

Behold My Servant

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Let's read from verses 1 down to verse 4 and see what the Lord would have us to learn here. Isaiah 42:1,

1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment [or justice] to the Gentiles [to the nations]. 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment [justice or righteousness] in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

As we leave chapter 41 and you remember the last message that I preached from chapter 41, there was a summons of the nations and their false gods to God's court. He called them to trial and called upon them to produce testimony as to why they, those idols, should be regarded with such high esteem and that's a good question. Why is it that men go to such lengths to support and to advance the cause of their idols? Wars are fought over it. Our God versus your god, little g-o-d. And certainly this was the case as the Lord would be pleased to raise up a Cyrus to come in and deliver Israel out of captivity from another kingdom, Babylon, but when you look at it in history, both were idolatrous nations. Both were idolatrous kings and yet they lived and moved and had their being in God alone, the true God, but they didn't give honor to him. You remember even with Daniel's friends, Nebuchadnezzar set up this statue and announced that everybody, all nations, should come and bow down before it.

So you can see that the Lord's people in the day were surrounded by idolatry. In fact, were it not for the Lord's mercies, we would be with them because we have idolatry in our own heart. We worship ourselves and such is our depraved nature. So the reminder here is that even with God purposing to raise up a king as we read in verse 25 of Isaiah 41, historically likely a reference to Cyrus, that he would come and that he would conquer and none could stop him. Lest anybody should give Cyrus the glory, the Lord says, "Let's call him into court and see what power there is within him apart from God giving him that power to rule and to reign."

So you can see at the end of chapter 41, verse 29, we have a "Behold." There are two things that when the Lord teaches a soul, teaches a sinner that they behold, one is their own sinfulness and the second is the glory of Christ. Those two things. In verse 29, the Lord calls to memory their own sinfulness, "Behold, they are all vanity," and how can you read this without saying, "We are all vanity in our natural state." Notice, "their works are nothing." Isn't this the nature of man to always bring up works as being something, some part of it? Even among so-called Christians, professing Christians, they all argue and say, "Well, it's not that our works are anything for our salvation but they certainly are something for our sanctification." Where do you find that? Isaiah 41:29 says, "their works are nothing." Whenever works come up in a conversation among believers, their first statement is going to be that, it's "they're nothing."

Let's get back to talking about whose work is everything and that is the Lord Jesus Christ and his righteousness and he says, "their molten images are wind and confusion." You notice it begins with "Behold." Here's the Spirit of the Lord drawing attention lest we should ever glory in anything in us, even graces. If you can fabricate in your mind an idol of a grace, whether it be even repentance or faith, you've just fabricated a molten image and it causes wind and confusion because you cannot focus on two things at one time. You cannot, in your mind's eye of faith, look to Christ alone and at the same time hold to some idol of grace or repentance or faith or anything that you think that you have.

So chapter 41 ends at verse 29 and, again, remember that these are chapter divisions put in by editors so just take out chapter 42, that 42 there, and connect verse 1 with verse 29. We have a "Behold" in verse 29, we're all vanity. Man at his best state is altogether vanity, the Scripture says. So where do we behold? "Behold my servant." This is God's testimony concerning his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This has everything to do with him being the true object of worship. You know, again, keeping it in the trial format, you've called all your witnesses, just none of them will stand to God's key witness. It's like he's the prosecuting attorney, "Let me call my witness," and he says, "Behold my servant." It's as if he's calling his Son to the witness stand. I'll tell you what: when the Son of God gets called to the witness stand, it's all over. Trial over. And that's exactly what God purposes through this chapter, to shut men's mouths, that every mouth might be stopped and every man or woman be found guilty before him.

But here he calls his key witness, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he calls all men's attention to the witness stand where he sets forth his glory, the glory of his person and his work that he came to accomplish for the salvation of sinners. Who can compare the work of men's hands to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ? They are all vanity. He is all glorious. Their work is nothing but condemnation. His work is nothing but salvation. Do you see that? None of all the gods of the nations have ever shown their worshipers the way of salvation. Everybody has a notion of it. They all have a view but it all comes down to something man does to please their god. It is only the Lord, it is only his Spirit that indeed shows sinners the way of salvation, God's way of salvation. When God calls his witness to the stand, there is no answer. If you stand in the way of works, if you stand in the way of the flesh thinking that somehow that is what will bring satisfaction to a holy

God, then you will be found guilty and condemned so, "Behold my servant," Christ, God's only remedy for sin. The only Savior for sinners.

