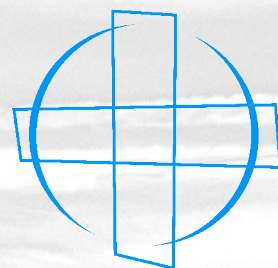


MARCH
2024

Donald J. Wills
Senior Pastor

SERVE



The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear FBC family and friends,

As we embark on a new year in 2024, people often make New Year's resolutions to break from past habits that have proven to be detrimental and to set goals to reach for new heights. These "line-in-the-sand" moments include personal items like: weight loss, health management plans, dietary adjustments, new financial strategies to save more money and pay off debt as well as career goals like striving to be the best salesperson, working harder to get the promotion, being the best employee at the company, or being the best boss or supervisor. There are many more topics that get included in these statements of determination, but how often do we include spiritual resolutions that impact ourselves and others for eternity? Such as grow in my walk with Christ, read my Bible, pray more, give of my time to serve in the church, increase my financial contribution, and witness to others. The fact is there is much we should evaluate on a personal level and the starting point should be the spiritual; then let all the other concerns of life fall in line. Jesus says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt 6:33).

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

This first quarter is about "Serve" and what that looks like in the church. The greatest example of service is Christ. I am reminded of the story when Joseph and Mary had left Jesus in Jerusalem. When they returned to find the Child, He says to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" We need to be about the Father's business through serving in the church, giving, witnessing, and setting goals to impact lives for all eternity. Where and how will you serve in 2024?

Blessings,

Pastor Don Wills



Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

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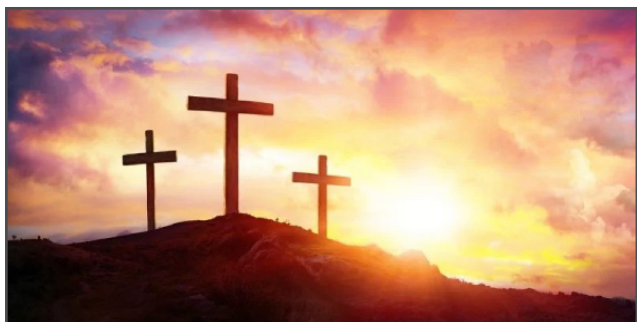


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March 3, 2024



*A Servant who is
Righteous
Isaiah 42:1-9*

Focal Verse:

“I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people as a light to the Gentiles.”

Isaiah 42:1-9

Introduce

With the advent of maritime travel, especially at night, merchants have long sought ways to keep both sailors and cargo safe. In antiquity, they first tried to illuminate coastlines with fire. Eventually, they built elevated platforms on which to put these fires to make them more visible from a longer distance—the precursor to our more modern lighthouse. For those of us who have spent any time on either the Atlantic or Pacific coast, we have probably seen at least one of these beautifully ornate lighthouses. And some of us may even have some type of artwork in our homes commemorating these structures. But how often do we think about their purpose and appreciate their function above their beautiful form?

Whether we have physically entered a lighthouse or not, most of us can visualize that tall, narrow, yet cylindrical structure that juts several hundred feet into the air along a craggy coastline where waves violently crash ashore with regularity.

Entering the structure, we would proceed up a long, winding, circular staircase that leads to a room consisting of only windows with a 360-degree view of the shoreline. In the center of that room, we would find a wick,



lamp, or perhaps lightbulb powered by coal, oil, or electricity with mirrors strategically placed behind it to intensify the light as a guide for approaching ships. As technology developed, this beacon would have also been equipped to rotate.

Lighthouses weren't just erected anywhere along the coast, however. They were purposefully placed at strategic points. In fact, they had a two-fold purpose. The presence of a lighthouse first and foremost alerted the captain of a ship to imminent danger—whether from a sandbar, rocky crags protruding from the water, the presence of underwater reefs, or a multitude of other hazards. But lighthouses didn't just warn of impending danger; they also guided the captain safely into the port, pointing the vessel to the right path to navigate obstacles in the harbor.

In the book of Isaiah, which we will study over the next month, we will meet a

Introduce

Servant to whom the world in general would not be attracted. He wouldn't look like anyone special ([Isa 53:2](#)). And, as a result, many would despise and reject Him ([Isa 53:3](#)). Yet, this Servant had an extraordinary function. He would come into the world as Light ([Isa 42:6](#); [John 1:6-11](#)). Like a lighthouse which alerts mariners to danger, this Servant warns us of the dangers of unrepentant sin. But, He doesn't just warn us; He also shows us the way to enter the "harbor" safely—that is to have eternal life. As that Light to both Jew and Gentile, Jesus provided the way to have that eternal life, if we would only accept it, through His substitutionary death on the cross. Thus, this righteous Servant died for the unrighteous so that we might graciously live in heaven with Him forever!

Key
Question

How does the Light of the world reveal the true condition of our lives?

Isaiah 42:1-4

THE MESSIAH WHO BRINGS JUSTICE

With prophets like Isaiah, we tend to focus on the wickedness of the people and the message of judgment they delivered to the nation. Yet, within that message of judgment, hope resounds even more loudly if only the people would trust the Lord alone and repent of their sin. Although God on numerous occasions in Isaiah disciplined Israel for her unfaithfulness and rebellion, He has not forsaken or abandoned her. In fact, God has always used punishment as a means of correction and restoration whereby He draws people into a holy relationship with Himself. Therefore, He takes time to reassure Israel saying, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you; I will uphold you with My righteous hand” ([Isa 41:10](#)).

Furthermore, God reminds the people not to trust in the worthless and powerless idols of the nations around them, but to pin their hope solely upon Him ([Isa 41:24](#)). At times, many people in Israel followed secular culture and deserted the Lord for what seemed like a more rewarding experience with less resistance in worshiping a pantheon of gods. The people who turned to these idols to seek counsel and rescue only found themselves hopeless and frustrated, for God alone has the power to deliver and save. Such idols can’t give and sustain life, answer prayers, meet needs, or provide guidance—only the one true and living God can do these things. Therefore, we must trust in Him alone. With this background in mind, we turn our attention to the Servant whom God has sent into the world to bring justice, provide light, and give life to all ([Isa 42:1](#)).

Verse 1 opens with a call to look to the **Servant** whom God has sent as the source of

deliverance. As such, this command to **behold** links God’s chosen **Servant** here closely with His remarks to Israel in the previous chapter, highlighting the consistency and certainty with which He acts to accomplish His plan and purpose.



In fact, the Lord declares that He will **uphold** His **Servant**—the very same promise He made to the faithful in Israel to **uphold** them by His “righteous hand” ([Isa 41:10](#)). We don’t use the word uphold much in our everyday speech. The Hebrew word means to hold firmly—to keep or sustain. Whether this **Servant**, Israel, or the church, we all must realize that our strength comes from the Lord. Only He can sustain us in life and propel us to accomplish the works He has purposed for us. If we trust in any other source, we will fail!

