

# A Servant Song

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[ 0 : 00 ] Right, let's lift things to the Lord in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that we've been able to come together this brief lunchtime as your church.

And Father, we've come from many different places and situations. Yet those of us who live for you, well, we're as one.

We're your family. We're a demonstration of what you're doing all around the world. And Father, a foretaste as well of the future new creation.

Your people in your place under your glorious rule. And we thank you, Father, for the blessing of this midweek meeting.

And we ask that you would continue to use it for your glory. For drawing people to yourself. For building us all up. And for sending us out into the world to serve you.

[ 1 : 09 ] We think now of our lives. And though we love and serve our Lord Jesus, we each know of our sin.

Areas of our lives where things aren't in line with his revealed will. And so, Father, we've followed the pattern of the world rather than God's son.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. And the truth is not in us. And so, Father, please forgive us, we pray.

And help us to turn away from particular areas of temptation. Father, we would want our lives to paint a portrait of you.

Amidst all the hustle and bustle of our 21st century world. We thank you, Father, that you are faithful and just.

[ 2 : 18 ] And will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We think, Father, of all the Christian camps that are going on just now.

And our heart goes out to those leading the camps. And all those who've come along as guests. And to learn more about you, your son and your ways.

Father, we pray that you'd be with them all. And you'd help them to manage in these wet conditions. We especially think of maybe children that are along for the first time.

They're away from home. Feeling a bit disorientated and homesick. And wondering what they've got themselves into. And all this wet weather. They just seem all the time damp.

And it's steaming. And clothes aren't dry. We just pray that you'd help the leaders manage. Help them to find games that can be done indoors.

[ 3 : 19 ] Help them to find ways of building together your church. And helping these folk enjoy their time despite the conditions.

We pray for those that we know who may be unwell in these days. That you'll be with them. And comfort them. And finally, Father, we ask that you would be with us now as we come to your word. And help us to respond this lunchtime as we ought. And we lift our prayer to you. In Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

So you might like to open your Bibles in about the middle. Page 602. Isaiah chapter 42.

And we're looking at the first servant song. And I'll read from verse 1. So Isaiah 42, reading from verse 1. Page 602.

[ 4 : 22 ] Behold my servant whom I uphold. My chosen in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break. And a faintly burning wick he will not quench. He will faithfully bring forth justice.

He will not grow faint or be 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.

[ 5 : 20 ] To bring out of 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 carve idols. Behold the former things have come to pass. And new things I now declare. Before they spring forth. I tell you of them.

Well last week we were looking at a song. If you are here from the Old Testament. The song of songs. The ultimate song. And this lunch time we are going to be looking at another song.

From the Old Testament. From the book of Isaiah. Isaiah wrote four poems. About a servant. A coming servant. Perhaps we are more familiar with chapter 53.

You will remember. That Philip explained. Isaiah 53. To the eunuch who was running beside his chariot. He got on board. And Philip explained.

[ 6 : 23 ] 53. You can read that in Acts chapter 8. But this lunch time we will be looking at. Chapter 42. The first servant song in chapter 42.

And we will begin. By looking at the context. Of this particular passage. And our first point. Is the failure. Of God's servants. God's people.

Are supposed to be. God's servants. Serving him. Like a waiter. We pray don't we. Your will be done. And God's people should be God's.

God's servants. Both in the Old Testament. And also the New Testament. Whether it's Jews. Or Gentiles. Whether it's 750 BC. Or it's 2012 BC.

If we're God's people. We should be God's. Servants. If you're a Christian today. You are a servant. Of the living God. Just have a look with me. At chapter 41.

[ 7 : 22 ] And verses 8 and 9. Chapter 41. Can you see verse 8. But you Israel. My servant. Jacob. Whom I have chosen. The offspring of Abraham.

My friend. You whom I took. From the ends of the earth. And called from. Its farthest corner. Saying to you. You are my servant. I have chosen you.

And not cast you off. So God's people. Are supposed to be. God's servants. Proclaiming. The message. About God. To the whole world.

But Isaiah. Was called by God. To speak to a people. Who'd failed. As God's servants. And we'll see this. In chapter 42. Just look with me. At verses 19 and 20.

Can you see. Who is blind. Says Isaiah. Says God. But my servant. Or death. As my messenger. Whom I send. Who is blind. As my dedicated one.

[ 8 : 18 ] Or blind. As a servant. Of the Lord. Do you see. He sees many things. But does not observe them. His ears are open. But he does not hear.

