

He Will Bring Justice to the Nations

Isaiah 42:1-9

Whenever I see the kids off in the morning, I often say, “**Go change the world!**”

Recently, I was about to leave the house when Victoria said, “Where you are going?” I said, “I’m going to change the world.” She retorted, “Well, you’re not going to change it that much!”

While we are limited in what we can do – **we can’t help but see brokenness everywhere in this world. We long for things to be different.**

If you can identify with this reality, then you will find encouragement in Isaiah 42.

“**Justice**” is mentioned **3X** in the first four verses.

This implies that **the world is unjust, that it is broken.**

We see it all over the place today. **Think about plight of those:**

- Who live in the slums of Nairobi
- Who are hungry in Ethiopia
- Who dwell in poverty in Haiti.
- Who are in conflict with bordering nations
- Who are beheaded for their faith
- Who are sexually abused, some enslaved and sold – repeatedly
- Who are abused, overlooked, and dehumanized simply because of their race
- Who can’t read
- Who are surrounded with pollution
- Who experience the misery of....
 - AIDS
 - Cancer
 - Divorce
 - Abandonment
 - Loneliness
 - Bereavement
 - Depression
 - Infertility
 - Broken political systems
 - Corrupt governments
 - Insecurity
 - Disability
 - Mental Illness

The effects of sin and brokenness are everywhere.

Isaiah wanted his audience and our audience to know this: **Jesus is the Hope of the Whole World!**

Jesus, the Messiah, has come to bring personal deliverance to individuals & total justice to the whole world.

This is not a **pep-talking-dad** spouting off **shallow, positive thinking.**

Yahweh promises it (5, 9)!

- We should not respond to God by saying, “Well, he’s not going to change it that much.”
- Oh yes He will.

Advent means (among other things) that sinful addictions, depression, cancer, racism, terrorism, famine, poverty, orphanhood, abuse, **do not have the last word!**

At the time of Isaiah's writing, Israel is in captivity, and the Lord promises a deliverer from the East to lead them out of bondage. Most believe it refers to Cyrus (chs 40-48), a pagan King (cf, 444:28). Cyrus was Medo-Persian ruler who overthrew the Babylonian empire, and in 538 B.C. allowed some Judean exiles to return home (Ezra 1:1).

But a deliverer much greater than Cyrus is coming.
He is the Deliverer for the whole world.

Over 700 years before the birth of Christ, we read about him here.

Some call Isaiah the **5th gospel** because it's almost like he was an eyewitness.

We see what kind of King We Have, what Kind of King We Need, and what kind of people we should be.

- To **Pilate**, "My kingdom is not of this world..."

Jesus is building his kingdom in a different way – being born of a virgin, in humble conditions, living obediently to the Father, dying on a cross, speaking truth; gently healing bruised people; bringing perfect justice to the world; and by using people who enter the kingdom through repentance, and who then take on the character of their King as they join His mission.

So let's look at this exquisite picture of Christ, in four categories of characteristics, then I want to ask two questions.

#1: The Servant King (1)

"Behold" – Get this!

It's in the **beginning** of the chapter and the **end** of the **previous chapter** – read **41:29**. Idols are useless.

NIV doesn't like "Behold." I challenge you to use "Behold" today [**"Behold, I bring you brunch."**]

- **Look – stand in awe, be amazed... Perk up"**

The **Servant is different than other Rulers. He's worthy of worship!**

- You've been created to worship.
- Isaiah is saying, **"Smash your idols and worship and listen to and follow the Messiah."**

Idolatry and injustice are related.

Our first parents brought a worldwide curse on the land through their sin – which was an act of idolatry. They wanted to be God. Now injustice is everywhere.

- Humans **continue to choose substitute gods**, and as a result, brokenness continues. Injustice is **more than a sociological issue**. It involves **idolatry – it's a spiritual evil**.

"My Servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights..."