To illustrate the force behind the word **uphold**, think about a person precariously dangling over the precipice of a cliff—holding on for dear life. On his own, he cannot sustain himself there indefinitely; he can only hang on for so long. Eventually, his arms will grow weary and his grip will loosen; over time the objects supporting him, whether the roots of a tree or the fibers of a rope, even though anchored securely in some way will give way because of friction and wear. Nothing can sustain him forever. As the man hangs there, a first responder finally arrives. Leaning over the cliff, the rescuer tightly embraces the man’s arm so he won’t fall and he can pull him to safety. When ready to lift him, the first responder will yell something like, “I’ve got you. You can let go.” The man must then trust that his rescuer can sustain his weight and pull him to safety.

In the New Testament, we see how God sustained His **Servant**, Jesus; He had Him tightly in His grip so that He could focus on accomplishing His divine plan to deliver the world. Temptation could not overcome Him ([Matt 4:1-11](#)). Distractions could not dissuade or overwhelm Him ([Luke 9:51](#)). And death could not defeat Him ([Acts 2:24](#)). Just as God sustained His **Servant** to do His will, so also will He strengthen and sustain us! Therefore, we must recognize that “the Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation” ([Exod 15:2](#)). We must trust that “He’s got us” and won’t let go ([John 10:28](#)). But to receive the full benefit of His power to sustain, we must let go of



every temporary and imperfect thing onto which we have taken hold in attempt to find momentary security; we must trust in Him alone.

Question
1

What things in life provide you with a momentary sense of safety and security? How do you keep yourself from becoming distracted with these things in trusting Christ?

Whereas a first responder nobly appears when rescue is needed and then recedes into the background until called upon again, God remains staunchly by our side. He doesn't just show up when we find ourselves in trouble. He walks with us daily. He certainly delivers us through perilous situations and circumstances which life hurls at us. At other times, however, He keeps us from placing ourselves in danger and falling off the cliff. He guides us to righteousness and keeps us from sin when we surrender completely to Him. To know what constitutes righteousness we must look to Him. The word translated **behold** refers to a close examination of the object referenced. It begs us to pay careful attention and follow the pattern this **Servant** has set for us. The New Testament puts it this way, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2).

When we look closely at His life, we see how this **Servant** functions as God's **elect** or chosen **in whom** His **soul delights**. From the foundation of the world, God had destined this **Servant** to fulfill a specific task. He would walk sinlessly (Heb 4:15), give His life as a

"In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

Then I said, 'Behold, I have come in the volume of the book it is written of Me to do Your will, O God.'"

Hebrews 10:6-7

sacrifice willingly (John 10:18), and cancel our debt from sin freely through His grace (Col 2:13-14). Only one Person who has ever lived could fulfill this divine purpose: Jesus. Twice in the New Testament God the Father verbally expresses His pleasure or **delight** in Jesus' obedience—once at His baptism (Matt 3:17) and the other at His

Instruct

transfiguration ([Matt 17:5](#); [2 Peter 1:17](#)). The fact that God **delights** in obedience more than religious ritual made His Son's sacrifice effective for us and pleasing to Him—something mere animal sacrifices could not do ([Heb 10:5-10](#)).

Like this **Servant**, God has designated us for a specific task and set us apart for a special purpose when we have a relationship with His Son. He has chosen us all to live righteously, patterning our lives after His holiness by walking in His Spirit ([Eph 1:4-6](#); [Gal 5:25](#)). But individually, He has also endowed us with specific spiritual gifts to use for His glory to build the church ([Eph 4:11-13](#)). God has called us to share the gospel with everyone whom He brings into our lives ([Matt 28:19-20](#)). So, we can use the experiences He allows us to have and the trials He helps us endure to point others to Him ([2 Cor 1:3-12](#)). When we use our gifts to fulfill the specific call which He has given us, God is well pleased. He delights in us! May we always seek to please Him through our obedience, faithfulness, and fruitfulness in following His plan rather than allowing our own personal ambitions, preferences, and egos to get in the way.

Question
2

To what task has God specifically called you?
If you have been obedient to that task, how
has God shown His delight?

The presence of the **Spirit** encapsulates the life and ministry of this **Servant**. As a triune God, the Father, Son (**Servant**), and **Spirit** are equal and function in unity ([John 10:30](#)) where the **Spirit** then serves as a confirmation of Jesus' identity as the Messiah. John the Baptist, for example, reveals that God who commissioned him to preach and baptize said to him, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" ([John 1:33](#)). At Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit indeed descends in the form of a dove and remains upon Him, leading John to declare, "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" ([John 1:34](#); see [Matt 3:13-17](#)). At Jesus' resurrection, we see further proof that He is who He said He is based upon the activity and presence of the Spirit. For Paul notes that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" ([Rom 1:4](#)).

The presence of the Holy **Spirit** in our lives similarly marks us as belonging to God as His children. To be clear, His presence doesn't make us "God" or divine, but it does

demonstrate that we have a renewed relationship with Him through the forgiveness of sin. The Holy **Spirit** comes to reside in us the moment we repent of our sin and surrender to Christ. Therefore, Paul can attest, “You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance” (Eph 1:13-14).

Elsewhere, Paul writes, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom 8:16). Because He marks us as belonging to God, we now have a lofty standard to fulfill as

His representatives who bear His name (2 Cor 5:20). As such, the Holy Spirit points us to the truth (John 16:33), empowers us to witness (Acts 1:8), leads us to walk in righteousness (Rom 8:1-11), and enables us to serve to build the church and glorify the Lord (1 Cor 12:7-11).



Question
3

Upon examining your life, what kind of ambassador or representative are you for Christ?

Aside from some of these similarities we have in common with this **Servant**, God entrusted Him with one unique task that He alone could accomplish—to establish **justice** worldwide. We hear numerous calls for **justice** and equity in our world today. But these calls don't cure the ills of injustice in our world, they only serve to stoke the flames of division, create more animosity, and often lead to violence and destruction. In their attempt to establish **justice**, our world tends to pit one group against another in a struggle for power. And both groups seek privilege by attempting to destroy the other. Focusing on our differences and demonizing other groups will never lead to a constructive conversation and never resolve injustice. God knew this, so He sent His **Servant** with a different plan to institute **justice**!

This **Servant** will achieve **justice** for all through grace and compassion. Verse 2 relates that **He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street**. In comparison, notice how our world attempts to achieve **justice** through boisterous protests where a cacophony of shouting obscures the message and shows unbridled rage. At other times, people simply shout over the other person in an attempt to silence their voice; they won't even let them speak! Therefore, no way exists to have a meaningful dialogue.

In the first century, the Jewish political elite and religious rulers attempted to silence Jesus in this same manner. Yet, Jesus never “opened . . . his mouth” and remained silent “as a sheep before its shearers” ([Isa 53:7](#)). Consequently, Jesus established **justice** through His actions on the cross—not mere verbal condemnation or protest. He paid the penalty for all our sin—no matter who we are or what we have done. Through His compassion and grace, He has made this salvation available to all equally.

