord Jesus Christ take hold of that verse there these are the things I do that's what God says and you go to the Lord and say Lord tonight I've been hearing about what you do that you lead people along paths that they didn't know and that you bring the light to bear in their experience well Lord

I've heard about you but I still don't know you will you tonight do this one thing for me will you bring me into the light will you bring me into your life will you bring eternal life into my heart and you know this if you honestly and genuinely and sincerely pray that the Lord will answer that he has promised he said those who seek will find and we've got to take God at his word so you go to the Lord and say I want you Lord I plead with you tonight these things I do will you do these things for me because I can't do it myself and then he says and I do not forsake them isn't that wonderful every single soul he will never ever ever abandon or forsake might be times you you can feel forsaken by God and even tonight maybe some of you are here tonight and that's exactly how you feel and you say where is he where are the fulfillment of the promises that I looked to and believed you're still clinging on and maybe it's just with a strand of faith let me tell you he will never forsake you there were times that

Joseph in the prison must have felt like that year after year after year there were two or three false dawns he thought that's it but no in fact it just became more and more and more hopeless and I'm sure there were times he felt God has forsaken me oh he hadn't he was preparing Joseph but he was also preparing the preparing the scene in Egypt for Joseph to be all of a sudden ushered out of the prison to become the second of command in Egypt same with David you go through some of the Psalms and as David is running for his life barely escaping with his life there are times he felt that God had forsaken him that God had forgotten about him you go through the Psalms Lord have you forgotten to be gracious maybe that's where you are tonight well the answer to that is no the

[31 : 52] Lord hasn't forgotten to be gracious in fact we are told that the Lord waits that he may be gracious he will yet come to you and he will yet display his own power his own authority and he will make the crooked places straight in your experience and he will once again bring you into the light and he will show you who he is and he will show you and remind you of his love for you he is everything let us pray oh Lord our God again tonight we give thanks for the gracious way that you deal with us certainly not according to our deserving but according to your tender mercy we ask Lord that you will bless us and we pray for the fellowship in the hall afterwards and Lord we ask for that as he speaks to us that you will bless him and encourage him in that and also the work that goes on in the shed we pray oh Lord that you will be with us in all that we're about and all that we do and as we eat and drink in the hall we pray that your blessing might be upon us and that we give thanks to you for your constant goodness watch over us and take us to our homes in safety tonight

be with us in all the coming days and forgive us our every sin we pray in Jesus name amen let us conclude singing from psalm 85 from verse 8 to the end psalm 85 from the

Scottish Psalter psalm 85 to the end of the psalm and the tune is Bethesda that's on page 340 I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk he'll speak peace and to his saints but let them not return to foolishness to them that fear him surely near is his salvation that glory in our land may have her habitation truth met with mercy righteousness and peace kiss mutually truth springs from earth and righteousness looks down from heaven high yea what is good the Lord shall give our land shall yield increase justice to set us in his steps shall go before his face I'll hear what God the Lord will speak I'll hear hear what the

Lord will see to his so guilty peace and to his saints God let let them return to foolishness to them that hear and surely hear this is salvation salvation and glory in our love may have an opportunity salvation through faith with mercy righteousness and peace is mutually through sins all matter of righteousness through son from heaven and by yea want is good our

Lord shall live our land shall yield and peace now may the grace and mercy and peace of God the Father Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forever more Amen I will. Do you I will offer couple prays I will be fellowship and tutti and prominent so on