So let's look at a couple of points here and the first here in verse 1 of Isaiah 42 is that it takes eyes that God gives to behold Christ as his servant, as his salvation. If we say, "Behold," and you're a blind person, what are you going to see? When I was out in California a few weeks ago and went to Santa Monica beach, there was a group of blind young people that they brought and each one had a guide that was taking them out and as I stood and watched them, I wondered about the difference of what I was standing and looking at and beholding because I had been given eyes to see and what kind of impression they might have come away with, having been guided. They were there: they could feel the wind; they could hear the noise; they could hear the seagulls. But ultimately being blind, they could not see and I thought what a privilege it is to have eyes to see. To be able to look and enjoy the beauty versus just have someone interpret it for me. Such is our case. Until the Spirit of God opens our eyes, we're not going to be able to behold God's servant but if he has enabled us to with an eye of faith to behold and observe and admire his servant, God's servant, God's Son, in this matter of salvation, what a beholding it is. What a glorious beholding it is. Let us never forget, let's always remember that if he has given us eyes to see his Son, all the glory is due to his name because he could just have easily left us blind.

Over in 1 Corinthians 2 and how we need him to give us eyes to see. Not just once but over and over again as we read his word. Here in 1 Corinthians 2, we see how necessary it is concerning being given eyes to see. If you look in verse 6, and this is a gift of God to behold, Paul says in verse 6 of 1 Corinthians 2, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect," among them that have been perfected. Those are the Lord's children. But it's "not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought." Do you see, the comparison with Isaiah 41:29, they are vanity? "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden ministry, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." I truly believe in their pride, had God given them a glimpse of just who they were crucifying, they would be like our children, "Well, if you say that, then I'm going this way. I'm going the other way," because they would not want to give him the glory. So had he even opened their eyes a bit and given them a glimpse of who that was they were hanging on that tree and that they were, in essence, doing the will of God in offering him up as the sacrifice, they would have refrained. They would have found another way to kill him. It doesn't mean they would have repented but they would have found another way to kill him just out of rebellion against a holy God. But verse 9, "as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," natural man, "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

So that's the very first thing when we talk about beholding Christ as God's servant. That one sent forth to accomplish salvation, it takes eyes to see and that by the Spirit of God

alone. The second thing to bring out here in Isaiah 42, we see what it is of God's servant that sinners do behold when their eyes are opened. The first thing is the Father's honor that he has placed upon his only begotten Son to be his servant and to accomplish the salvation of sinners. He says, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold." To uphold, it can mean to strengthen, to accomplish a task, but it also means to lift up. Whom I exalt above all. And certainly that is the Father's desire that his Son be honored and glorified; that his Son be exalted.

If you go over to John 4 and we'll look at a couple of these verses and you can do this. You can take a concordance and look up the word "honor" and where it pertains to God the Father, it has everything to do with the honor of his Son. Do you know that's really why we meet when we do Wednesday night, Sunday mornings? We meet to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, we get together for men's birthdays, we get together for anniversaries and other things to honor men but with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, every time we meet together, it is God's purpose that we honor his Son. Here in John 4, I'll begin in verse 43, "Now after two days..." I'm sorry, I believe it's John 5. I had 4 written but John 5. Here the Lord is speaking to people who had the Scriptures, in fact, they were responsible for copying them and they took great care to copy them and the Lord said in verse 39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." But he says, "you will not come to me, that you might have life." There is the inability of men. Do they not come because they can't? Well, here he says, "You don't come because you won't." It has everything to do with that depraved fallen will.

But he says, "I receive not honour from men." That could be a general statement like we're seeing here that men in their depravity will not honor him or it can mean that as God's servant he doesn't need the honor of men. That's not who he came to serve. He came to serve his Father.

But he says, "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." If you want to get people mad, tell people that have given their lives to religion or Christendom that all those years of serving their denomination, they have not the love of God in them. You could start a fight but that's what the Lord is telling these, the most fundamental of the day who upheld the written word of God. They were literalists when it came to the interpretation of Scripture. The only problem is they were literally wrong. They thought it all had to do with them like most people today. When they come into a church meeting, they want to hear something from this word that has to do with them. One of the greatest criticisms I get in preaching funerals is, "You didn't say anything about the person that died." Well, they're dead. What else do you want me to say? They're dead. Let's talk about the living. Let's talk about Christ, the living one, you see.

"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" There were is says "the honour," you could easily put "Christ." You're not seeking Christ whom God has purposed to honor.

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" So we can see here that it's the Father's purpose to honor his Son.

In fact, in this same chapter 5 over in verse 22, when it speaks of Christ being the servant of the Father, here's what it means, verse 22, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." It's like in Egypt, Pharaoh put all judgment into Joseph's hands when he had ascended to that throne. Here, the Father judges no man but has put all honor and judgment unto the Son.

Verse 23, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." How many times in a public gathering when someone does an invocation they will use generic words, almighty or God, generic terms so that people aren't offended and that everybody can identify with that prayer, so-called. But it's clear, "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." We could spend a lot of time going through this word and reading and studying together but to miss Christ is to dishonor the Father. So, when one sees Christ truly as the Father's servant, he sees that one whom the Father has purposed to honor and glorify.

