

“Behold My Servant”

Isaiah 42:1-4

Isaiah 42:1 picks up where Isaiah 41:29 left off. Notice the contrasting “beholds”—

- “Behold” the idols of the heathen are nothing (41:29).
- “Behold” God’s servant in whom He delights is everything (42:1).

Jesus said He is the fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1-4 (cf. Mt. 12:17-21).

Our text is the first of four “Servant Songs” in the book of Isaiah (49:1-13; 50:1-11; 52:12-53:12).

Individuals specifically called “my servant” in the Bible— Abraham (Gen. 26:24); **Moses** (Num 12:7, 8; Josh. 1:2, 7; 2 Kings 21:8; Mal. 4:4); **Caleb** (Num. 14:24); **David** (2 Sam. 3:18; 7:5, 8; 1 Kings 11:13, 33, 34, 38; 14:8; 2 Kings 20:6; 1 Chron. 17:4, 7; Ps. 89:3, 20; Isa. 37:35; Jer. 33:21, 22, 26; Ezek. 34:23, 24; 37:25); Job (Job 1:8; 42:7, 8); **Isaiah** (Isa. 20:3); **Eliakim** (Isa. 22:20); **Israel/Jacob** (Isa. 41:8, 9; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 49:3; Jer. 30:10; 46:27, 28; Ezek. 28:25; 37:25); **Nebuchadnezzar**

- 2 Corinthians 3:18, *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory...”* The more you *“behold”* the Lord, the more you will be changed into His likeness—You become more like Him.

➔ The glorious title *“My servant”* speaks of...

I. The **SUBMISSION** of His service.

- A. A servant in the Bible was someone who was at the disposal of another. A servant’s will is the will of the one whom he serves.
- B. Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Jesus took upon Himself *“the form of a SERVANT”* (Phil. 2:7). He said, *“I am among you as he that serveth”* (Luke 22:27). Jesus exemplified what it means to be a servant when He girded Himself with a towel, and washed His disciples feet (John 13:3-16).

II. The **STRENGTH** of His service. His strength came by knowing three things:

- A. He was **APPOINTED** by God. God elected / chose Jesus (cf. v. 6).
 1. There is strength knowing who selected you. As a servant of God, our importance is not in the prominence of the position we hold, but in the truth of who called us to serve.
 2. If God sent two angels to earth, one to represent Him in the White House, and the other to clean the restrooms of a local church, each would be equally blessed... and each would be equally diligent and faithful in carrying out his service.
- B. He was **APPROVED** of God (*“...in whom my soul delighteth...”*)

Strength comes by knowing you are loved and knowing what you are doing pleases God. [Note the connection of *“beloved”* and *“well pleased”* in Matthew 12:18 denoting God’s approval.]

 1. Knowing He was loved by His Father enabled Him to endure the rejection of men. His own were not delighted in Him, but He could go on in His service because He was assured of His Father’s love.

- You and I will not always be praised or appreciated by others. But we are strengthened as we realize God is pleased by our service.
2. When you know the one you serve is pleased with your service, it will energize you to serve even more!
- C. He was **ANOINTED** by God (“...*I have put my spirit upon him...*”). (cf. Isa. 61:1; Mt. 3:16; Acts 10:38). If Jesus needed God’s anointing, how much more do we need it. When we serve in the strength of the flesh, we accomplish little. But when we are empowered by God’s Spirit, things get done.

v. 1— “...*he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*” The word “*judgment*” doesn’t mean punishment here. To make a judgment also means to make a decision or settle a controversy. Jesus will bring justice and “set things right” concerning the Gentiles (cf. vs. 3-4). Verse 4 is summarized in Matthew 12:21—“...*in his name shall the Gentiles trust.*”

III. The **SP**IRIT of His service (Isa. 42:2-3).

- ➡ Three characteristics of the life and earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- A. He was **HUMBLE**—“*He shall not strive...*”
1. Jesus never strived for public recognition or drew attention to Himself.
 - Unlike many celebrities today who love to hear themselves speak and seek photo shoots or grab headlines, Jesus never sought the applause of men.
 2. He didn't use His success to promote Himself. He didn’t talk about what He did nor publish His miracles in the Jerusalem Post. As a servant, He just calmly went about doing what the Father called Him to do (vs. 14-16). ILLUS: 1 Cor. 9:16
- B. He was **HUSHED**—“...*nor cry.*” His life was characterized by **MEEKNESS** (Mt 11:29).

1. When falsely accused, He opened not His mouth. He never tried to defend Himself nor cry out in retaliation to those who crucified Him.
 2. *“When he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed Himself to him that judgeth righteously”* (1 Pet. 2:23).
- C. He was **HELPFUL**—*“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench...”* He was compassionate towards the bruised and broken.
1. Reeds often wilt under the heat of the Galilean sun and bend and break. That is like us—Under the heat of trials we may wilt. Adversity leaves us bruised. But Jesus knows our weakness. He will not break us when we are bruised and hurting.
 2. Flax is difficult to ignite and burn brightly. It only smolders. Like flax sometimes we can only smolder. But Jesus doesn’t give up on us—He doesn’t douse out the small ember that still burns. *A “smoking flax He shall not quench.”* He knows our frame and remembers we are but dust (Ps. 103). And Jesus loves us anyway! He “fans the flame” so we burn brighter.

IV. The SUCCESS of His service. vs. 3-4—*“...he shall bring forth judgment unto truth [make it manifest]. He shall **not fail** nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth...”* [Mt. 12:20-21 —*“...till he send forth judgment **unto victory**...”*]

➡ When Jesus comes again He will set things right in all the earth.

- A. I confess: I get discouraged with myself sometimes. I get discouraged about the weakness of my faith ... my lack of zeal in soul winning... the irregularity of my prayer life.
- Praise God—Jesus never gets discouraged! The fact I serve a God who never gets discouraged helps me not be discouraged also. How would you feel if your pastor always came to the pulpit discouraged. You’d be discouraged also!

- B. Jesus will not quit until His job is finished (John 17:4). Perseverance is a characteristic of every successful leader. As we serve the Lord, you must not quit until you've successfully finished what God has called you to do! DON'T QUIT!

SUMMATION: A European nobleman called his household to hear what he had written in his will. He said He was leaving his entire estate to his eldest servant. Someone asked what he was leaving for his rebellious son. The old man replied, "My son left home several years ago, and no one has heard from him. However, if he should ever return, he may have his choice of one of three things: (1) All my money; (2) All my possessions; (3) He could chose any one of my servants.

Sure enough, when the son heard that his father had passed away, he returned home to see what his father had left him. When he was offered the three choices he wisely choose his father's eldest servant. He realized that if he had the servant, he had everything the servant had.

Jesus, God's servant. God the Father has entrusted everything to Him. When a person chooses Jesus, he also possesses all that Jesus has. Romans 8:17 says we are "joint-heirs with Christ."

Will you follow Christ's example as a servant?

If you are not saved, trust Christ who gave His life for you.

If you are saved, serve Him... Romans 12:1—"which is your *REASONABLE service.*" Jesus said, "*He that is greatest among you shall be your SERVANT*" (Mt. 23:11).

The greatest commendation that could ever be said of you is, "*Well done, thou good and faithful SERVANT*" (Mt. 25:21). Will Jesus say this to you?