Question
4

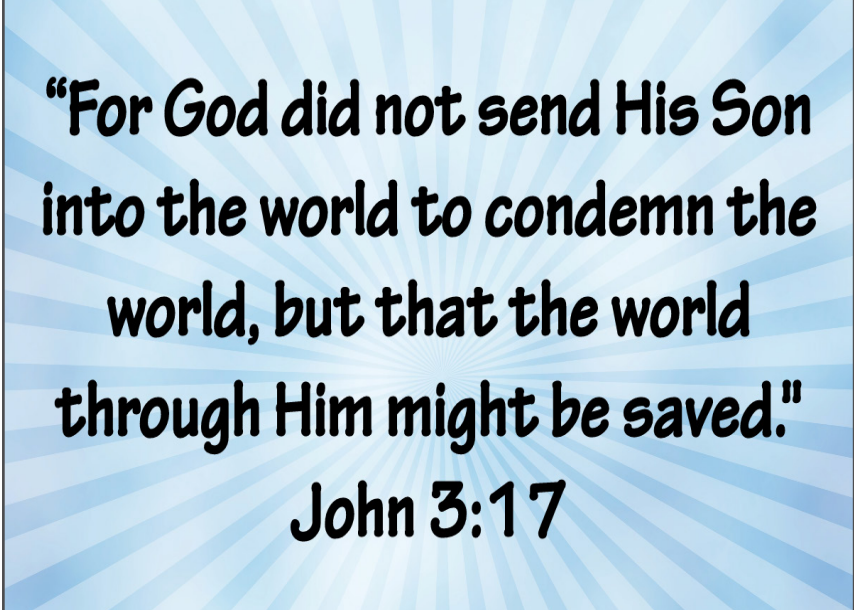
How does the world's clamoring for justice usually lead to more injustice?

Jesus did speak at the appropriate time to warn people of their destructive behavior. Yet, he did not get into pointless arguments, but gently reminded them of their own errors by asking questions to help them think introspectively about their own lives. He did not condemn them, or speak judgmentally, but rather He spoke the truth in love to help them see their own condition and their need for restoration ([John 3:17](#)). The world, however, regards **justice** as a person getting what he or she deserves whether a penalty for wrongdoing or a reward for doing right. But Jesus came to give us the life we don't deserve. In a sense, therefore, this reflects grace and mercy not **justice** in the way we typically view it. Through His death, Jesus removed the penalty for our transgressions. And herein lies the true **justice** which He instituted: He made this gift of life available to all—both Jew and Gentile—if we accept it on His terms.

Isaiah further describes this **Servant** as one who builds, mends, and supports rather than one who tears down and destroys. He reveals how **He will not break a bruised reed** or quench a smoking flax, but **He will bring forth justice for the truth** (v. 3). These two images picture careful restoration so that these damaged and

weakened items can once again thrive. The first envisions a broken branch on a tender plant propped back into place. The second refers to the wick of a candle trimmed so it can burn more brightly.

Rather than remove them or discard them, the **Servant** sees their true worth and takes action to restore them. Jesus does so with us too! When mankind sinned in the Garden of Eden, God could have immediately put them to death, but He didn't. He had a solution in mind to restore them and now us. He sent Christ to repair, reconcile, and restore. In a sense, God used this Servant to restore us to our original purpose—to serve Him in holiness. Thus, He has reversed the curse that mankind has brought upon the world through sin. This concept will become much more evident in verse 5 which functions as a bridge uniting the two sections of this passage.



“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”
John 3:17

This first section ends on a note of triumph. The **Servant** will not fail to bring **justice** to the entire world (v. 4). Israel, on one hand, often failed in her purpose to point people, including the Gentiles, to a relationship with the Lord because they worshipped other gods and they acted no different than the nations around them. Even those generally faithful to the Lord, whether Moses, David, Peter, or Paul, failed at times because their flesh dominated their way of thinking and they made mistakes. This **Servant**, however, would not disappoint because He would perfectly display the image of God to the world ([Heb 1:3-4](#)).

Anyone or anything that promises to bring true **justice** to this world will fail because they have been corrupted by sin. Only one without sin and untainted motives could ever bring about such transformative **justice**. As God, this **Servant** could because He is sinless and can judge in complete righteousness ([Heb 4:15](#)). Although He has set that **justice** in motion already through His death and resurrection, it has not yet fully arrived. We **wait** for that day in which we will experience true, reformative

Instruct

justice. In the meantime, He has shown great patience toward us, giving people time to repent (2 Peter 3:9). One day, He will return to issue His final verdict, so we must ask ourselves, “Are we ready for that day?”

Question
5

As we wait for Christ to return to bring about justice, how can we practice and proclaim justice in our world right now?

Isaiah 42:5-9

THE MISSION TO BRING LIGHT

As the passage begins to transition from the person of the **Servant** to His purpose, Isaiah reminds us about God’s care and concern for all His creation. The God who **created the heavens** and formed **the earth** along with everything in it has given **breath to all people** and sustains them throughout life (v. 5). Moving from this general principle to a more specific one, the prophet now demonstrates God’s care for His **Servant** whom He has **called in righteousness** (v. 6). God will guide Him (i.e., **hold His hand**) and sustain Him (i.e., **keep**) so that He might focus on fulfilling His purpose.

God, therefore, would **give this Servant as a covenant to the people** and **a light to the Gentiles**. As that **light**, He would **open blind eyes** and set **prisoners** free enshrouded in **darkness** (v. 7). To **give His Servant as a covenant** is a rather unusual way of stating it. We typically say that we make **a covenant**, enter into an agreement, or approve a contract. But when we think of this Servant’s identity, to give makes perfect sense. In antiquity, covenants were ratified, or made official, through the offering of a sacrifice. This **Servant**, however, wouldn’t merely make **a covenant with the people**; He would also ratify it or put it into effect through His own blood. Jesus literally became the sacrifice that made the **covenant** effective! Therefore, John the Baptist when he saw Jesus could exclaim, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)!

Moreover, Jesus came so that the whole world might have life through Him. He wasn’t just **a light** unto the Jews, but also to **the Gentiles** (John 1:9). In fact, many of the Jews failed to recognize Him as this true **Light** and rejected Him to their own destruction (John 1:10-11). Nonetheless, like the lighthouse mentioned in the

introduction, Jesus still functioned as a guide who would show us the way. And that way to have life led exclusively through Him ([John 14:6](#)). Certainly, Jesus gave physical sight to the **blind** and healed many other infirmities, but here to **open blind eyes** means to show people their true, sinful condition so that they might repent and surrender to the One who brings life.

Unfortunately, many people remain **blind** to their true spiritual condition. They refuse to **open** their **eyes** and see the truth. In part, the god of this age blinds

their minds to the consequences of their choices and attempts to redefine what constitutes sin ([2 Cor 4:4](#)). Recall how the serpent in the Garden of Eden twisted God's words forbidding them to eat of that particular fruit ([Gen 3:4](#)). Yet, people are still responsible for their own choices and actions. The blame does not fall solely upon the devil. People **blind** themselves because they try to justify their sin, compare themselves to other imperfect human beings, and, in some cases, redefine the bounds of what constitutes sin.

“whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”

2 Corinthians 4:4

Question
6

In what specific ways does sin blind us?

When we compare ourselves to the **righteousness** of the **Light**, however, we will see how wretched we truly are. Thus, Jesus came into the world to show us the consequences and danger of sin, revealing to us our deficiency and helplessness to overcome sin on our own. So, He also came to illuminate our understanding so that we might know how we can have salvation. From the beginning, people have turned to many things in order to seek eternal life. They have sought it through religious ritual, even turning to other gods (v. 8), human philosophy and ingenuity, good works, and trying to be a good person. None of these things works! They all still lead to destruction. In Christ, however, God has established a **new covenant** (v. 9) which deals with the problem of sin and death once-and-for-all. We must recognize this Servant whom He has sent as the source of all life and surrender our lives to Him—the One who loves us so much that He has given His life so that we might reside in heaven with Him forever.

Inspire

Praise God that He did not leave us on our own to figure out things. He sent His Son, the Servant in this passage, to show us the way. When we as humans attempt to fix problems on our own, we tend to make an even bigger mess. And when two or more people come together to find a solution, the problems seem to multiply and satisfactory resolutions rarely come! But God didn't leave us on our own. He had a perfect plan to deal with our problem forever. His righteous Servant would give Himself as our covenant, taking our sin upon Himself and dying in our place. We can have life if only we would turn from our sin, trust Him, and submit to His leadership. Then, we would have the security of knowing we have eternal life which He graciously grants to those who follow Him.

Incorporate

How would you communicate God's conception of justice to our world today? In what ways can we effectively practice or engage in biblical justice in our world?

How are we to be lights in the world? What biblical passages come to mind that describe us as light?

March 10, 2024



A Servant who Restores

Isaiah 49:1-13

Focal Verse:

"Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Isaiah 49:6

Introduce

I often enjoy watching programs on restoration whether that of old homes, cars, or valuable collectables rescued from obscurity from the attic or pulled from the garbage heap in a last-minute find. The transformation which occurs from the object's current condition to a restored one could not be any more dramatic! In the hands of a master restorer, a rusted heap of little more than a pile of scrap metal can once again become a beautiful, functional machine in pristine, mint-like condition as if it had just rolled off the factory assembly line. In all his painstaking work, the master restorer doesn't merely seek to cover or hide the imperfections cosmetically, but to get rid of them altogether so that the object once again functions according to its original purpose.

On one such program that I watched several years ago, the restorer immaculately transformed a rusted pedal car—a child's toy developed in the late nineteenth century and popularized by the mid twentieth—into a beautiful collectable. The body of the car was severely damaged, covered in rust and dents. Critical pieces, such as the steering wheel and a couple of the wheels themselves, were missing altogether. The car had no use; it had no value in that state. It took the vision and expertise of the master restorer to see what the pedal car could once again become in order to revitalize it!



So, the restorer began to track down the missing pieces from that time period. He spent hours scouring sites around the country until he found each original, vintage part. After securing all the original parts, he went to work on the frame of the pedal car itself. He took everything apart—the body, bolts, and accessories—in order to sandblast each piece to remove the rust. Finding a sliver of original paint, he matched it. He primed and painted the body its original color. Any pieces that required re-chroming, he did so. He even re-created the original decals and affixed them to the body of the car! He then meticulously re-assembled the car on which every piece could now function as it should.

Introduce

This pedal car couldn't have restored itself. In its current state in the junkyard, it would have inevitably continued its destructive course with no chance of reversing its fate. It needed the touch of a master restorer. It needed a master restorer with a plan and one who would take the time to invest in it. The restorer also needed the knowledge and ability to return the pedal car to its original purpose. Without the ability and right skills, the restorer would have been helpless to stop the decay.

You and I are like that pedal car. We need restoration because we chose to sever our relationship with the Lord through sin. In and of ourselves, we were helpless. We couldn't do anything on our own to reverse our course of decay and destruction. Fortunately, God sent His Servant—a Master Restorer—who had a plan to return us to our original purpose if only we would accept it. Through His own righteousness, of which we learned last week, this Master Restorer had the ability and skill to deliver us from death and once again make us useful in right standing with the Lord. He didn't just cover over our sins, but He washed them completely away, making us a new creation in which we can once again serve God according to our original intended purpose!

Key
Question

In what ways has Christ restored you to your original purpose to serve the Lord?

THE CALL OF THE LORD:

Isaiah begins this prophetic oracle by highlighting the lofty call of the **Servant** whom God has chosen to rescue not only Israel from spiritual exile because sin has alienated them from Him, but the entire world. Like a coach giving vital information about a game plan, the Lord calls all people everywhere to “**listen** up.” He has a message that goes beyond the Mediterranean **coastlands** of Israel to **peoples from afar** (v. 1). His words apply to everyone everywhere in every generation, so He bids us to pay careful attention! Therefore, we must ask ourselves: “How well do we **listen** to what God has said?”

In our modern world of multi-tasking, we have gotten ourselves into the bad habit of trying to do too many things at once. We may believe that we can do multiple things well at the same time, but our divided attention ultimately causes us to miss some details no matter how hard we may try. To do a task well, however, we must focus on it alone! When we find ourselves multi-tasking, we will always oscillate between one project and the other. While we “focus” on the one task, we will slight the other. This should never be the case with God. He always deserves our full, undivided attention. Honestly, would it please you or frustrate you if your spouse, children, or friends only paid attention to some of what you said only some of the time rather than giving their undivided attention when you spoke directly to them?

Question
1

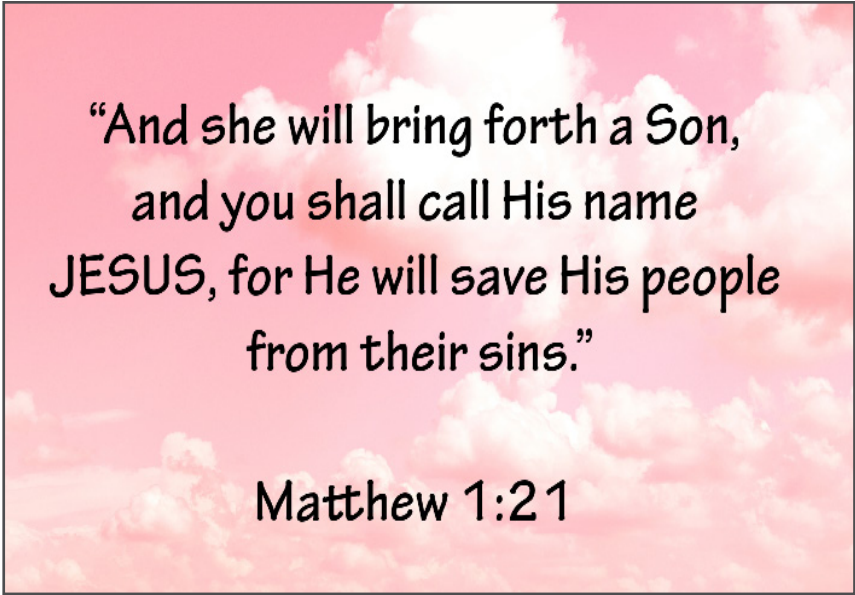
At what times has trying to multi-task caused you to miss important information because you become dustracted or consumed by one task over the other?

