

The Gentle Savior

6.6.18

Portraits of Jesus in Isaiah

Wednesday Summer Series

1. To understand the Servant of Isaiah we must understand the setting of this prophecy.

A. Judah is in turmoil again.

1. God's judgment has been released upon the Northern Kingdom.
2. The government is trying to forge an alliance with Egypt, who they think will be their savior against the nation of Assyria.
 - a. But this is completely contrary to God's word for them.
 - b. Instead of pursuing the one true Savior that could save them from their enemies, they turn to a nation that will prove to be disastrous.

B. Isaiah 30:8-22 serves as a summary of what is to come.

1. Isaiah is called to be both a prophet of judgment and a prophet of hope.
2. As you read Isaiah, you will see a recurring pattern: As judgment is pronounced, so too is hope.
3. READ: **Isaiah 30:8-22**

2. The hope of God's people is embodied in the "Servant of Isaiah".

A. Beginning in Isaiah 42, God foretells of a servant to come.

1. This is no ordinary servant.
2. Throughout Isaiah, there are several servants mentioned:
 - a. Israel is a servant at times.

b. Isaiah is certainly a servant of the Lord as he carries the Lord's message to the nations.

c. The future King Cyrus of Persia is called a servant of the Lord as the Lord uses him to bring judgment upon Babylon and deliverance to Israel.

B. But none of these compare to the Lord's Servant in Isaiah 42-53.

1. As we will see, the role and ministry of this servant cannot be fulfilled by anyone except Jesus.

2. 700 years before Jesus' birth Isaiah prophesied of His ministry.

3. A ministry that would be like no other person.

4. In Isaiah 42, we find a portrait of Jesus as a Gentle Savior.

5. As we read this and begin to understand, let us reflect on how God loves us and deals with us.

6. If you find yourself hurting, broken, washed up or washed out, we see that Jesus loves us anyway.

READ: Isaiah 42:1-9

3. The Servant of the Lord has divine origins.

A. Isaiah declared that the One to come would be from and empowered by God Himself.

1. "This is MY servant".

2. This was not man's idea or man's plan.

3. When we reflect upon Jesus' coming, the plan begins and ends with God.

a. It was God's will to send His son.

b. It was God's will that the Son would die for the sins of the world.

c. Salvation begins and ends with God.

B. And it is God's power that strengthens the Servant.

1. Jesus did not walk and live in ordinary power.
2. Yes, he emptied himself and lower himself to our level for his 30+ years of living.
3. But He lived and walked and ministered under the power of God through the Holy Spirit.

C. The Holy Spirit was evident in Jesus' life many times:

1. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
2. At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit descended upon him.
3. When Jesus healed the sick, it was through the work and power of the Holy Spirit.
4. When Jesus was in agony in the Garden, Jesus prayed for the power of God to strengthen and uphold him.
5. Time and again Jesus got away from the crowds to pray and to connect again with the source of His strength.
6. In ways Isaiah could not fully comprehend, the Servant of the Lord was completely strengthened by God Himself.

D. This emphasis on the Spirit begins at the very beginning of the description of the Servant, Jesus.

1. God said He would "Put my Spirit upon Him".
2. This expression of the Spirit was rare in Isaiah's day.
 - a. The Spirit was placed on the 70 elders in Numbers 11.
 - b. And the Spirit was placed on David in 1 Samuel 16.
 - c. Jesus' exposure to the Spirit would open the doors to a whole new level of experience.

4. The Servant's ministry would extend the Spirit to all people.

Isaiah 42:5 (CSB)

⁵This is what God, the LORD, says—

who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,

who gives breath to the people on it

and **spirit to those** who walk on it—

A. Through Jesus, the Holy Spirit is not limited to a select few.

1. God revealed himself here as the one who gives breath and spirit (life) to those who walk on the earth.

2. In Joel 2, God said, "in the last day He would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh..."

3. Up until Jesus' life and ministry, the presence of God was limited to a select few for a select amount of time.

4. But after Jesus' resurrection, He made the Holy Spirit available to us on two previously unheard-of levels:

a. First, the Spirit was made available at the level of Salvation: **John 20:22 (CSB)**

²²After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

b. But also at the level of empowerment:

Acts 1:8 (CSB)

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 2:4 (CSB)

⁴Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them.

5. Because of this Servant, Isaiah prophesied about, we TOO can experience the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

B. When we call upon the Name of Jesus, we are calling upon God's chosen one.

1. Although we are not called to die for the sins of the world like Jesus did, we are called to live by the Spirit like Jesus was.

2. We are not called to live life on our own power.

3. We are called to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

4. We have access to the Father through the ministry of Jesus.

5. When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is put on us in a way similar to what Isaiah prophesied about here in verse 1.

6. We too are called to be people of the Spirit, just like the Lord's Servant was a man of the Spirit.

7. We too need God's strengthening and empowering ministry in our lives.

8. Because Jesus' ministry is also our ministry.

5. The Servant will bring Justice to the Nations.

A. The word used for justice *mišpāt* is translated as both justice and judgment in English.

1. It is a legal term referring to the decision of a legal case.

2. Earlier in Isaiah, God's people had chosen to serve other gods and idols and placed their trust in other nations and powers and not the Lord.

a. These choices brought judgment and justice in the form of invasion from Assyria and later Babylon.

b. Their sin was punished in the pain of exile.

c. Exile from their home, their temple, and their God.

d. But the same “word” that brought them judgment is the same word that brought them salvation.

