

“Behold My Servant”

The Servant Songs of Isaiah

Isaiah 42:1-9

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Jeff: Our heavenly Father, we thank You for this day and for the blessing of life in Christ. And we thank You for all of the benefits that we’ve received in Him. Father, we thank You for the fact that You not only created us, but when humanity fell into sin You redeemed us, Lord, when You could have left us in our sin and condemnation we deserved in Adam. And yet because of Your love You sent Your only-Begotten into the world that we might have life and have it abundantly, that we might have the blessings and the benefits of being united to Christ, and that we might have faith, and that we might have assurance of being kept and loved. Lord, all of these things are things we marvel at and thank You for, and pray that You’ll continue to increase in our own experience. Help us, Lord, to understand that experience—Your love for us—more and more. Help us to have an increase of assurance, a greater measure of it.

Father, we ask that You’ll do these things for us, especially as we live our lives in a world that is increasingly hostile to the faith. Father, as we bow before You even today we recognize that our country is changing. And so, Lord, we pray for the speaker at the breakfast tomorrow, that he’ll be able to provide a different perspective on some of the current events and that men will take it to heart.

Father, we pray for other men that we care for. We pray for Bob Forney. We ask that You’ll bless Him and strengthen Him. We pray that You’ll cause him to increasingly become well. We also pray for Kevin. And with the numerous health concerns that he has we commit him to You. We recognize how frail and delicate life is. But we recognize also on the other hand how durable the human body is. And Lord, we pray that the durability will win out. And we pray that You in Your providence will bring him back to health. And certainly, Father, we pray that You will encourage his spirit while he goes through this time of trial.

Lord, we also certainly pray for our brother Bruce and are thankful for him. Lord, we ask that Your hand would be upon him for good. And we pray, Lord, that You’ll give him wisdom. Lord, we ask that You’ll give him strength. And we pray, Lord, that You’ll bless his wife as she supports him and enables him to do the many things that he is still engaged in.

Father, we turn our hearts toward Your word now. We recognize that this is the only safe place to stand. In a world where there are many words, those words are often spun in such a way as to support a lie or a deception. But Lord, this is Your word. And we’re thankful for it, that it is truth. We ask that You’ll help us to study it with open minds and keen eyes, that You’ll cause this truth to be embedded upon our hearts and written upon our hearts. And we pray as it is that it will come forth from our lives in ways that our hands demonstrate, and Lord, in ways that our thoughts think. So Lord, we ask that You’ll bless us and strengthen us by Your grace to study Your word. And we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

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Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Well, today we’re going to look at Isaiah 42. So if you would turn with me to Isaiah 42 we’re going to look at just the first nine verses; let me read these to you.

*“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold,
My Chosen, in whom My soul delights.
I put My Spirit upon You,
And He will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry aloud or lift up His voice,
Or make it heard in the streets.
A bruised reed He will not break,
And a faintly burning wick He will not quench.
He will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth,
And the coastlands wait for His law.
Thus says God, the LORD,
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 in it:
I am the LORD;
I have called You in righteousness.
I will take You by the hand and keep You.
I will give You as a covenant for the people,
A light for the nations,
To open the eyes that are blind,
To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
From the prison those who sit in darkness.
I am the LORD, that is My name;
My glory I give to no other,
Nor My praise to carved idols.
Behold, the former things have come to pass,
And new things I now declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”*

Okay. I don’t know about you, but I happen to think that when we look at these passages, these Isaiah songs, one of the things I think we see the Lord Jesus Christ. I think we see Him in a way that is sometimes certainly different from the way the New Testament describes Him. Sometimes we see Him from the perspective of those who have yet to understand the fullness of His appearing. Sometimes we see the psychological state of the Messiah that we don’t necessarily see in the New Testament. But what we do see in these Servant songs is a suffering Servant who will come and obey and achieve salvation for us. And we’ve now headed into those sections that contain the suffering Servant songs.

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I just want to remind you of something. I want you to remember what Isaiah 40-48 was all about. When you think back to Isaiah 40-48, one of the things that I said last time we were together was that this is about God and the nations—God judging the nations, God rebuking the nations. And why was He rebuking them? In the main He was rebuking them for their idolatry.