After getting the people’s attention, the Lord details the unique call He has placed upon this **Servant** even before His birth. Reminiscent of Jeremiah’s call by God as a prophet ([Jer 1:5](#)), God has **called** this **Servant from** His mother’s **womb** and given Him a **name** that denotes His divine purpose. This also reminds us of an event that occurred much earlier in this prophetic book where God directed Isaiah to give King Ahaz a sign concerning the impending doom of Jerusalem at the hands of the

Babylonians. This sign indeed served as a warning to the king, but it also looked forward to a much greater event in the coming of the Messiah who would restore the world to a rightful relationship with the Lord. Isaiah 7:14 states, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Fast forward nearly 700 years from the days in which Isaiah penned these words and we will find a pregnant virgin who had conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit ([Luke 1:34-35](#)). There in a humble stable in Bethlehem, she gave birth to a first-born Son with a special purpose. Just as Isaiah had promised, this Child was called Immanuel, which means “God with us,” because God had literally made Himself flesh to dwell among His creation ([Matt 1:23](#); [John 1:14](#)). Unlike any other prophet, priest, or king who had come before Him only to warn the world of the penalty for disobedience to God, this Baby came to provide salvation to the entire world through His sacrificial death. For this reason, they named the Baby, Jesus, which means “Yahweh saves,” for He would be the Savior of the world ([Matt 1:21, 25](#)).

As God in the flesh, this **Servant** spoke with unmatched divine authority. God had made His **mouth like a sharp sword** (v. 2a). In other words, He would transform the world spiritually through the power of God’s Word rather than through military might ([Heb 4:12](#)). Throughout Jesus’ teaching ministry on earth, the people often recognized that He spoke with greater authority than Israel’s most revered leaders! At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, the people marveled because “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” ([Matt 7:29](#)). The scribes had to appeal to other scholars and precedents established by tradition to support their



*“And she will bring forth a Son,
and you shall call His name
JESUS, for He will save His people
from their sins.”*

Matthew 1:21

teaching. Jesus needed to do no such thing! He appealed to Himself as God for the basis of His teaching and the right application of Scripture. In addition, Jesus also spoke authoritatively in many other ways. When a raging storm suddenly arose and threatened to capsize the boat, for example, Jesus commanded the wind and waves to

cease. His authority over the natural order caused His disciples to wonder who He is that the wind and waves obey Him ([Matt 8:23-27](#)). In another instance, Jesus spoke with authority over demons whom He cast out of a man, giving them permission to enter a herd of swine which then plummeted off a cliff ([Mark 5:1-20](#)). Finally, as God, He had the authority to forgive sin—something which brought Him into conflict with Israel’s religious leaders ([Luke 5:17-26](#)). Only God could do these things. And, as God in the flesh, this **Servant** alone had the right to do these things!

Question
2

How is the authority of this Servant evident in your life?

Next, Isaiah notes how God would protect the Servant and use Him at exactly the right time to accomplish His purpose. The text describes how God **has hidden** this **Servant in the shadow of His hand** and made Him like a **polished** arrow securely stored in **His quiver** for the right moment when He is needed most. This image pictures a skilled archer who conserves his arrows for battle and removes them from the **quiver** only at the exact moment he intends to use them. To win a battle, an archer must draw and fire his arrow with precision. During the Revolutionary War at the Battle of Bunker Hill, commanding officer William Prescott ordered his forces, “Do not fire until you see the whites of their eyes.” With limited supplies of ammunition as well as having outnumbered troops that were less trained than the British, the Americans needed to strike at the right time with accuracy and precision to win the battle.

Although God is vastly superior to the forces at work in this world, He sent this **Servant** to strike a fatal blow to sin and death at exactly the right time! In Galatians 4:4-5, Paul reminds us, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Again, in Romans 5:6, Paul interjects, “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Both of these verses in the New Testament relate exactly what God had foretold here in the Old: He would act at the right time to bring salvation and victory through the promised Messiah!

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus was also conscientious about acting at

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the right time. He would often tell others that His hour, or time, had not yet come ([John 2:4](#); [7:6, 30](#); [8:20](#)). In part, He did this because the Father had appointed the exact time and manner in which He would die as the sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, therefore, had to exercise great caution because the religious leaders constantly sought to kill Him ([Matt 12:14](#)). Like this **polished** arrow in Isaiah, He needed to pick the times He revealed Himself to others discerningly. As a result, He acted both deliberately and wisely to achieve the purpose for which God had sent Him ([John 12:23](#))!

God has called us to pattern our lives after the example this **Servant** set. We need to learn to trust God to act at exactly the right time. No matter how impatient we may be or how desperately we would like to see some type of immediate resolution, we must wait upon the Lord to act. His timing is perfect! Scripture gives us a long history of problems caused by people who grew impatient with the Lord and decided to act on their own—just look at Abram who tried to take matters into his own hands to have an heir with Hagar ([Gen 16](#))! We must trust God to act at the right time and through the right means no matter how dire the circumstances may seem or how desperately we want Him to act now.



Question
3

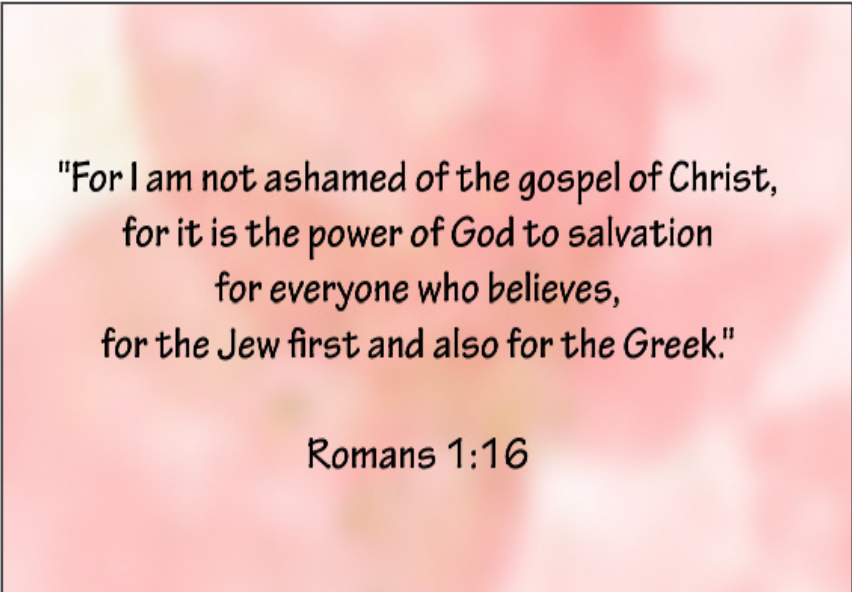
Why is it sometimes difficult to sometimes wait on God to act exactly the right time?