Coming back here to Isaiah 42, how is it that the Father has purposed to honor the Son? Well, when you say "my servant," that means he is the Father's alone. No man can serve two masters and for the Father to declare him to be his servant, that means none other was to or could accomplish the mission for which he sent him. So we don't give the glory to men. That can be a danger even in exalting Gospel preachers above measure. They're but flesh. They're but dust. We dare not give any honor to any man with regard to our conversion. It's the Lord's alone. It's the fruit of what he, the servant of God, came to accomplish and he did in his life and death to the satisfaction of the Father.

If you look back in Exodus 21:6, this is the historic reference, if you will, of who the Son is to the Father as a bondservant. There were servants that were there just simply because they owed somebody something and as a soon as they....you see, back then they didn't have prisons so if you owed somebody something, then you indentured yourself to them until such time as you paid your debt and then you went back on your way again. But here it is describing a bondservant in Exodus 21:6, one who being the master's, loved the master. In verse 5 it says, "if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free." Now, you think about how that would pertain to Christ. Who was his Master? His Father. Who was his wife? That bride which the Father gave him to redeem and his children. "Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me," he said. "I'll not go out free. I'll not leave them to do anything else."

"Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever." Where did that judgment take place? It took place at the cross when the Son publicly declared to such a degree he was the servant of his Master, the Father,

that he refused to run from that cross, that awl being the very cross itself and finished the work, accomplished it, that he might forever be his Master's.

There's another reference to this over in Isaiah 50:5, called here in my Bible, "the obedient response of the servant." Verse 4, "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." I believe these verses pertain to Christ in his humanity as he dealt with sinners in this world. He was like a sheep before his shearers is dumb. He opened not his mouth. "That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Who was it that he came to save? The weak. The lost. "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Then here it is in verse 5, "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious." When it says to "open the ear," it's to bore the ear. That's what that reference is just like we read in Isaiah 21:6. And he said, "I wasn't rebellious." He willingly agreed to be the Savior, the Substitute, the Redeemer and he said, "neither turned away back." You know, he set his face like a flint toward Jerusalem. He never wavered and verse 6 tells me that this is how this pertains to Christ. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded."

So you can see how the Lord Jesus Christ is that one whom the Father honored but he has that faithful servant honored, his Father, and did everything for his satisfaction. He was God's elect is the way it's put in Isaiah 42, "Mine elect. My chosen one." You see, God has servants. You might say the angels are his servants. Men are his servants. But to none of these gave he this task to come and to earn a righteousness on behalf of lost sinners and to establish it that God might impute it to their account.

It says in Isaiah 42:1 this one "in whom my soul delighteth." Notice, "I have put my spirit upon him." That's what the word "Christ" means. It means "the anointed one." He didn't have to put his spirit in him, it was already by nature, he was the Son of God, but he put it upon him. He anointed him. "Behold my servant. This is the one who will accomplish my salvation," and every time the Father spoke from heaven when his Son was upon this earth, there are only two different times that it's recorded in Scripture: in Matthew 3:17 and Matthew 17:5, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him."

Let our souls delight in Christ alone. If he has given us eyes to see, that's what we will see. We will see the Father's honor that he placed on his only begotten Son to be his servant and to accomplish the salvation of sinners. What else will we see? Well, his all sufficiency. There is nothing about him, there is no quality about him that we need ever doubt. When you talk about how much time you put into investments and thinking about it or a house, buying a house, it's such a big deal, or other things in this life and yet all these things pale when you consider that in a very short time we'll all be standing before a holy God. What will your answer then be? Well, if we're the Lord's we won't have to have an answer. The answer has already been given.

It's Christ the Lord who will represent his sheep and as the Lord teaches us, the more we see of him, the more our own mouths are shut. We have nothing to boast of. Those that

he has taught, they see his all sufficiency as that servant, that Savior of sinners and we do have the witness and testimony of the Spirit. Do you notice here in Isaiah 42:1, I mentioned, "I have put my spirit upon him"? In other words, that's the Spirit's work to do. Not to draw attention to himself but to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as God's servant.

If you look over in John 16:13, keep your hand here in Isaiah 42 but in John 16:13, how do we know that the Spirit of God is at work in a sinner's heart? You know, if you judge by modern day profession, it's getting up and getting excited and shouting and carrying on and waving the hands and shouting, "Hallelujah!" and all this stuff, falling into a trance, speaking gibberish. All this stuff goes on in religion but here in John 16:13, Christ says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself." I've had people accuse me of that, "Why don't you preach more on the Spirit?" Well, the Spirit doesn't speak of himself. As God's servant, the Spirit's work is to exalt Christ. This book that he has inspired that we hold in our hands is for one purpose: to guide us to him. That's why I don't care whether it's the Old Testament or the New, when we open this book, we're going to talk about Christ. We're going to talk about his death. We're going to ask God to show us his Son because Christ said that was his purpose. "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." Verse 14, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." So that's why the Spirit of God was upon him and that's why the Spirit of God is in any word, any message taken from this word, Christ, the word, and setting him forth, exalting him before sinners. So that's the Spirit's work to do.