B. In God’s plan, He not only brings judgment but also justice.

1. Not justice like we know justice.

a. Not our idea of fairness.

b. Not a fairness that can be bought, petitioned, or bribed.

2. God’s justice is absolute truth and righteousness.

a. And it brings judgment upon those who reject Jesus and Hope for those who embrace Him.

b. The same message that is judgment for some is hope for others.

C. Unlike the world’s sense of justice, God’s is for all people.

1. Isaiah said that the Servant would bring “justice to the nations” and the “islands” will place in Him their hope.

2. What does this mean?

a. Those in Isaiah’s audience thought of God as being their sole possession.

b. But in the ministry of the Servant, there is enough love, justice, and hope to extend to all of the people of the world.

Isaiah 49:6 (CSB)

“he says,

“It is not enough for you to be my servant

raising up the tribes of Jacob

and restoring the protected ones of Israel.

I will also make you a light for the nations,

to be my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

c. Through Jesus, the prophecy given to Abraham would be fulfilled, that through him all Nations and people would be blessed.

D. We can never forget that Jesus's heart for the nations has been passed down to us.

1. We cannot limit our ministries to just a select few.
2. God's justice is made available to all people.
3. All people will experience either God's judgment or God's justice, so all people deserve to hear and choose for themselves.
 - a. Justice that limits itself to only a select and chosen few is not justice at all.
 - b. The Jews wanted the focus of God to be upon them only.
 - c. God declared that His Servant would be not only a light to Israel but a light to Gentiles as well.

E. That is why Jesus' ministry had a strong emphasis on the outcasts of society.

1. God's justice open eyes that are blind.
2. God's justice frees captives from prison and releases them from their man-made dungeons.
3. When Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, and gave hope to the marginalized, He was fulfilling the calling and function of the Servant in Isaiah 42.
4. The Pharisees missed this aspect of Jesus' ministry.
5. The Pharisees wanted the judgment of God not the justice of God.
6. In the end, they were judged and the outcast was saved.

One of the hallmarks of God's chosen Servant was....

6. The Servant will show extraordinary kindness.

A. The Hebrew uses parallelism (*The comparing of similar things to make one picture*) to demonstrate the gentleness and kindness of the Servant.

Isaiah 42:2–3 (CSB)

²He will not cry out or shout
or make his voice heard in the streets.

³He will not break a bruised reed,
and he will not put out a smoldering wick;
he will faithfully bring justice.

1. First, the Servant will not cry or shout in the streets.
2. Unlike people in our world who is always trying to out shout others for attention, Jesus isn't like that.
3. Jesus ministered out of a position of humble power and dignity.
4. This is not an expression of weakness but of gentleness.
5. Weakness says I can't because I don't have the strength, gentleness says I can but I don't have to in order to win.

B. What are the bruised reeds and the smoldering wicks?

1. Bruised reeds refer to a stick or rod that is broken to the place that it isn't able to provide support for someone who leans on it.
 - a. It is broken, useless, and internally damaged.
 - b. It deserves to be thrown out and replaced.
2. A smoldering wick refers to wick that has been used up and no longer provides any value because it lacks oil.

C. But Jesus will not break the reed any further or dispose of the wick.

1. To this servant nothing is useless, even the *bruised reed* (however it came to be crushed is not the point), which is useless as a support or for anything else. Neither is anything (*e.g. a smouldering wick*) too far gone towards extinction.¹

2. Those that we are willing to give up on, Jesus loves.

3. Not only does He love them He heals and fills.

4. If you feel like you are beyond hope, beyond love, beyond forgiveness know that your emotions are lying to you.

5. Jesus' love brings healing and wholeness to those who are broken and empty.

D. Jesus is not weak but gentle.

1. Jesus declared rest for the weary, the broken, and the heavy burdened.

2. When Jesus offered a yoke that was easy and a burden that was like, He was fulfilling the description of the Servant to not break the bruised reed or the smoking wick.

3. Jesus doesn't want to overwhelm you with more cares or concerns, He wants to strengthen you with His power and Spirit.

4. He came not like earthly conquerors with their weapons and armies of mass destruction, He came in gentleness, love and power.

God's answer to the oppressors of the world is not more oppression, nor is his answer to arrogance more arrogance; rather, in quietness, humility, and simplicity, he will take all of the evil into himself and return only grace. That is power.²

¹ J. A. Motyer, [*The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 320.

² John N. Oswalt, [*The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*](#), *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 111.

Closing: For the tired, hurried, harassed, and the outcast, gaze upon the portrait of Jesus and experience His love.

Tonight, we want to pray for you:

1. we want to pray for those of you who are tired.
2. we want to pray for those who feel like there is no way the Lord can ever forgive you or love you.
3. we want to pray for those of you who have friends or family who doesn't know Jesus.
4. we want to pray for those who want to be Baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

No matter your need or place tonight, let us gaze at this portrait of Jesus:

1. The One who loves us when we are unlovable.
2. The One who lifts us up when we deserve to be crushed.
3. The One who restores us when we are broken.
4. Let us stand in all of Jesus tonight and thank Him for his love.