Jesus, the ultimate King, **actually came serving others, giving His life away.**

- Following this King means to be a **servant** not a **celebrity**.

A unique feature of this fifth Gospel is the **Four "Servant Songs."**

- **A mysterious figure** appears at the end of his book.

- **Isaiah 42 is the first of four Servant Songs of Isaiah fulfilled in Jesus**
- **See 49:1-13; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12**
- **The NT writers affirm for us that it is indeed Jesus, as these songs are quoted.**
- In **Matt 12:18-21**, Matthew quotes these first four verses – **the longest OT quotation in Matt. gospel** – showing us that it refers to Jesus.

Sometimes Israel is called the servant

- Even in this chapter – **42:19**. But that servant failed. Jesus will be the representative of them. He is the anti-type.

Verse 1 is a beautiful **Trinitarian verse** showing the divine love within the Trinity.

- Unlike Cyrus, the Father would **delight** in the Servant, and **uphold** Him.

You should be thinking about Jesus here in **Mark 1/Matthew 3**

- **God was quoting himself!**
- The **first half**, “This is my beloved Son,” is a quote of the Greek Version of **Psalm 2:7-8** (a great strong king, who will have the nations as an inheritance)
- The **second half**, “in whom I am well pleased” comes from **Isaiah 42:1** (the servant).
 - Further, the Spirit **descends like a dove**, on the Gentle King.

At Jesus’ baptism, God’s says that this great strong King of Psalm 2 and this suffering Servant of Isaiah is the same person: Jesus.

Jesus was the obedient Son of the Father.

We get the benefits of Jesus always pleasing the Father.

1b: “I have put my Spirit upon Him”

Isaiah 11:1-2

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

- ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD

Luke 4 – Jesus’ Ministry Begins with numerous references to the Spirit’s work...

¹ And Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness...

¹⁴ And Jesus returned **in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all....

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. ...He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

- ¹⁸ “The **Spirit of the Lord** is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

This liberation is noted later in Isaiah 42.

Acts 10:38-43

“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....”

Beneath the surface, there was a spiritual battle raging.
Jesus went in the strength of the Spirit to accomplish His mission.

Now it is through Christ, by the Spirit we live as lights in this dark world.

#2: The Just King (1c)

“he will bring forth justice to the nations.”

This phrase is like a **headline of the chapter**. 3 X. The details around it support this idea.

We see the high, global, cosmic, dimension of the King.

mišpāt - “justice.”

Isaiah has **more than legal correctness in mind, or human rights**, though that’s included.

- It’s more than punishing evil-doers and caring for victims;
- It’s more than **rectifying/retributive justice**.

Sometimes it does mean that. But usually *mišpāt* refers to something **more general**. It’s bigger.

- It refers to **the kind of society in which rectifying justice isn’t necessary!**
- Behind it is the idea of **shalom**.
- Jesus is coming to bring **total shalom**. **Absolute peace/total well-being/harmony**.
- **The Just King is bringing a Just Kingdom.**

How did we lose shalom?

Genesis 3 – When our first parents sinned, shalom was lost.

- **Spiritual** brokenness – we lost relationship with God
- **Relational** brokenness – we lost relationship with each other.
- **Social** brokenness – conflict between genders/races would result
- **Physical** brokenness – sickness and death entered the world
- **Systemic** brokenness – all governmental systems have some dysfunction because of sin

“Joy to the World” – “...He comes to make his blessing known **far as the curse is found**.”

- **Where is the curse found?** Throughout the whole earth.

The Servant coming to restore all things.

- **Personal Dimension**: He will restore our relationship with God.
- **Cosmic Dimension**: And He’s to heal/restore **everything** in the **world**

The Servant **will undo everything that sin has done**.

Ray Ortlund points out that word is used in **Exodus 26:30** of the **“plan” for the tabernacle** is this word for **justice (*mišpāt*)**.