And so here we find a transition as it were from chapter 41 to 42. If we think about that we think about that here we’re in a section where God is dealing with the idolatry of the nations. And we’re moving into this Servant passage. So we’re moving into 41-42.

Now I want you to think about that transition. It’s really a courtroom scene, if you will. One of the things that you realize is that the nations are appealing to their idols. They’re appealing to their idols to help them in time of need, to supply grain for the crops, and so on. And they’re engaged in idol construction.

And you see that one of the things they say to one another is, “Be strong.” The craftsmen say this to one another. The text says that the craftsman, as it were, strengthens the goldsmith. They tell each other that each part of their work is a good work.

And so here you have this picture in chapter 41 of people building an idol, and people encouraging each other in the building of it. And so when you get to verse 21 of chapter 41, one of the things you find is God turning to these idols that have been constructed by these people and His people—not just the nations but His own people!—and He turns to the idol and He says,

Transcriber’s Note: Isaiah 41:21, NKJV. *“Present your case, says the LORD. Bring forth your strong reasons, says the King of Jacob.”*

Jeff: “Okay, present your case for yourself. Tell Us a little bit about yourself. But not only a little bit about yourself; tell Us how great you are.” And verse 22 says, “And do that by telling Us what will take place next. You’re a god; you’ve been constructed to be such. Wonderful! Now tell Us how great you are by telling Us the future. Go ahead; We’re all listening. Forget that; I know you can’t do that.”

So in verse 22 God says, “Why don’t you tell Us a little bit about the past?” Now that should be easy for anyone. If any one of us were asked the question what happened yesterday?, with a little work we could probably tell each other what happened in our lives yesterday.

And so God says, “Look, you can’t tell the future; fine. Tell Us what happened yesterday. Tell Us about the past. Tell Us, that We might know that you are God,” or a god.

And so He puts them on the spot as it were. He’s really calling them to account. God knows and we know that they’re really just dumb pieces of wood or statues or anything else that they’re fabricated from. But here are these foolish people who fabricated them. And they’re having to watch this as God humbles what they’ve done. And in fact when you get to verse 23 of chapter 41 he basically says, “Just do something.”

Transcriber’s Note: Isaiah 41:23, NKJV.
*“Show the things that are to come hereafter;
That we may know that you are gods;
Yes, do good or do evil,*

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That we may be dismayed and see it together.”

Jeff: “You can’t tell Us the future; you can’t tell Us the past. Just do something. But you can’t do anything because you are neither good nor evil. You don’t know good or evil. You are a stump; you are a rock; you’re something of an inanimate object. You’re nothing.”

And so here we have a transition. As I said, there is a transition between 41 and 42. And the transition is here. In verse 24 He says, *“Behold, you are nothing.”* And then in verse 29 He says, *“Behold, all of them are false.”* And then in verse 1 of chapter 42 He says, *“Behold, My Servant.”*

Now I think that’s quite an astounding transition, isn’t it? *“Behold, You are nothing. Behold, all of them are false. Behold, My Servant.”* And so there’s this wonderful transition from thinking about idolatry to thinking about the Son, and the Servant Son.

Now we need to think in general about this because God has many servants. There’s Eliamin, there’s Cyrus; even Israel is called a son. But this is a Son like no other; this is a different Son. And one of the things that we find here in the text is that God basically tells us the traits of this particular Son. He wants us to understand who this Son is. And so He gives us some identifying traits.

Notice some of the things that He says. He says, *“I will uphold Him.”* He says, *“I delight in this Chosen One.”* He’s telling us who He is. He says, *“I put My Spirit upon Him.”* These are all things that God is telling us about His Servant Son. And the question that you have to ask yourself is this. Who is this Son? Who is the Son?

Now I want you to think about it like this. If we’re back here in the eighth century B.C., and we’re all the way up here 2100 years afterwards, it’s a different answer for us. Of course we know and we’re all saying, look, this is the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you think back to the eighth century B.C. and God is telling them about this Servant Son and not naming Him, that’s a different answer, isn’t it? I don’t know who this is. This is the One foreshadowed; this is the One foretold. This is certainly the One who was in the mind of God when He prophesied in Genesis 3:15 that a Seed of the woman would rise up and deliver them from their travails; this is that Person. And yet who is it?