Just imagine. Being called into the office. With your manager. You sit down. You're full of anxiety. And he says to you. You see many things.

But you don't observe them. He says to you. Your ears are open. But you're not listening. What a shocking message. That would be. Wouldn't it. And so.

God's servants. The Jewish people. They come under the judgment. Of God. Just turn back with me. To chapter 39. And we'll see the coming. Judgment. Looming up.

Chapter 39. Verse 5. Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah. Hear the word. Of the Lord of hosts. Behold. The days are coming. When all that is in your house.

[ 9 : 15 ] And that which your fathers. Has stored up till this day. Shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left. Says the Lord. And some of your own sons. Who will come from you.

Whom you will father. Shall be taken away. And they shall be eunuchs. In the palace. Of the king. Of Babylon. So the Babylonian exile.

It's looming up. Isn't it? And yes. The Babylonians. Came. They came. To the promised land. You know.

That land. Flowing. With milk and honey. And it was plundered. And God's people. Were taken away. To Babylon. Chapter 42.

Verse 22. But this is a people. Plundered and looted. They are all of them. Trapped in holes. And hidden in prisons. Prisons. They have become plunder.

[10:12] With none to rescue. Spoil. With none to say. Restore. Who among you. Will give ear to this. Will attend. And listen. For the time to come.

Who gave you up? Who gave up Jacob. To the looter. And Israel. To the plunderers. Was it not the Lord. Against whom we have sinned. In whose ways.

They would not walk. And whose law. They would not obey. God's people. In Babylon. Just think friends.

Of all that slipped through their fingers. They were rescued. Weren't they? From Egypt. Given the promised land. They had King Solomon's temple.

Built. And it's all. Gone. Hasn't it? They'd rejected God. And God said. Well enough is enough. This is a people plundered.

[11:06] And looted. They were all of them. Trapped in holes. And hidden in prisons. They had become plunder. With none to rescue. Babylon. By the rivers of Babylon.

Psalms 137. There we wept. When we remembered. Zion. And we can sometimes realize. Can't we friends? Even as Christians. The consequences.

Of our sin. But God. In his mercy. He inspires. Isaiah. To write.

About. The coming liberation. From exile. And the coming. Messiah. And chapter 40. Is like a breath.

Of fresh air. From chapter 40. Onwards. Although there's judgment. Isaiah is looking way ahead. Death. To liberation from exile.

[12:01] And the coming. Messiah. Chapter 40. It's the. The annual concert. In January. At the Royal Concert Hall.

Up the road. Handel's Messiah. Begins with chapter 40. Put your hand up. If you've been to Handel's Messiah. Not enough of you. About 20%. I think you all ought to get tickets.

On the way up there. From £12.50. And I looked it on. On the internet. This morning. It's not in January. In 2013. It's the end of March.

What date is it? The 30th of March. And it's amazing. And it begins. With the first verse. Of chapter 40. It's lovely.

Comfort. Comfort. My people. Says your God. Speak tenderly. To Jerusalem. And cry to her. That. Her warfare.

[12:56] Is ended. Isn't this a wonderful message? That her iniquity. Is pardoned. Isaiah. Is looking ahead. That she is received. From the Lord's hand. Double for all her sins.

A voice cries. Is this familiar? In the wilderness. Prepare the way. Of the Lord. Make straight. In the desert. A highway. For our God. Every valley. Shall be lifted up.

And every mountain. And hill. Made low. The uneven ground. Shall become level. And the rough places. Plain. And the glory. Of the Lord. Shall be revealed. And all flesh.

Shall see it together. For the mouth. Of the Lord. Has spoken. Yes. Israel. Failed. As God's servants. We fail.

Don't we? As God's servant. But rescue. Is on the way. And we come to chapter 42. So turn up.

[13:53] Back to chapter 42. And in chapter 42. It's a little bit like. Isaiah nods. To the orchestra. And there's.

Sort of a roll of drums. And it's lovely. Chapter 42. Verse 1. Look at that. Can you see. That. It's a lovely word. Isn't it? Behold. Says God.

My servant. Whom I uphold. My chosen. In whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him. And he will bring forth justice.

To the nations. So the true servant. Is entering the stage here. Isn't he? In Isaiah's. Writing. God's people. Had failed. Hasn't they?

As God's servant. And so God. Is sending. His very. Own. Servant. God says. Through Isaiah.

[14:50] I will put my spirit. Upon him. Verse 1. In those days. Jesus came from Nazareth. Of Galilee. And was baptized. By John. In a Jordan. And when he came up.