- God revealed His plan for this meeting face with God to Moses.
- The Tabernacle was kind of **mini-Eden**.
- He also has a plan for the **blueprint for human existence**.
- **God knows how human beings and human society can be at their best.**

Because this Servant came into the world, we have the assurance that God's kingdom *will* come, and his will *will* be done on earth as it is in Heaven – and are made for this Kingdom.

Recognize that the longing you have for justice – for a true and better world – is really a longing for Jesus. It can only be fulfilled in Jesus.

“Always Winter but Never Christmas” (*The Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe*)

The children ask about Aslan. They are told that he is the King, who will make all things right and rescue those in the Witch's captivity. Then Mr Beaver shares this old Narnian rhyme:

Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again.

Aslan changes everything externally and internally when he appears.

In a greater way, wrongs will be right, when Christ is in sight.

- Sorrows will be no more. Springtime will replace winter.

#3: The Healing King (2-4)

2 – The Servant uses different methods than other rulers.

His methods do not include aggression or violence, like that of Nebuchadnezzar or Cyrus.

- His kingdom will **advance quietly**.
- No **parades, or pomp, airplanes**.

He will get the results of a King – justice – but doesn't use the methods of typical kings – domineering power/manipulation.

Kings often cared more about the accomplishment of a task, like getting a road built, than caring for those who suffer in the process.

Jesus walked with humility.

He didn't startle people with bravado.

The one group he played hardball with was the religious leaders, who were hypocrites; self-righteous; proud.

V. 3 – The Gentle Healer – Here we see the personal, intimate dimension of Jesus' ministry. A Bruised Reed

Bruise - “Oh it's just a bruise!” in English

- In Hebrew it's translated “**crush**.”
- It's like a **deep contusion that has damaged a vital internal organ**.
- It's **something that doesn't show on the surface; but inside you're dying**.

A bruised reed: A stalk of grain that is been broken – at an angle – not in two pieces. It's bruised. Because it's broken it will never produce grain.

But this Servant does what no one else can do – HEAL IT, so that it will produce grain.

Jesus Christ is attracted to hopeless cases. He doesn't crush the weak, like other rulers. He defends and heals them.

- Jesus loves the fragile – who are **dying on the inside.**
 - He loves the people who are **beaten, battered, and bruised.**
“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted / and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Ps 34:18).
 - He loves people who may not show it on the **outside but on the inside are dying.**
 - **He knows what to do with them!**
 - **He doesn't discard them as useless.**
- “He binds up the brokenhearted and heals their wounds.” (Ps 147, Isa 61)
- We're all bruised reeds.
 - Jesus can bind us up and make us fruitful again.

Example from Matthew 12

When Matthew quotes this text in the New Testament, he says it was fulfilled **when Jesus was healing sick people, and Jesus was quiet about it (Matthew 12:15–21).**

- He **heals a guy on the Sabbath...** The religious leaders are engaged, but he doesn't cry aloud in the street. Instead he withdraws. Many follow him. And he heals them and orders them not to make him known. (12:9-116). Then Matthew says, “This was to fulfill what was said about him in Isaiah 42:1-4.

Jesus gave **suffering people their lives back.**

- He **didn't break the bruised.** He dealt tenderly with them.
- He spoke peace and comfort to them.
- There **was no destructive swagger.**

He is the Gentle Servant brings forth justice to the nations.

Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*

“**Are you bruised? Be of good comfort, He calls you. Conceal not your wounds, open all before Him ... go to Christ...There's more mercy in Christ than sin in you.**”

**The Servant came into the world to “Kiss your wounds.”
He came to gently deal with your bruised soul.**

- Are you bruised from relational conflict, disappointment, depression, anxiety, fear, failure, bad choices, physical weakness? Find in Him rest for your soul.