Well, you remember in 1 Peter chapter 1:10-12.

Transcriber’s Note: 1 Peter 1:10-12, ESV. *“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what Person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”*

Jeff: We’re told by Peter that the prophets of the Old Testament who prophesied by the Spirit of Christ did not know the Person or the time of His appearing. They looked through a glass dimly, but not so us, right? I mean, it’s easy for us to look at this text and see the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I think that I’ve told you this story in the past. There was a friend of mine; his name was Rich Gantz. He was a Jewish man who lived up in Canada. He was a

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psychologist. His life was falling apart. He ended up going to LABri. And somebody at LABri—Francis Schaeffer’s place over in Switzerland—opened up the Bible and read to him one of the Servant songs; I think it was Isaiah 53.

And he was basically a high-strung individual. He backed away and he said, “How dare you read the New Testament to me, a Jew!” And they said to him, “That’s Isaiah.”

And he said that was the beginning of the end for him. Or that was the beginning of the beginning for him. And so the idea that we see the Lord Jesus Christ where the Jews don’t is kind of an interesting thing, because here is a Jew who knows so much about Jesus that when he hears the Old Testament read he recognizes it as Jesus.

And we recognize this as Jesus—this Person, this Servant who is described in the text. We recognize Him as Jesus.

I want you to just think of a couple of different places in the New Testament that have this kind of language that we’ve been thinking about here in Isaiah 42. For instance, think about Philippians chapter 2, verse 5 and following. Here we find the Servant being ascribed to Jesus. Jesus is the Servant in this text. And so we find Him described as Somebody who is high and exalted, Somebody who takes upon Himself the form of a Servant. Again that’s just right out of Isaiah, that kind of Philippians 2 language.

Or think about Luke 9:28, and especially verse 35. *“This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him.”* Isaiah 42 tells us that the Son, this Servant, is the Chosen One in whom His soul delights. And that’s exactly what we’re told about Jesus. That’s what the voice from heaven tells us about Jesus at His baptism.

How about Matthew chapter 3? *“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”* He delights in Him. This is Jesus. Who is this? This is the Lord. And the Lord/Servant is the Lord’s Servant.

I want you to think about that. I want you to think about how we have here a glimpse of the Trinity. In John 1:18 one of the things that we find is this. And I want to read it to you because it’s quite a verse. We oftentimes think about John chapter 1 verse 1 being a startling veers with regard to the Deity of Christ, and so it is.

Transcriber’s Note: John 1:1, ESV. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

Jeff: But listen to this. *“No one has ever seen God. The only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.”* Now think about that. We think about the Father as God. But it says here that the God who is at the Father’s side has Made Him—the Father, who is God—known.

It’s really striking how the New Testament everywhere talks to us about the plurality of Persons in the Godhead. And here’s a place where we’re being told that this One who is God, who dwells in the bosom of the Father, has come to exegete or make the Father known to us. He’s in the Father’s grip, as it were.

Think about it this way. One of the ways that we describe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit prior to creation is *paraperesis*. There’s an inner penetration of knowing and being amongst the three Persons of the Deity. That’s the Trinity.

We think about it in a variety of ways. For instance, when we think about the Godhead, one of the basic concepts that we think about is the simplicity of God. That is

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to say, we think about God as being His attributes. He doesn't possess love; He is love. He doesn't possess goodness; He is goodness. His attributes and His existence can't be separated. And that is true of each Person of the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All of these ways of talking about the Trinity just help us to understand more richly and deeply that this Son is Himself God. Yes, Don; go ahead.

Don Maurer: In Isaiah 48 verse 16 it's a very interesting verse. It says:

“Come near to me; hear this:

I have not spoken in secret.

From the beginning, from the time that it was, I was there.

And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit have sent Me.”

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: Interesting.

Jeff: Oh yeah; that's beautiful. You know, one of the things we find is that we find a lot of language being taken up and used in the New Testament that is spoken out of the lips of God in the Old. You know, one of the places that I love is in Jeremiah chapter 5, for instance.