Through this **Servant**, God **will** ultimately **be glorified** (v. 3). But here, the text identifies the **Servant** as **Israel** which has seemingly caused some confusion as to whether it refers to an individual or to the nation. Although we will address this topic more fully in the next section, we must recognize that the **Servant** is clearly an individual—not the nation or people—because He perfectly fulfills God’s purpose

and call to redeem the world and restore all into a right relationship with Him. Thus, God the Father **will be glorified** through His Servant's humble and obedient act of submission to do what He had originally called the nation to do, but they never could do because of their own sinfulness and faithlessness. In support of this, we see Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You" ([John 17:1](#)).

The **Servant**, therefore, would come in humility and weakness which appeared to the world to end in defeat and failure. The weakness by which He came even caused the **Servant** Himself to lament briefly that He had **labored in vain** and spent His **strength for nothing** (v. 4). But unlike the fickle nation of Israel, He would put His trust in the Lord alone which would lead to triumph and seal the victory! Thus, the **Servant** confidently knows that His **just reward is with the Lord** and His **work with His God**. When Jesus came in the likeness of human flesh, therefore, He took on all its weaknesses and frailties, becoming like us in every way with the exception of sinning ([Heb 4:15](#)).

So, to the world, the crucifixion appeared to end Jesus' promise of restoration in defeat and failure. And even while Jesus hung on the cross, it momentarily caused Him to bear the brunt of the separation that sin causes between us and the Father. In that helpless and vulnerable state through which He took all our sins upon Himself, it led Jesus to cry despairingly, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me" ([Matt 27:46](#))? Yet, Jesus had fully surrendered Himself and trusted in the Father's plan ([Luke 22:42](#)) through which He worked to bring victory and life by raising His **Servant** from the dead ([1 Cor 15:50-58](#))! And God raised Him with power from the dead—a power which would give life to all who would trust in Him alone ([Rom 1:1-4](#)).



*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,
for it is the power of God to salvation
for everyone who believes,
for the Jew first and also for the Greek."*

Romans 1:16

Like this **Servant**, God will also work through our weaknesses in order to accomplish His will that He might **be glorified**. Through what the world labels as

Instruct

weakness and liability, God demonstrates His strength and power, working through us to do only the things that He can do. Throughout Scripture, we find examples of God working through His people's weaknesses to glorify Himself. He used a man with a speech impediment to lead His people out of Egypt (Moses). He used an eight-year-old king to rid the nation of idolatry and return the people's focus back to Him (Josiah). He used fishermen without a formal education to spread the gospel (Peter, James, and John). Even Paul in all his trials and tribulations recognizes, "My [God's] grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). May we trust God and allow Him to use our weaknesses to display His power and majesty to bring glory and honor to His name. All we must do is make ourselves available, trust in Him, and submit to His plan.

Question
4

How do you allow God to glorify Himself through your weakness?

Isaiah 49:5-7

THE CHOSEN WHO REDEEMS:

In these next three verses, God details the purpose for which He sent **His Servant** into the world. It is a very specific calling assigned to the **Servant** at conception (v. 5). God would use Him to **restore** the people of **Israel**, that is the descendants of **Jacob, back** into a right relationship with Him. Yet, God has also called this **Servant** to an even greater and more far-reaching task! Not only would He **raise up the tribes of Jacob** and **restore the preserved ones of Israel**, but He would also **give light to the Gentiles** (v. 6). In other words, this **Servant** would bring **salvation** to the entire world—something the nation of Israel could never have done for herself or for others!

Briefly, we'll return to the subject we began addressing in the previous section: how the **Servant** refers to an individual, not the nation of **Israel**. In these verses, we see that **Israel** herself needed restoration. How could a sinful, broken nation redeem herself? Simply put, she couldn't; she needed Someone to come take her place and save her! She needed Someone to fulfill the obligations that she could not fulfill herself, for she had continually broken her covenant with the Lord and consistently rejected Him. It would be like trying to repair an automobile with other worn and

broken parts from a junkyard; it just wouldn't work! Something new and perfect is needed to fix the problem—not the same old methods ([Jer 31:31-34](#)). Only a perfect sacrifice could restore Israel, and the whole world for that matter, into a right relationship with the Lord. So, Jesus came as the perfect Lamb who would take away the sins of the world once and for all ([John 1:29](#)).



Verse seven announces that this **Redeemer of Israel** is able to save precisely because He is **holy** and perfect. Unfortunately, many people did not recognize Him as their **Redeemer**. They would instead despise and abhor Him because He did not fit their own ideology! In other words, they rejected God's perfect plan in lieu of their own plan, but their plan ends with destruction. One day, however, these **rulers, kings, and princes** will understand their folly and bow down in **worship** of this **Servant** ([Phil 2:9-11](#)). This doesn't mean that they won't face the consequences for rejecting Him, but that they will all acknowledge Him as Lord and God when He returns.

Therefore, the decision about this **Redeemer** that we make now matters: Do we accept the relationship He offers and have eternal life or do we reject Him and face eternal death? God has offered us life, but we must accept that life by acknowledging the **Redeemer** He sent by willingly repenting and surrendering to Him now lest we later be forced acknowledge Him as Lord when He returns because we have chosen to reject Him now.

Isaiah 49:8-13

THE COVENANT WITH THE PEOPLE:

So now, God describes exactly how He will accomplish this act of redemption. He will give the Servant Himself as **a covenant to the people** (v. 8). The Lord again begins by emphasizing how He has preserved this **Servant** for this exact moment to accomplish His purpose of **salvation**. Literally translated, the phrase **in a time** of favor

(i.e., **acceptable time**) connotes how God will uphold and bless His **Servant**. He will not leave Him alone or abandoned, but instead He will answer (i.e., hear) and help Him to fulfill the task set before Him.

Before we delve into the benefits of the **covenant**, we must first understand what it means to be given **as a covenant**. Normally, we would expect God to state that He would make a **covenant with the people**. Aside from this passage, never anywhere else in Scripture or secular culture for that matter is someone said to be given **as a covenant!** The way God states it here shows His specific intent behind it. To make this kind of **covenant** or testament (i.e., will) requires it to be ratified or made effective through death. Rather than use animals to ratify the **covenant**, God uses the **Servant**. He Himself must die to make it effective. In a last will and testament, for example, the testator must die before those specified in it can receive their inheritance. In this sense, therefore, God has given Jesus as the **covenant** to die for us that we might receive an inheritance of eternal life through Him!

Now, God outlines what His **covenant** will do—that is the benefits for the people who accept it. Beginning with Israel specifically, God notes how He will **restore** the land (i.e., **earth**) and return it to the people who had forfeited it through their disobedience (i.e., **desolate inheritances**). Thus, He will set the **prisoners** or captives free and illuminate the path of those who are in darkness to find their way (v. 9). Once again, the people will dwell with the Lord in safety, for He will provide for them like a flock grazing **by the roads** where they will find plenty of provision in their once-barren **pastures**. Therefore, no longer will they **hunger** or **thirst** nor will the **sun** scorch them because God will mercifully lead them **to springs of water** (v. 10; [Exod 12:21](#)).

