

“My Servant—the Chosen”—Isaiah 42:1-3

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “My Servant—the Chosen,” is Isaiah 42:1-3 → *Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold, My chosen, in Whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up His voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed He will not break, and a faintly burning wick He will not quench; He will faithfully bring forth justice.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

“Service with a smile!” This is the mantra of many businesses who endeavor to present their employees as genuinely concerned about **you**. Think about the number of times you have been greeted with a smile and welcomed as you entered the business establishment. There may have been an intentional effort made to make you feel comfortable—so comfortable that you feel they’re here to serve your every need and desire! They may strive to show interest in your life, making conversation about your interests, family and so forth in an effort to show that they genuinely care about **you**.

While some people may be very receptive to such “attention” and positive “service” there are many others who are actually annoyed by such efforts even

to the point of feeling like the employee is acting hypocritically. It actually makes one ask some questions about the concept of the service which we receive and give on a daily basis: Can you force genuine care for another person from a paycheck? Is service really servicing if the motives for such service are self-seeking and self-benefitting? Is it even possible for a person to serve without expecting something in return which benefits him? Upon what is receiving “good service” or “bad service” based? Upon the person’s faithfulness to his task or how he made me feel at the moment?

No matter how you analyze it serving people will be taxing on your physical endurance, emotional well-being and even your joy in life. Why? Because serving people means serving sinners who are selfish, self-centered and self-entitled. This is why the cliché “You can’t please all of the people all of the time” has been countered with “Good luck pleasing any people at any time!”

In verse 1 of our text Isaiah speaks about God’s *chosen servant*. *Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold, My chosen, in Whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations*. God chose to call many individuals in the Scriptures as *My servant* and the service they rendered carried a wide variety of assignments. While He had used this title with such people of faith as Abraham (cf. Genesis 26:24), Moses (cf. Numbers 12:7), David (cf. Isaiah 37:35) and even Isaiah himself (cf. Isaiah 20:2), he even used it for

unbelieving kings like Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon (cf. Jeremiah 25:9), and Cyrus, the king of Persia (cf. Isaiah 43:10; 45:1). *My Servant* also came to be a designation for the whole nation of Israel collectively (cf. Jeremiah 30:10) to indicate the reason for their existence.

Being chosen as God's servant will also be taxing on your physical endurance, emotional well-being and even your joy in life. Moses became so frustrated that he cried out to Yahweh in Numbers 11:10 → *Why have You dealt ill with Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You lay the burden of all this people on me?* The prophet Jeremiah became so distraught in his service for the LORD that he actually felt "deceived" by Yahweh. He said to Him in Jeremiah 20:7 → *O LORD, You have deceived me, and I was deceived; You are stronger than I, and You have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me.* The prophet Elijah despaired so much while serving Yahweh that he went into the desert to die! (cf. 1 Kings 19:4)

Why such struggle serving the LORD? Because serving the LORD means caring for and serving people which means serving sinners who are selfish, self-centered and self-entitled. This is why service that is a real concern and care for others must have a motivation much greater than a paycheck.

This is why God's servant is one upon whom He has put His Holy Spirit! It

is the Holy Spirit Who gives you Christ's heart, genuine concern and care for sinners like yourself. It is the Holy Spirit Who brings the much needed strength during those trying times of service to sinners like yourself in the midst of rejection, "service sabotage" and ingratitude. It is the Holy Spirit Who produces the results in the midst of all your servant efforts, results which belong to His will and His timing. Such service can only flow from being a sinner who trusts in the Person and Work of Yahweh's Servant, Jesus.

This prophecy is actually describing the Person & Work Jesus, God's "anointed One." The Hebrew title "Messiah" and the Greek title "Christ" both mean "the anointed one". He is described as a humble *servant* Who *will not cry aloud or lift up His voice, or make it heard in the street.* (verse 2) It is a picture of one who serves humbly without calling peoples' attention to his service. Verse 3 of our text says *a bruised reed He will not break, and a faintly burning wick He will not quench.* Many would feel like a broken dying plant isn't worth trying to bring back life and would simply throw it away. Many would be annoyed by a smoldering wick with all the smoke it produces and simply snuff it out. Jesus comes to strengthen and bring new life to sinners like yourself who are broken and smoldering spiritually to the point of having no hope!

This prophecy has been fulfilled in Jesus! He was baptized *to fulfill all*

righteousness (cf. Matthew 3:14-15) so that by faith in Him you *might become the righteousness of God*. (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21) Even Jesus' healing ministry was proclamation to the people that He was this promised Servant and Savior of the world! Acts 10:38 says that *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were **oppressed by the devil**, for God was with Him*. Broken spirits, broken relationships, broken bodies—brokenness in all it's forms—is a result of the devil bringing sin into our lives and world. **Jesus—Yahweh's chosen Servant—came to crush satan's power once and for all!**

This is the *justice* He came to *bring forth*. He is described later by the prophet Isaiah as Yahweh's Suffering Servant (cf, Isaiah 52:13-53:12). He took upon Himself the just penalty for your sin—eternal suffering in hell. He did it, His life filled with humiliation and suffering, taxing His physical endurance, emotional well-being and joy in the midst of rejection, “service sabotage” and ingratitude in the midst of sinful choices. They even made the choice to crucify Him because He just wasn't serving them the way they thought He should!

However, He was **the LORD's** chosen Servant to fulfill His will in His love and care for us wayward sinners! His life, death and resurrection covered the *justice* which was necessary for the payment for your sin! As Romans 5:18-19 says: *Therefore, as Adam's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so*

Christ's one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by Adam's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by Christ's obedience the many will be made righteous. In His righteousness you are forgiven and need not suffer the penalty of hell because of your sin!

It is the humbling experience of receiving the forgiveness of sins by Jesus which produces a genuine care and concern for sinners. It is the Holy Spirit Who empowers you to serve . . . yes, serve sinners . . . with humility and . . . yes, much suffering. It doesn't flow from a paycheck or special recognition or a "thank you" or receiving some kind of trophy. Rather, it flows from the life, death and resurrection of God's Servant—the Chosen—Jesus. He placed this before His disciples when He taught them about serving. He told them they would do it different than how it's done in the world. He said in Mark 10:44-45
→ *Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Amen.*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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