“**A Faintly Burning Wick He Will Not Quench**”

Some only have a little flicker about them. They're in danger of burning out.
The Servant blows on the flicker– “**wwwhhooooehhh**”

OT Example: Elijah

We read about his great prophet doing great things in chapter 1 Kings 17-18.
Then in chapter 19, **he's cracking under the pressure of his ministry.**

- After a great victory, he doesn't celebrate. **He doesn't go to Disney World!**
- He sits under a broom **tree and asks the Lord to take his life!**
- He's physically, emotionally, spiritually, and ministerially – **drained.**
(I shared this last week in Ukraine to a group of 60 plus pastors).

Elijah was bruised. He's flame is just flickering.

God first sends an angel, and what does the angel do? He doesn't rebuke Elijah.
The angel cooks!!!! He makes some cake!

- Some of you are pretty good cooks, but I doubt you can make something this good!!!!
- He's asleep and wants to die – and he wakes up an angel cooks him something – twice!
- Eventually, through the Angel, God gets Elijah talking. He challenges him.
- He comes in a still small voice – and blows on the dimly burning wick of his soul...
- He healed the bruised Reed.

Then we read about Elijah again in 1 Kings 21 – Rejuvenated challenging King Ahab!

We find Jesus doing this for people in the gospels...

- NT Example: Peter (John 21)

V. 3b-4 – The Faithful King will accomplish his mission

He will not be disheartened or crushed until he has brought forth this shalom.

- He's too legit to quit.

But notice something. This may be in a footnote.

There's a hint of the atonement.

- The exact same words for "grow faint" is the same word among for "faintly" burning wick.
- And the exact same word for "bruised" is the word for "discouraged"

The servant will suffer in ways that are similar to suffering people. He will be a suffering King.

The point is, the Servant will experience the exact same things – bruised/crushed/snuffed out – but it won't stop him from bringing justice.

It's actually through his sufferings that he will bring healing!!!

Isaiah 53:5 – by his wounds, we are healed!

Gen 3:15: "He will bruise your heel."

- He will be bruised, but it won't stop him from bringing salvation.
- "He was wounded for our transgressions, and crushed (or bruised) for our iniquities."
(53:5)

Our bruised heart needs to hear, "This is my son/daughter, with him/her, I am well pleased."
If we're in Christ, that's what we hear.

This salvation is for the ends of the earth – the coastlands.

He's not a tribal Messiah. But the Messiah for the nations.

They wait for this "instruction." The truth that will set them free.... That leads to #4:

#4: The Liberating King (5-9)

This king is coming to free us from the dark, blindness, and prison...

V. 5: There is no doubt about whose speaking! Creator God! Sovereign over all!

V. 6-7: "you" – God is also the Redeeming God, and He sends His Servant for that mission.

"Righteousness" – the will of God is right and pure.

"Uphold you"

- His mission will be dangerous. They killed the prophets.
- At his birth
 - Herod, every baby boy to be massacred.

- Jesus, father Joseph, takes the family and they **flee to Egypt**.
- Behind it all, His Father in heaven was “upholding Him.”
- **Public ministry**
 - Luke 4:29, “Throw him off a cliff!” His Father upheld him... “My hour hasn’t come” (Jn 7:6)

6b: A covenant to the people

- Appointed him to be the **covenant head**
- **Mediator of a new covenant**. He was our **representative, cut the deal with his own blood**.
- The father appointed the Son to become the covenant for the people
- **“In Christ”** – over and over. **All our spiritual blessings are derived from our union with Him!**

6c: Light to the nations

- The truth of salvation; the message of the gospel.
- Isaiah’s statement probably lies behind **John 8:12** – “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- **Simeon** saw the beginning of Isaiah’s words fulfilled in Luke 2, as he takes up the child and says that Jesus is a **“light for the Gentiles” (2:32)**.
- **This is** one of the earliest designations of Jesus.
- **Following Jesus, involves walking in the light** – truth, purity, meaning, hope.

7a: Sight to the blind

- Double sight – Mark 9-10.
- **Bartimaeus experienced the Messiah’s sight giving power**.
- It was a foretaste of the shalom he’s bringing.