In Jeremiah chapter 5 this is when Israel is in rebellion. *“Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; look and take note. Search her squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her;”* that I may forgive her. And you have justice, which you can also translate as truth—faithfulness, as it were, as in Deuteronomy 32:4.

Now think about those concepts. A man who loves justice and is faithful or loves truth. Why? So that God can pardon sins. I want you to think about that. And I want you to think about it in light of something that I'm going to read to you. I'm not going to tell you where I'll read it from, but just listen for those concepts. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

That's 1 John 1:9. And it seems like, as John writes that, that here is the Man who is faithful for truth and justice and pardons sin, forgives us for all our unrighteousness. It's hard to read the New Testament and not see all of those Old Testament passages which just kind of bleed into the New Testament as they speak about Christ. It's really a striking thing.

One more thing is that this Servant will bring forth justice to the nations. You know, that's an interesting thing, especially as we think about it today. I think in some ways that this is something that we need to hear. And I think the question is: How is that justice going to be brought forward to the nations? And I think that justice is going to be brought forward into the nations by people confessing that the Lord is not only Savior, but that He's King. And until people confess Him as King, they're not going to live according to His statutes. And that's just as simple as it gets; that reduces it to the lowest common denominator.

And yet I want you to understand something. Just because we don't see the consummation of justice now doesn't mean that He has not brought justice, because He most certainly has. These things are waiting for the consummation. And when we see them in the consummation we'll see them as they truly are, even now in the present. So

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it’s just something for which we have to wait. Let me ask you. Any questions about that? Any thoughts that you have, talking about the character or the identity of the Lord Jesus in Isaiah 42? No?

Now, how about the character of the Servant that we find? Notice this. We find that He’s quiet. Isn’t it interesting that it says that He doesn’t cry out or raise His voice?

Now I want you to go with me to Matthew chapter 12 and verse 15 for just a minute. Notice: *“Jesus was aware of this, and He withdrew.”* That is, He was in trouble with the Pharisees because He healed the man with the withered hand.. Jesus, aware of the trouble He was in, withdrew from there. *“And many followed Him. And He healed them, and ordered them not to make Him known. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:*

‘Behold, My servant whom I have chosen.’

Here’s our text:

“My beloved, with whom My soul is well pleased.

I will put My Spirit upon Him,

And He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

He will not quarrel, or cry aloud,

Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.”

And he continues on. Now isn’t that interesting! Here Jesus commands them not to speak of Him. Why is that? Because it’s fulfilling this prophecy. Isn’t that interesting! I think that’s fascinating!

But I want you to see something else that I’ve already been through, because it’s interesting that it’s mentioned twice here in this text. He’s going to bring justice. But notice:

“a bruised reed He will not break,

And a smoldering wick He will not quench,

Until He brings justice to victory,

And in His name the Gentiles will hope.”

Now all of a sudden here we get a sense of what that justice is really about. We can talk about justice in the abstract, as if justice is going to come and we’re going to see justice upheld in this case and in that case. But actually what’s being said here is that justice is going to come into the midst of a people who are already judged. And that justice is going to take the punishment upon Himself. That Substitute is going to take the just judgment against them onto Himself. And they’re going to be declared righteous because He has satisfied justice, because justice has come to victory in Him. It’s just a fascinating thing.

But what we find here is that we find the twofold estate of Christ. And we find Christ in His estate of humiliation. We see Him as the suffering Servant, as the One being led to slaughter. And that’s not surprising. He’s humble and lowly. He’s a Servant.

But we also see Him as steadfast and graciously kind. Look at verse 3. In verse 3 we’re told that in this great text.

“A bruised reed He will not break,

And a faintly burning wick He will not quench.”

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Verse 4:

*“He will not grow faint or be discouraged,
Till He has established justice on the earth.”*

Now I want to put those two things together for just a minute. The first thing that we have a tendency to say is that we look at a text like this and we think how kind and merciful God is by sending us His Son who is going to look at somebody who is struggling. He’s struggling in the faith and God won’t snuff him out. His Son will not snuff out that burning wick, that smoldering flax, that person who’s weak in his faith.