Coming back here to Isaiah 42, we see, thirdly, the work to which he was appointed. The work to which he was appointed. Why is it that he came? Why did Christ come into this world? Well, it says very specifically, "he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Again, Gentiles means nations. Judgment means righteousness; it means equity. There was a judgment to be rendered and, again, it is speaking of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is there that mercy and truth met together. It is there that righteousness and peace kissed one another. The only way that God could be merciful to sinners is through an accomplished justice.

His justice had to be satisfied and that, to bring forth to the Gentiles or to the nations. You see, the Jews had it wrong. They thought if the Messiah came he would set up some sort of earthly kingdom for them. Wrong. Christ is the Savior of the world in the sense that he was given of his Father as the Father's servant, a people that he would represent from every tribe, nation and tongue, otherwise we'd all have to sit here and try to figure out whether our roots go back to a Jew somewhere. I'm glad I don't have to worry about that. It says here, "he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," to the nations.

Notice how he would do it. In verse 2 it says, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." He's not a politician. Right now, we're still, what, two years off and already we've got people crying in the street, trying to get people's vote. Christ isn't up for election to where we need to vote on him. "Won't you cast your vote for Jesus?" People have all kinds of slogans today. You know, the election is over.

When he says here, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect," this is a theocracy. God has already appointed his heir. There is no election and his work is in silence. This is what's difficult for the religious world to know. There was that massive crowd and yet he drew near to Zaccheus sitting up in that tree and simply said to him, "Come down for today salvation has come to thy house." You think about the noise of the crowd and yet it was Zaccheus who heard his voice. He didn't have to lift his voice and cry unto him. He waited until every one of her accusers was gone before he spoke to that adulterous woman and said, "Where are they? These thine accusers?" She said, "They're gone." She was the only one he intended to hear his voice.

That's how the Lord does his work. That's how he speaks. It's not in the noise of modern religion. It's not in the voices of preachers running to and fro making a living out of panhandling. That's basically what they do, set up services to go around to churches and get a good honorarium, some money, set it up for next year, go back. They are just wandering panhandlers. No, it's in the still and the quiet when the Lord is pleased to cross paths with one of his own that he'll take this word and bring it home to their heart and even the man delivering the message doesn't even have to be there for the Lord to do his work because it's his word. It's his word.

But we can rest in this hope: he will not cry nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street and "A bruised reed shall he not break." That shows right there who he came to save. It wasn't the mighty and the strong. A bruised reed. You know, if we're walking on a path and we see a bruised stick or a flower or something, aren't you tempted just to go ahead and finish it? It's already broken, let's just break it off and then throw it away. A bruised reed he will not break.

Nor will he quench the smoking flax. He'll repair the reed. He'll cause that smoking flax to shine forth again and the fire to glow. Such is his work to do. He came to show mercy to sinners and that just shows us what type of Savior and servant he is: merciful and gracious, faithful to his Father.

Then verse 4, the fourth thing we see here is his constancy, his persistence, his will, his determination to accomplish that which the Father gave him to do. It says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth." Do you realize he could have lived a holy life on this earth, walked this earth for 33 ½ years and yet that wouldn't have accomplished salvation. That would have just proved that he was holy.

To finish the work. Here it is described as having set judgment in the earth he had to lay down his life. He had to obey the precepts of the law but he also had to pay its penalty in order to be the just God and Savior and that he did.

He did not rest until he had finished the work and as it says here, brought forth judgment unto truth in verse 3. A truthful judgment. Aren't you glad that salvation is a legal accomplished reality for those for whom Christ died? There is not going to be any loopholes. To be brought to rest in the Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work

accomplished there at Calvary. He paid the debt. He paid it entirely that we might rest in him.

And it says in verse 4, "the isles shall wait for his law." Wait. Isn't that the most difficult thing for sinners to do, just wait? But that's what we do. We don't try to justify ourselves before a holy God, we wait. And we wait for his law in the sense of we wait for that time when we shall stand before him along with every other single person in the world and yet our hope is that when Christ died he died for me and if he did, I have nothing to add. I have nothing to say. I have nothing to defend myself. He is my defense. He is my advocate. That's his work to do so we wait. We wait upon him.

Oh, what a blessed thing to behold God's servant. May he be pleased in his mercy and grace to grant us eyes, not only just to look to him but to behold him and to have him even as he is the Father's, have him as the object of our affection, desire, our all.