7b: Frees the prisoners

“Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother, and in His name all oppression shall cease.”

- Have you ever thought, **“Can I change, or am I stuck with this forever? Is this it? Is this me forever?”**
- Jesus is the great liberator.

As followers of the Messiah, and recipients of this grace, **His mission becomes our mission**. As His agents in the world, we’re called to lead people into the **light, into sight, and out of prison**. Recall Paul’s words in **Acts 26:15-18**

8-9: God’s Name is Glorified

- He will give his glory to no other, nor his praise to our carved idols.
- He **stakes his honor on this Servant’s mission**.
- We should give Him glory (v. 10)

9: We should believe this: “Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare.” What is he saying? **You can trust him!**

Ray Ortlund:

God is saying, “If I kept my word about Cyrus, and I did, and you know I did, then you can believe that I’ll keep my word about my servant. In fact, I launched his mission 2,000 years ago. It’s already underway. So dump your idols and trust *me*. I want you to be a part of my new world.” This is exciting. This calls for music!

Two Concluding Questions:

#1: Are you a bruised reed? Will you put yourself in the care of the Servant?

Jesus is attracted to the battered.

He never MISTREATS THEM!

- The Servant has come to **deal with the weakest people in the human race.**
- He's the ultimate physician.
- Put yourself in his care.

He **expresses his sufficiency in a variety of ways to the weak**: Scripture, prayer, accountability, fellowship, baptism, the Lord's Supper, counseling, friends.

- Scott Sauls tells of his own experience of a time of anxiety and depression. **He was terrified of sun going up and down... he lost 25 pounds... couldn't sleep even with sleeping pills...** all the while, he kept pastoring and preaching and the Lord blessed his ministry, but inside was dying.
- He shares how the Lord restored him, particularly through **some good friends/counselors.**

The Lord expresses his sufficient grace in a variety of ways to bruised reeds.

Don't turn from him, but to Him.

Put yourself in his care. He will not fail you!

#2: What kind of people will we be if we follow this Servant?

If we adore Him, and follow him, what will happen to us?

1. We will care for the bruised.

- If we follow the Servant we will be **tender** and **sensitive** and **gracious** and **forgiving**.
- We will not be an **elitist church**.
- We will **care for the wounded – the poor, immigrant, orphan, widow, prisoner, lonely, the abused, the battered, the confused, the anxious, the depressed...**
- We won't trample people to get what we want.
- We won't love money and use people; we will love people and use money.

2. We will share the liberating message of the gospel.

- We will share the liberating message of the gospel with the nations.
- The gospel is ultimately what heals the heart.
- We will preach freedom to the captives, sight for the blind.

3. We will wear justice.

- We will do justice, or as Job says (29:14), we will put on justice, like clothes.
- We will live with a sensitivity to human injustice.
- We will do the Great commission and Great Commandment.
- We will seek to putt relationships and everything else right in the world.
- We will deal with social structures and healing the hurting heart.
- The book of Isaiah is filled with references with the need to do justice: Isaiah 1:11-17; chapter 58.

- **Justice Sundays Coming in 2017 – Feb 5, Racial Harmony**

Like the Messiah, we must seek **the results of the king without the methods of the kings.**

- **MLK Jr.:** “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”
- **That’s different methods.**
- **“You can turn your fire hoses on us, take us to jail, beat us, but we’re not retaliating – we’re going to love you until you changes these laws and practices.”**
- **That’s what was needed then.**
- **Justice requires Spirit-enabled power, and wisdom.**

Jesus is **the ultimate Servant**. He has come to save His people from their sins.

Jesus was **the ultimate missionary**. He has given us the model of mission – proclaiming truth, caring for the bruised, doing the work of justice.

He has come for us so let’s sing to Him and let’s follow him.

Let’s join Isaiah in verse 10 – and “sing to Him a new song!”

- He has given us **new life**.
- He has brought a **new covenant**.
- **He will make all things new.**