And you know as well as I do how refreshing that is, because if you live the life of faith for any length of time you know how difficult it is to go from one day to the next. Sometimes you feel that you’re hanging on by a spiritual thread. And you take solace in the fact that the Christ in whom you believe is bigger than you are, and certainly stronger than the faith you exercise. But you also realize that the faith that you exercise, no matter how weak it is, comes from and is a gift of that great Savior. And so He is the One who ties you to Himself, no matter how experientially weak you feel in the faith. And so it really is something encouraging to read words like this.

But I want you to think about the connection between verse 3 and verse 4 here. Notice again what it says.

*“A bruised reed He will not break,
And a faintly burning wick He will not quench.”* Notice verse 4.
“He will not grow faint or be discouraged.”

Notice that word *discouraged*. If you have a note in your Bible down at the bottom, it is the word *bruised*. And so it’s interesting.

*“A bruised reed He will not break,
And a faintly burning wick He will not quench.”*
He will not grow faint or be bruised.

Now I want you to think about that for just a minute. It’s very striking, isn’t it? The fact that He can save bruised reeds is because He Himself is not bruised.

Now that’s very striking, because when you think about Christ as Substitute you think about Him taking upon Himself the punishment that I deserve for my sins. And we think about that and we say, now wait a minute. If He took upon Himself the punishment I deserve for my sins, then how could not He Himself be bruised? And I think there is a helpful way of understanding this. How is it that we talk about Christ as being the Sin-bearer?

Well, one of the things that we talk about is that we talk about *condition*, and we talk about *estate*. And I’ve already mentioned His estate. The humiliation is the estate of Christ. Humiliation and exaltation are the two estates.

But how is it that we distinguish condition from estate? Oftentimes we don’t. But the older theologians did distinguish between those two words.

Condition is something like this. I can be sinful as to my condition. But as to my estate I may not be guilty. Now how could that be? How could it be that I could be sinful as to my condition but not guilty as to my estate?

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Well, what the older theologians were quick to say is that an estate is where there is a judge present. If there is a judge present then my condition is judged. And so if I am in a sinful condition and in the presence of a judge I am guilty. If I am in a condition of innocence then I am not guilty.

Now why is that important for thinking theologically? Well because we oftentimes say that Christ was not a sinner, that He was in fact sinless, but treated as if He were a sinner. That’s one thing that we usually say.

We usually say something else. We usually talk about how Christ became the Sin-Bearer. We don’t say this. We don’t say that God took a syringe and pulled out all of the sin substance—whatever that is—and injected it into the Messiah so that He could bear our sins substantively—in his own veins, as it were. That’s not the way we talk about it.

We talk about our sins being imputed to Him. Well, what does that mean when we think about it? It’s not a substantive transfer, as if we inject Him with sin.

What is it, then? Well, I’ll tell you what it is: it’s not this. His condition doesn’t become a sinful one so that He is actually a sinner. No, because He is sinless and treated as if He were a sinner. So what happens is, he becomes in the estate of the guilty. In other words, our sentence of guilt is now imputed or declared to be His. And as that is the case He is treated in our stead as a sinner.

And so that is how we think of Him in terms of what? He doesn’t break the bruised reed. Why? Because He Himself is not bruised! He doesn’t share our condition! But He does share our estate on the cross. Do you see that? Does that make sense? Yes, Don?

Don: So when it says in Genesis 3 that “*you shall bruise His heel,*” or in Isaiah 53 when it says that “*It was the will of the LORD to bruise Him,*” is it talking about His estate?

Jeff: Well, you have to look at the context. When you look at the context Genesis 3 is clearly talking about a physicality to the suffering of Christ in terms of how He is treated as a sinner, right? He obviously goes through horrible treatment. But even the physicality of His curse bearing is nowhere near the significance of His spiritual curse bearing—having the wrath of God poured out for us. So there are dimensions of physicality to His curse bearing. But those are consequences of His estate, not of His condition.

Don: Okay.

Jeff: Does that make sense, Don?

Don: Yes.

Jeff: Okay.

Don: But you said He wasn’t bruised. And yet we have those—

Jeff: No, I didn’t say that. Isaiah said that. *(Laughter)*

Don: But Isaiah said that it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him.