Out of the water. Immediately. He saw the heavens. Opening. And the spirit. Descending on him. Like a dove. And the voice. Came from heaven. You are my beloved. Son. With you.

I am well pleased. And so God's people. Failed. As God's servant. We fail. As God's servant. But God.

God himself. Says. Behold. My. Servant. So we thought about our failure. As God's servants.

And we thought about the identity. Of God's. Own. Servant. Is the son of God. And he broke into history. Around 2,000 years ago.

[15:47] But what's his job? God's sending him. But what's he going to do? And that's our third point. The true servant. Gets his job description. And this servant's.

Job description. Well it might just seem. Too good to be true. We can be skeptical. About things. Can't we? You know. Rightly. Very often. Many of us have been. Sort of led down the garden path. By people. Haven't we? Been deceived. Has that happened to you? I know it's happened. To me. You know. We've been too gullible. Or we. We look at a bargain. We see a bargain in a newspaper. And we go to a certain supermarket. And when we get there. There's none left. Maybe they only had a few in stock anyway. It's a low price to get people in. And we're disappointed. Or maybe it's the banks.

Selling payment protection plans. That people didn't need. Or the telephone rings. And someone's trying to sell you something. Oh hello. Good evening. How are you? They say.

[16:44] And so we're often skeptical. Aren't we? About good news. Even when you're on the telephone preference. There's still phone. You don't know. And so God has to remind us.

That it's God who's speaking. This isn't friends. The false hope that the world offers. Just look with me at verse 5. Can you see? Verse 5.

Thus says God the Lord. Who created the heavens. And stretched them out. It's like he's saying. Do you remember Genesis chapters 1 and 2? Do you remember me creating the cosmos? Well it's me speaking. Who spread out the earth.

And what comes from it. Who gives breath to the people on it. Do you remember breathing life into Adam? Do you remember reading about that? Have you seen a baby taking its first breath?

[17:42] God is saying it's me. And the spirit to those who walk in it. And so we're all ears. Aren't we friends? We should be. This is a message from the creator of the universe.

And so now God himself. As we read this passage. He allows us. Listen to this. To see within the Trinity. A communication.

A conversation within the Trinity. What follows is God the Father talking to the servant. His son. God the Son. It's almost like phone tapping. We're listening in to an intimate father-son communication. Just look with me.

From verse 6. 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.

[18:39] 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 the Lord.

That is my name. My glory. I give to no other. Nor my praise. To carve idols. Behold. The former things have come to pass. And new things I now declare.

Before they spring into being. I tell you of them. A light for the Gentiles. Says God. Verse 6.

Think about it. This servant is going to have a global ministry. Are you with me? It's not just a message for the Jewish people. Is it?

For Gentiles as well. That is the whole world. This servant is going to have a ministry to the whole of the planet. The whole world. You know.

[19:35] This servant's job. It extends to Glasgow in 2012. Today. He's at work today. It's raining at the moment.

But. I guess when the rain stops. There'll be a whole crowd of people. Outside the royal. Concert hall. Proclaiming. The message. The gospel message. There's a few guys in here just now.

Taking a break. I guess. And the message is going out. Isn't it? It's going. Out. To the world. God is at work. And just look at the rescue mission in verse 7.

To open eyes that were blind. That was me for most of my life. To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon. From the prison. Those who sit in darkness.

And so God is sending his servant into the world. Isn't he? On a rescue mission. And did you notice? He's taking the initiative. Did you see that?

[20:32] God is tracking us down. Just think how unique this is. We open the New Testament. And God himself descends into our world.

Doesn't he? And it happened in history. He came to get us. It's the opposite isn't it? To how you'd imagine it would be. You'd think.

You know. That you'd need to climb up. The non-Christian world. That's what they're all actively doing. Trying to get to God. Might be religion. You know. All the world's made up religions. Trying to climb up to God.

Trying to be good enough. Trying to climb up. And offer God something. The good deeds. Or something like that. You know. Here's a good list of my good deeds. God let me in to heaven. Do you see? It's all by human effort. Ascent. Trying to climb up to God. The trouble is. If we take the initiative.

[ 21 : 26 ] We'll approach God contaminated. By our sin. But Isaiah says. In contrast. God descends down. To rescue us.

Chapter 9 verse 14. You don't need to turn it up. The Lord himself. Will give you a sign. Behold. The virgin. Shall conceive. And bear a son.

