
The Servant's Mission

Isaiah 42:1-9

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Introduction I've heard these things many times before. As a morning show comes on TV at 7am or the evening news at 6, I've heard the anchor say, "and now 90 seconds around the world..." Next I see and hear atrocities in our nation and about the world. They last for but 90 seconds and then take backstage for the featured stories of the day. For the most part sad to say these 90 seconds simply function for me as an attention grabber for a show or simply as background noise for a busy day. This week was different.

A few days ago, while I was sitting on my bed putting on my socks and chatting with Lisa in the early morning I heard; "and now 90 seconds around the world..." I glanced at the TV perhaps out of habit and then I could not look away. It was different this time. I actually listened, looked and felt 90 seconds of outrage, massacre, exploitation, corruption, unkindness, injustice throughout the world...

It was as though I was watching something in slow motion. Each picture mounted itself in the hallway of my mind. I was troubled and sad. "What went wrong" I thought as I stared at these snapshots of terrible situations in my backyard and on the backside of the world.

TRANSITION

Perhaps on a different scale but nevertheless real, if we were to play our "90 seconds around our life" we just might hear similar themes. Terrible situations we would see/hear:

- A father yelling out of anger over his not-compliant child
- A mother gripped by fear as she thinks of the future
- A teenager lying to keep hidden his poor performance at school
- A single man viewing life as unfair gazing at pornography
- A church goer greeting warmly and then mumbles in the heart "jerk"
- Suppertime sounds...forks clanging/mouths chewing/swallowing/pass the peas might be heard – but no fellowship / conversation.
- A little one crying in her bed
- A spouse wanting out
- Bitterness growing and hearts growing cold
- Cheating, stealing, lying, breaking, tearing, giving up, screaming out, hiding out, burning out...

The world we all want is not the world we all have. The Bible tells us why. It rightly interprets the wrong. But it doesn't stop there. For the malady it has the remedy; for a terrible situation there is a wonderful solution. And this is what we see in our passage for this morning. Please turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 42:1-9. Here's the summary of the message. Note carefully the single command. By faith we must obey it; for it is our only hope.

Summary

*For a terrible situation **behold** the wonderful solution.*

I get this summary from two words that hold two passages together. If you are in your Bibles at isa.42 look back one verse to 41:29. Notice the relationship between v29 and v1.

Behold, they are all a delusion... (See the terrible situation)

Behold, my Servant... (See the wonderful solution)

(Describe Israel in 720bc briefly highlighting idolatry as the source of the situation)

The Bible describes us all as having sunk deep into hopeless idolatry. How can we stop the sin and escape into reality? There is but one way (Jn.14:6). Let us this morning look and live (Jn.3). **Behold my servant** is our only hope.

Describing the Servant's mission

v1-4

To receive consolation/hope from the LORD found in His servant first let's think together over characteristics of the Servant's mission as we listen to the LORD describing his mission. This can be found in v1-4 (read vv).

The Servant's mission of JUSTICE

v1,3c-4

The theme of what the Servant accomplishes is found in repetition. 3x in this paragraph Isaiah talks about *justice*. In v.1, then in v3 and finally in v4 we hear the prophet describe the servant's mission as justice.

(teach on *mispat* = authoritative decision as a head referee having looked at instant replay comes out on center stage to announce what is true or a judge having heard the argument settles the matter once and for all. The authority weighs in and declares reality. The results, as we will see soon, are not unlike what we find in Ps.96:11-13 = making right all wrongs brings joy / hearing and believing truth brings liberty.)

His source

v1

This servant does not operate on his own. He has the full backing from the Sovereign king of the universe. This support is the servant's source for his mission as seen in v1.

Sovereign Delight

The Lord chose this servant for this mission. And his eternal choice is based on his full pleasure in him. The LORD finds his full and final joy in the servant. This is the servant's source for his mission.

Sovereign Might

Also, notice with me v1 and how the LORD upholds the servant. His mission will take everything he has. His support through the sovereign might of the LORD is his source for his mission.

His scope

v1,4

Continuing to describe the Servant's mission we find also a definition of the extent to which the servant takes his justice. The scope of the servant's mission can be seen in the terms found in v1&4

Nations / earth / coastlands

The Servant's mission is not limited to the Israelites. The effect of His declaration of truth travels throughout Israel but also to the ends of the earth. It penetrates the difficult places of Islam. It enlightens those kept in the darkness by Christian-like religions as well as unchristian-like religions. It runs swiftly throughout postmodern Europe and into the shallow pluralism of America. It calls out to drug dealers and prostitutes. It beckons the self-righteous church-going do-gooders. This mission penetrates and permeates the wide-world; covering the globe with *mispat* – justice – declaring the truth; namely the gospel and thus righting all wrongs.

His Success

v3c-4

If we take a few minutes to study the mission we will begin to feel the hope of the mission. But if it is just described in terms of source and scope we may not have a solid confidence that the Servant is our solution. Notice with me the last way the Lord describes his servant's mission found in v 3c-4. The term "faithfully" tells us that this mission will continue and stay the course "until" (see v4) the whole earth is filled with the effects of His mission.