Jeff: Yeah, that’s right. And again there are physical consequences. But here we’re talking about how it is that He can say, “I wasn’t bruised,” when in fact we know He was bruised.

Don: Right.

Jeff: Okay. I don’t know about you guys, but that’s the kind of stuff that’s better than coffee. *(Laughter)*

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The third is this: it’s justice. And we see that He establishes justice in verses 1, 3 and 4. And how does He do that? Well again, the answer is the gospel.

How does He establish justice? That’s a serious question when you think about it. I mean, when you talk to people in the world, this is often the objection that the Roman Catholic has. We have this judicial fiction; that’s what they call it. And so how is it that justice is established when people like us are forgiven our sins?

You know, it’s almost like this. Well okay; here’s a list of your sins, and is this how God establishes justice? Does He just say, “I’m going to take the divine eraser and just erase them?” Is that what happens? Is it as simple as that?

And the answer, of course, is no, because our sins deserve punishment. And God doesn’t just erase them; He doesn’t just take the divine eraser and erase them. No, those sins which have consequences are punished. They’re satisfied in Christ. And so justice is established in the Son. In other words, it would be injustice, and you and I both know it.

If somebody came into a courtroom setting, I don’t even have to create a fictitious setting. How about somebody who rapes, kills, murders? And he’s brought in before a judge and led out in three days, or less nowadays? No one thinks that’s just. No one in his right mind think that’s just, right? And so there’s a sense in which we say, wait a minute. Why isn’t he paying for that?

And it’s the same way with the gospel. The gospel is not just a get out of jail free card, where we’re brought in, arraigned and set free and hey, everything’s great; no. What happens is that our sins are punished, but not in us. They’re punished in Christ.

And that’s the greatness of the gospel. And the greatness of the gospel is sometimes diminished by us when we forget that. Why is that? Well, what I mean by that is that when I go out and sin as I please, without giving a thought to the Christ who I say is my Savior, then what am I doing? I’m basically saying, “Whatever. I can sin as I please. The blood of Christ has covered my sins; I’m going to sin boldly.” And you have to stop and say, what? I have a fictitious view of salvation if that’s what I believe, because I’m not counting the cost of what it cost my Savior to die for me.

Well anyway, let’s talk about the work of the Servant. And I want you to notice here that we have the imagery of creation in the text. Why is it that we have the imagery of creation in the text?

Well, I want you to go back with me to the beginning of Isaiah. This is Isaiah chapter 1, verses 5 and 6. And look at what it says.

“Why will you still be struck down?

Why will you continue to rebel?

The whole head is sick,

And the whole heart is faint.

From the sole of the foot even to the head

There is no soundness in it,

But bruises and sores and raw wounds.

They are not pressed out or bound up

Or softened with oil.”

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In other words, not only are the people bruised. But the whole creation is bruised by the sin of Adam. We are sin-wrecked people, and we are living in a sin-wrecked world. And therefore all things will be made new.

Now I want you to think about that for a minute. We oftentimes think about Adam in the garden. And we think about Christ in the wilderness, and Him being tempted as the second Adam and succeeding.

But what is He doing? In the success of that temptation is He basically just walking us back to the Garden? Is He saying that the objective here is just to get back to the Garden? “Let Me take you back.”

No! The objective of His temptation in the wilderness is to get rid of the wilderness! And in getting rid of the wilderness He is dealing with individual sin, because when we think about sin and its effects, it’s not just individual. It’s not just me and my sin. But it’s how sin affects the world around me.

This is why Romans chapter 8 says that creation itself is craning its neck waiting to see what will happen with us, waiting for our resurrection, because it knows that in our resurrection that its deliverance is coming.

You know, there is something that I want to say to you. It’s interesting that Isaiah and the other prophets would pull this kind of imagery into redemption. And it’s important for us not to neglect that.

Why do I say that? It’s because sometimes we do. One of the things that I think we sometimes do is that we respond to the liberals in a way that actually truncates our own gospel. Do you know what I’m saying? And the reason I know this is because—and this is more autobiographical; maybe you guys don’t do this. But I have been known, when a liberal is around, for instance, to kind of say, “Give me a chain saw so I can cut down the tree.” (*Laughter*) You know what I mean? Like you tree huggers. (*The sound of a saw*) That sort of thing.