Although these images picture the return of God's people from exile and the promise of a renewed life, God speaks here not merely of a physical return from exile in either Assyria or Babylon, but a return from spiritual exile caused by sin. Jesus came to set **prisoners** free who are enslaved to sin ([Luke 4:18](#); [John 8:36](#)) and to show the path which leads to life for those **who are in darkness** ([Luke 1:79](#)). When we accept the freedom He offers, we will no longer **hunger** ([John 6:35](#)) or **thirst** ([John 4:14](#)). God Himself will be the source of our life and all our provision.

At times, the road in following Christ will not be easy or smooth. In fact, we will face obstacles and encounter problems all along the way. Yet, we must trust God for our provision and lean wholly upon Him. For this reason, God will use His **Servant**

to **make** roads through a **mountain** where no roads exist (v. 11). He will flatten the **mountain** and **make** the path straight and navigable for us to follow Him ([Prov 3:6](#)). Consequently, what is impossible for us to accomplish will be possible for this **Servant** ([Luke 18:27](#)). We can cast our burdens upon Him and He will make them light ([Matt 11:28-30](#))! We must simply trust God and follow Him!

For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

Hebrews 9:16

Question
5

How has Christ guided you through challenges in life and made your path navigable to follow Him?

Finally, we see the scope of His **covenant**. God has made it available to everyone through His **Servant**. This **covenant**, therefore, was not just for **Israel** alone, but the whole world benefitted. Verse twelve pictures people from every cardinal direction and every corner of the earth coming to participate in the **covenant**—including those in southern Egypt (i.e., **Sinim**) where God’s people had formerly been held captive. Because Christ has redeemed the world through Him and freed us from spiritual exile, we can rejoice. In fact, the **heavens** and **earth** break out in **joyful** song (v. 13). God has brought comfort to **His people** and shown **mercy** to **the afflicted** by sending His Son has the chosen **Servant** to bring life to the world.

Each of us is desperately in the need of restoration because sin has destroyed our lives. We cannot fix ourselves; we need the touch of a Master Restorer. Fortunately, God knew even before He created us that we would wreck our lives and we'd need His help to fix them. So, He appointed a Servant, who is Christ our Lord, to come to earth as a covenant who would give His life for us. Only through Him can we be restored into fellowship with the Lord and to our original purpose of bringing glory and honor to Him through our lives. May we follow that Savior and learn to trust Him in everything as He guides us.

Incorporate

How have you seen God work at exactly the right timing in your life?

How has Christ satisfied you (i.e., you no longer hunger or thirst) since you have trusted Him?

How has God freed you from spiritual exile or enslavement to sin? How can you use this as a testimony to others?

March 17, 2024



A Servant who is Resolute

Isaiah 50:1-11

Focal Verse:

“For the Lord God will help Me; therefore, I will not be disgraced;
therefore, I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be
ashamed.”

Isaiah 50:1-11

Introduce

With opening day for the professional baseball season in only a few days, perhaps no other sport reminds us so much of the focus and determination required to connect a small, wooden stick to a ball often hurled in excess of ninety miles an hour from only sixty feet away. Opening day for baseball brings with it the excitement of a new season as well as the temptation to surrender one's attention to the pomp and circumstance of the parades, festivities, and ceremonies surrounding the game. Professional players, therefore, must put aside these ancillary distractions to focus on their performances during the game. They must not find themselves caught up in the hype of the fans or the critique of the media above working on their fundamentals and continually improving their game.

Aside from all the off-field distractions, players must elevate their focus the moment they cross those white foul lines to take the field or step into the batter's box. They must block out all the noise from the boisterous crowd whether cheers or jeers. They shouldn't look into the stands even for a split-second to glance



at a fan-made sign or the antics of these crazed fans. The moment players break their concentration often produces disastrous results that alter the outcome of the game whether via a fielding error, a strike out, or a wild pitch. Baseball requires one's undivided attention and complete resolve in order to achieve success.

A batter, for example, will usually stare at a pitcher on the mound during the entire pitching sequence. He won't take his eyes off him for even a moment, but instead he will watch his wind up intently to see how he is gripping the ball in order to determine what type of pitch he may throw. As the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, the batter will then focus solely on the ball, particularly its red seams, in order to detect the direction of its spin and discern what way the pitch may break. Anything less than one's full concentration will typically end with less than stellar results. Therefore, a player must be focused the moment he steps onto the field, particularly into the batter's box. He must remove any distraction and concentrate solely on the task at

Introduce

hand!

Similarly, the Suffering Servant here in Isaiah removed every distraction and endured every hardship to focus solely on God’s plan to redeem a sinful people. Jesus never once took His eyes off God the Father whose plan required the utmost devotion, determination, and focus! He was wholly determined to fulfill God’s plan no matter what it required—including His death. Scripture describes Jesus as setting His “face like a flint” ([Isa 50:7](#); [Luke 9:51](#)) when undertaking God’s purpose. In other words, He resolved to fulfill the will of God no matter the cost. Indeed, He endured beatings, having his beard plucked out, and being shamefully spat upon. Yet, in all this, nothing dissuaded Him from His mission which led to His death on the cross! We, too, must keep our eyes fixed on Christ—never succumbing to any distraction in life. We must be wholly resolved to follow Him and participate in His plan for our lives no matter what we may face. After all, He was resolved to redeem us from the foundation of the world—despite the high price it cost!

Key
Question

In life what are some of the things that you have been most determined to do regardless of the cost?

Isaiah 50:1-3

THE COST OF SIN:

In the previous chapter ([Isa 49:14-26](#)), Israel attempted to blame God for their current predicament in which they found themselves besieged and exiled by their enemy. They even complained that God had forsaken them; they charged Him with utterly and arbitrarily forgetting about them as well as about the promises He made to them ([Isa 49:14](#)). But God patiently reminded them that He has not forgotten them nor has He reneged on His promises. On the contrary, if only they would repent and return to Him, He would deliver them from their current peril of their own doing and give them what He had promised.

Yet, the people continued to complain and blame God as Isaiah 50:1 opens. So, God offers them proof that it was they who were at fault and not Him. He shows them their **certificate of divorce** whereby He had **put away** their



unfaithful **mother** (i.e., the nation of Israel as a whole). In this case, Israel could not claim a no-fault **divorce** because she stood guilty and condemned of all the charges whereas God had remained faithful to His Word. God, therefore, had figuratively taken the nation to court and this **certificate of divorce** contained all the evidence against them. They had turned to the service of other gods even though they still participated outwardly in "religious" acts of worship they dedicated to the Lord ([Isa 1:4](#)). This syncretism in worship then led them to commit all kinds of immoral atrocities which earned them the reputation of being as odious to God as Sodom and Gomorrah ([Isa 1:10](#)).