The Point: What a Servant

In just a few minutes we've travelled over much terrain looking at characteristics of the servant's mission. From all we've heard, what's the point? What are we to feel and take away? Put succinctly; *What a Servant! Ah, What a Servant!*

The Servant's mission to people

v2-3b

For me, as I was studying and praying over this passage, I was thrilled with what I saw thus far. But it still seemed somewhat conceptual. The scope and success of the servant's mission was impressive but it didn't feel too personal. That is, until I got my heart on the heart of this passage found in the middle of the paragraph.

At the center of this passage we find people; broken and weakened. We find men and women; boys and girls who resemble you and me. Listen to how they are described.

His manner

v2

In v2 Isaiah understands the manner of the Servant. He is not like the world's leaders as seen in 41:2. His mode of operation is not to stomp and scream out. He does not shout nor is he showy. Rather, the Servant is gentle and kind. He is quiet and unaggressive as He transforms the entire world.

His mercy

v3

Also in v3 we notice the effects of his justice. To him, people are not useless (like a bruised reed) nor are people too far gone (like a smoldering wick) [ill. of 12 yr. old Turner at McKinley Lake in Iowa...& the kitchen candle having a small wick that makes more smoke than fire] . Healing and helping not snapping and snuffing is his mercy toward people.

Confirming the Servant's Mission

v5-9

We noticed in v1-4 the LORD saying something about the Servant's mission – its source, scope and success. We also saw how people are at the center of his justice – how kind he is and tender he works. Now we want to conclude the message by noticing what the LORD says to the Servant. In v5-9 we will hear the LORD confirming the Servant's mission. All that we heard and felt in v1-4 will happen because v5-9 tell us that the LORD guarantees it!

Who confirms this amazing mission? Listen as I [read v5-9](#)

The Creator confirms

v5

The Creator of the Universe confirms the servant's mission. He who says v.1-4 are so is the One who cause and controls and cultivates the universe. He is the one who created and stretched and spread out over 200 million galaxies. He is the One who gives (present tense) both past and ongoing creative activity.

If He confirms v1-4 then who are we to doubt v1-4.

The Promisor confirms

v6-7

Then in v6-7 we see another reason for confidence in v1-4.

The Promisor of the covenant confirms the servant's mission. He is the One who called and takes and gives to His Servant so that His mission will be successful. The Promisor (the Great Yahweh) planned and promoted and promised the preservation of His servant. We see in these verses the Servant as the covenant. You can almost hear the Servant projecting his voice out to say, "this is the New covenant"; the means through whom the bad, bruised, flickering, fainting people of God will enjoy a distinctive, privileged covenant relationship with the Lord of creation. He takes v3 kind of people

- From disorder into order
- From chaos to beauty
- From darkness to light
- From bondage to freedom
- From sitting to walking

This passage is making clear nothing but a perfected people in a perfected community in a perfected world! Oh, beloved, do you believe?

If he confirms v1-4 when who are we to doubt v1-4.

The Predictor confirms

v8-9

And finally, in v8-9 we hear the Predictor confirm his servant's mission. Throughout the book of Isaiah, the LORD makes fun of idols; gods who are no gods. He exposes their identity (that they are nothing) by asking them to predict the future. A block of wood simply stares and says nothing. Then the LORD tells the hearers what is to come. In these verses He continues the pattern. He is the Only one who is divine. The great and marvelous Creator, sustainer and orchestrator of history is personal (notice that he has a name), is peerless (notice there is no god but he), he is praiseworthy (notice his jealousy). He will not share the status of being worshiped with anyone.

The Point: What a Certainty

And what's the point of all this? Can we believe what our eyes just saw in v1-4? Is all this true? Can I bank my life on it? What a certainty! Ah, what a certainty!

Conclusion In closing, let's reflect upon the identity of the servant and our response to Him.

For such a terrible situation incurred by our sin we need to SEE the wonderful solution. See the servant. And who is this servant? For some of you, you know him and love him and worship him as I speak. Still others know him but due the drift toward idols you've forgotten him and the benefits of his service. Still others simply do not know who this servant truly is?

Matthew 12:17

Should you want to turn with me, I now close the message by using the New Testament. The passage to which I turn is Matthew 12. In this passage we see a wonderful man, a compassionate man, a powerful man, a man like no other. After he restored the lame and healed the mute and brought sight to the blind the author of the gospel said of Jesus, "*This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah*" (17)

And who is this servant? He is none other than **The Lord Jesus Christ** (preach the gospel)

Acts 26:22-29

And what are we to do with what we see? How are we to respond?

One of the key apostles who took this message into the nations (apostle Paul) was nearing his death. Telling them of his conversion to Christ and using Isaiah 42 for guidance, He preached to King Agrippa and governor Festus. Then Agrippa...

... said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am..."

(Acts 26:22-29 ESV)

Are you hearing what you are to do with who you are seeing? (implore the hearers)

Come to Christ this morning. Experience what Charles Wesley did when he penned these words.

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.*