And you know, I think to myself that I know the point I’m making. The point I’m making is that you worship this creation. And you ought not to worship it because there is only one true God. You’ve substituted Him for this. And yet I’m treating this, which is in travail because of my first father as if it’s worth nothing. And it’s not worthless. Christ came to get rid of the desert.

This may be totally off the rails. But think about if your family was a slave-owning family. And you got rid of slaves, but what you did was that you cared for the slaves that weren’t your slaves. You didn’t just dismiss them and disband them. You helped them get on their feet because you felt an obligation for what you had done.

Well, that’s the way of it with us and creation. We as children of Adam who were once children of Adam should feel an obligation to the creation for what our forefather Adam had done. And we ought to anticipate our concern for creation in Christ’s care for getting rid of the desert and restoring creation—not obviously by the way of the tree huggers, because they substitute creation for God. We ought to put it in its proper place. But that doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t care for creation; we certainly should. Does anyone want to comment on that? No? Okay.

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And then He does this by way of covenant in verse 6. He is the covenant. He, the Son, is made a covenant. He is made the substance of the covenant.

In other words, how do we think about that? Well, I want you to think about it like this. In the Old Testament you had ceremonies. You had a lamb that was offered instead of the worshiper. You had incense that was offered up. You had musical instruments that were played, and so on and so on and so on. Those were all forms.

Think about it like this. You have a glass; this is like a type. But one of the things that you realize is, that type is going to be fulfilled by putting water into it, right? Jesus came and fulfilled the type. He is the great Anti-type. And so He comes and fulfills what all of these things pictured or prefigured.

In other words, He is the fullness for which we’ve been waiting. That’s why for instance in Hebrews, all these people that wanted to go back to the glass or the type were crazy! Why would you want to do that when the fullness of the type is here? And so Christ is pictured here in Isaiah 42 as the substance of the covenant—that which is the fullness or the fulfillment of all of those types and shadows and ceremonies and promises.

Then there’s the release in this text. And notice that the release is in verse 7. It says that blind eyes will be opened, prison doors will be flung open.

I want you to think about this. In Jesus’ ministry, after the temptation in the wilderness, He comes out and what does He do? He preaches the gospel, and then He goes to Nazareth. And in Nazareth, in Luke chapter 4 He goes into the synagogue. He unfurls the scroll to Isaiah 61 and He reads it. Let me read it to you. It’s Isaiah 61; this is what He reads.

*“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To bring good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound,
To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

Now if you think about this, look at what our text says.

*“I will give You as a covenant for the people,
A light to the nations,
To open the eyes that are blind,
To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
From the prison those who sit in darkness.”*

And what does Jesus say? He rolls up the scroll and He hands it back to the attendant. He sits down and He says, “Today that’s fulfilled in your hearing.” That ought to give you goose bumps. “That’s fulfilled in your hearing.” Our text, Isaiah 42, is fulfilled in your hearing.

Jesus is the One who came to bring freedom to the prisoner. What prisoner? To the prisoner who was in the prison of his own sin—the prison of Adam’s making for us, and the one that we consented to by our own thoughts and actions and conduct.

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And the question is, what’s our response? And I think Isaiah 40 is a response in some regard. When you look at Isaiah 40, Isaiah 40 is a pivotal place of distinction when it comes to Isaiah because Isaiah 39 and Isaiah 40 are a fundamental change. Isaiah 39 predicts the captivity that’s coming. Isaiah 40 predicts the deliverance that’s coming.

The striking thing about it is that there are those who say that there are two Isaiahs, because obviously the first Isaiah could not have predicted what was going to happen in terms of deliverance like he does in the second half of Isaiah. So obviously there are two Isaiahs.

And you just want to say, “Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!” There is one Isaiah because there is one God. And there is one God who reveals Himself to His prophets. And so Isaiah certainly does tell the people before they go into captivity not only that they’re going into captivity, but that they will be delivered from that captivity.

And so what he is telling this people of Israel is, “You’re going into captivity. But there is hope beyond that.” Yes?