And shall call his name. Emmanuel. That is. God. With us. And John says. The word. Became flesh. And dwelt. Among us.

And so. God visits us. Friends. Doesn't he? He. Takes the initiative. Not us. Not you. Made himself nothing. Says Paul. In Philippians. Taking the form of a servant.

Being born. In likeness. Of men. And so. Friends. Our plight. As human beings. Is such that. God. Sent his only begotten son.

[ 22 : 23 ] Into our world. And he arrived. The servant. Arrived. He had no form. Or majesty. That we should look at him.

Said Isaiah. And as he speaks. Verse 7. Blind eyes. Are opened. Prisoners. Are released. From dungeons. And the good news.

Is going all around our world. Today. The dungeon. Flamed with light. My chains fell off. Our roads. Went forth. And followed thee. And the Chinese church.

At the moment. Is experiencing. Explosive growth. Closer to home. In Glasgow. People are getting converted. Every week. People are turning. To the Lord.

Every day. This servant. Is reaching people. Opening eyes. At a blind. Bringing prisoners. Out of darkness. Releasing people. From their oppression.

[ 23 : 18 ] And I wonder. If there's someone listening. You feel that Jesus. Right now. Is meeting with you. Well do something. About it. Ask him.

To forgive your sin. And help you. To lead a new life. Good. Number one. We've thought about. God's people.

Failing. As God's servants. Number two. We thought about. The identity. Of God's. Own. Servant. Number three. We thought about. The job. Of God's own servant.

And now. As we finish. Our final point. It's about. The commitment. Of God's servant. Number four. The true servant's. Commitment. Just look with me. At verse six.

I don't know. If you noticed it. When we read it. I am the Lord. I have called you. In righteousness. I will take you. By the hand. And keep you. And here's the interesting bit.

[ 24 : 12 ] Look at this. I will make you. The servant. I will make you. As a covenant. For the people. A light. For the nations.

So this. This new covenant. It's not simply. A verbal promise. That's been written down. And it sort of got to us. In our Bibles. Today.

It's more than that friends. It's more than that. God is saying. There's more to it. God is saying. I'm the creator.

Verse five. And my servant. Who I'm sending. He. Himself. Is. The covenant. Did you see that? In verse six. What God is saying. He's saying. Is that the covenant. Is coming to you. In flesh and blood. Alan Harmon. Says this. About verse six. He said. The best interpretation.

[ 25 : 07 ] Is that the servant. Is seen. As constituting. The essence. Of the covenant. And in the upper room. Jesus says. To his disciples. This cup.

Which is poured out. For you. Is the new covenant. In. My. Blood. What a commitment. That is. Isn't it friends. So he is.

He is God. He breathed life. Into us. Didn't he? Verse five. And then. He. In the person of Jesus. Gave. His own.

Life. That's total. Commitment. Isn't it? Of the creator. Of the cosmos. To his creation. He loves you. He gave himself. As the covenant. And today. We're on the receiving end. Aren't we? As of old. As of verse six.

[ 26 : 03 ] God is taking. The initiative. His spirit. Comes to meet us. We meet him. In his word. When we gather around. Today.

And he speaks to us. Verse two. He will not cry aloud. Or lift up his voice. So make it heard. In the street. A bruised reed. He will not break.

And a faintly burning wick. He will not quench. He will faithfully bring forth. Justice. A faintly burning wick.

You and me sometimes. God's people. In Babylon. He will not quench. Come on to me. Says the servant.

All who labor. And are heavy laden. And I will give you rest. Take my yoke. Upon you. And learn from me. For I am gentle.

[ 27 : 00 ] And lowly in heart. And you will find rest. For your souls. For my yoke is easy. And my burden. Is light. And so here he is.

God's servant. Shall we pray. Amen. God says.

To his servant. I will give you. As a covenant. For the people. A light. For the nations.

Dear heavenly father. We thank you. So much. For your commitment. To your creation. And your love. That you would send. Your only begotten son.

Into this world. To die. Because of our sin. Our rebellion. To give us. What we don't deserve. A clean sheet.

[ 27 : 59 ] A fresh start. And a certainty. Of being with you. In a new creation. For all of eternity. What a message.

That is. What a God. We serve. So we thank you father. For this. Your word. Written and.

Passed to us. In our Bibles. We pray father. That you'd help us. To serve you. As we ought. To be. Your servants.

In 2012. And to be taking. This message. To this lost world. And we lift our prayer. To you. In Christ's name. Amen.