Mike Davis: So just to think about all that, as I try to wrap my mind around all of that, here you have a problem that is challenging everybody in sight. They are hardened by sin. They’re being put into captivity. And as you go down the road apiece, that has to be a wake-up call. God throughout all of the Old Testament says, “I’ve not changed. Therefore repent and come back to Me.” Yet people are so cynical; it reminds me of today. We’re so cynical.

Jeff: Yeah.

Mike: We’re so emotionless. Because of the hardness of our hearts we’re even cynical as a church.

Jeff: Yeah.

Mike: Things don’t phase us anymore. And what does it take to get our attention? They would be taken into Babylon into captivity and killed and taken away. That would get their attention. And that’s when you start saying, “That’s how it is here in the West.

Jeff: Yeah. And you know, here’s the thing, right, Mike? You’re saying that we’re emotionless, right? No one has any love for God anymore. No one seems to care about what’s happening.

Mike: A real passion.

Jeff: A real passion. I want you to think about this.

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff draws a picture of a person.

Jeff: Here’s a person. And here’s his heart, and here’s his mind. And we’ll say this is his will. And we agree that he doesn’t seem to have a heart or anything that’s going on. But he exacerbates his own condition, because not only does he not feel. But he knows the things that he ought to be doing that will excite his affections, and he chooses not to do them.

So for instance, let’s put this in a marriage context. A guy doesn’t feel like he loves his wife anymore. He knows the things that he should do as a husband that will stir his affection for his wife. But he chooses not to do them.

And so what happens:? What happens is, he gets further in his hardness toward his wife. But if he doesn’t have affection for her and he knows what he ought to do, and he

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chooses to do it, his affections will grow. This is one of the fundamental things about Biblical counseling. I tell guys, “Do what you don’t feel like doing but you know it’s right, and the affections will follow.” It’s a sure bet.

And this is excellent, Mike. And this is what people need to be doing in the church. People who may not feel a deep love for God, or feel that God is doing anything in their lives, these Christian people who at least profess faith know that God works through means.

What are the means? Worship, Bible study, prayer, good works. He works through those in His people. And if we choose to do those things that we know He works through, then He’ll bring affections. The trouble is that we have a bunch of people today who are not feeling it and they don’t want to do it. And we’re in a bad way because of that.

And it’s not just the church. We are living in a world that’s grumpy right now; it is.

Brave Man: *(Unclear)*

Jeff: I know. And what happens when there are no feelings to go with? When there are no feelings to go with anymore, then who’s going to go with the head? Why would you go with the head when you don’t feel it?

Paul Sedlock: I was just listening to a podcast about habits. And it’s talking about how to establish good habits. And it said that your feelings can deceive you. If you only do something because you feel like doing something, you’re never going to do it. You basically need to establish a good habit even though you don’t want to.

Jeff: That’s right.

Paul: I think this is kind of foundational.

Jeff: Oh, absolutely. And how often is it the case—and maybe you’re the victim of this—but how often is it the case where a woman has married a man thinking, “I can change him.” And so she has sought to change him for maybe six months, maybe a year, and he doesn’t change. And all of a sudden she gives up acting like a faithful, good wife, because he is not responding to her.

And that’s exactly your point. We don’t do things because we hope feelings will follow, or we hope change will follow. We do things because they’re right.

So for instance, even if it’s years before I have affection like I had early on in my faith, I don’t do it because I want affection, although I do want affection. I do it because I know it’s right to do. And I choose it because it’s right. And I trust that God will bring the feelings. But when He does that’s just a blessing, right? It’s not the reason I was doing them. I was doing them because they’re right to do. Don, you get the last word and then we’ll have to close.

Don: Bruce said, “Think right, act right, feel right.”

Jeff: Yeah, that’s right; that’s the right order. That’s right, Don.

Okay. Well, let’s pray right. Father, thank You for this day and for the time You’ve given, and for the Lord Jesus Christ as He’s figured in these Old Testament texts. Lord, we’re so thankful for the richness of the pictures. But we’re also thankful for the richness of the message and how it pertains to us. Lord, bless us continually in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, for we ask it in His name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. *(Applause)*