The people also portrayed God as being forced to sell them capriciously to His **creditors** because He could not keep His promises. They claimed that God found Himself in a position where He couldn't pay His debts, so He **sold** them to appease His **creditors**. In more modern terms, they said God liquidated His assets to pay His debts! Through this metaphor, they charged God with being unable to keep His promises

Instruct

which caused Him to get rid of them as His people! But God again reminds them that no creditor can force His hand. Instead, the reality is that they **sold** themselves **for** their own **iniquities**—the same reason that He had divorced their mother. They need to wake up and take responsibility for their own actions and stop blaming Him.

Question
1

If God wrote put a certficte of divorce against you, what are some of the things that you'd have to change in order to reconcile with Him?

We live in a day of no-fault **divorce** where many people refuse to take responsibility for their own actions. Instead, they continually shift the blame to others—just like the children of Israel tried to do with God here. Rather than identifying the true source of the problem and taking steps to correct it, people blame everyone and everything but themselves. They will cite the environment, their upbringing, a lack of opportunity, their circumstances, and other people in their lives as the reason for some of the choices they make. And, like Israel, people still to this day blame God for the situations into which they have led themselves by their own choices! Regardless of the external things which may happen to us and over which we have no control, the fact remains that we alone are responsible for the choices that we make and how we respond. We can't blame it on anyone else!

We tend to look critically at the world and even decry our society's propensity to pass the buck rather than admit fault. It's always easier to see the fault in others than in ourselves. Before we criticize the culture and point out its faults, we must carefully examine our own lives and determine where we stand with the Lord ([Matt 7:3-5](#)). It's very easy, and seemingly natural, to pose the question: How does society shift the blame to hide their culpability? However, we must ask this same question of ourselves. This week don't focus on how the culture plays the blame-game. Look at your own life. Ask God to show you any areas in which you have attempted to shift the blame or anything which you ought to change in your service of Him. When we seek God and stop playing the blame-game, it will transform our relationship with Him above all which will influence how we relate to everyone in our circle of influence!

Question
2

At times, how have you attempted to blame others for the circumstnces in your life?

God reminded the people that He had even graciously given them time to answer the charges against them, but **none** showed up in defense! Hence, He asked two questions of them: “**Why, when I came, was there no man?**” and “**Why, when I called, was there none to answer**” (v. 2). With these questions, God pictures a trial—perhaps the divorce proceedings mentioned in the preceding verse. In the name of justice, He had given the defendant time to assemble witnesses or even take the stand themselves to declare their innocence. But they couldn’t. The fact that they had no witnesses and could not speak for themselves served as their indictment. They were guilty as charged!

In a rebuttal to their argument that He could not pay His debts and had **sold** them to His **creditors**, God reminded them of His sovereignty. He alone has the power and authority **to deliver** them from their current circumstances! Again, this leads God to ask them two rhetorical questions: “**Is My hand shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?**” A short **hand** (or arm) in this metaphor symbolizes weakness. Thus, God asks this question in such a way that anticipates “no” as a response: No, God is not too weak to **redeem** them! God would **redeem** and **deliver** them if only they would admit their sin and repent. But to this point, the people had been too stubborn to admit their own fault!



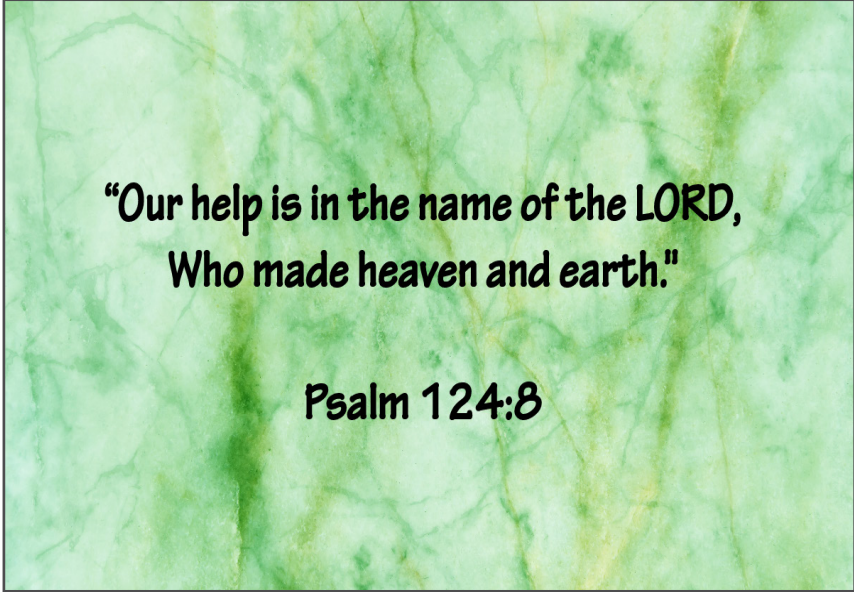
To reinforce the idea that He has the authority to **redeem**, God appeals to His sovereignty over the created order especially as it related to some of the plagues which He used to **deliver** Israel from the land of Egypt. With one word of **rebuke**, for example, God can **dry up the sea** and **make the rivers a wilderness**—that is dry ground ([Exod 15:8, 10](#)). As a result, **the fish** begin to **stink because there is no water** and they **die of thirst** ([Exod 7:21](#)). Finally, God reminds them that He has the authority to darken the sky as if the world is draped in **sackcloth** so that it cannot see (v. 3, see [Exod 10:21-22](#)). If He controlled the natural order and used it to **deliver** Israel some 600 years prior, would He not have the **power**

to **deliver** them from the hands of their current conqueror?

Question
3

How have you seen the hand of God deliver you?

Unfortunately, we oftentimes treat God just like Israel did. We may not verbally say it or even cognitively think it, but we treat God as if He has no **power** or authority because we retain control over our own lives. We refuse to admit that we need help and acknowledge He's the only one who can truly help us! Whether out of pride or sheer stubbornness, many times we refuse His help. In life, when well-meaning people try to assist us, we may exclaim, "I've got this," even when we truly don't have the situation under control. Then, we become frustrated when things go awry. Sometimes we do the same thing with the Lord. We treat Him as if He is an unwanted meddler in our lives. We tell God, "I've got this," when we truly need His help every day in every way!



**"Our help is in the name of the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth."**

Psalm 124:8

Isaiah 50:4-6

THE CHARACTER OF THE SERVANT:

Although sin has cost us dearly by severing our relationship with the Lord, He is not so weak that He cannot **redeem** us! It doesn't matter what we have done. God can **deliver** us from the depths of our sin. And He sent this suffering Servant to provide that deliverance for us. Whereas we have studied more about His purpose in coming thus far in our curriculum, these verses describe more of His character—who He is.

First, we see the Servant's faithfulness to communicate the exact message that **the Lord God has given** Him (v. 4). Although this could be said of any prophet who disseminated the Lord's message accurately and faithfully, as we shall see, the description of this Individual will become more specific as we advance through these

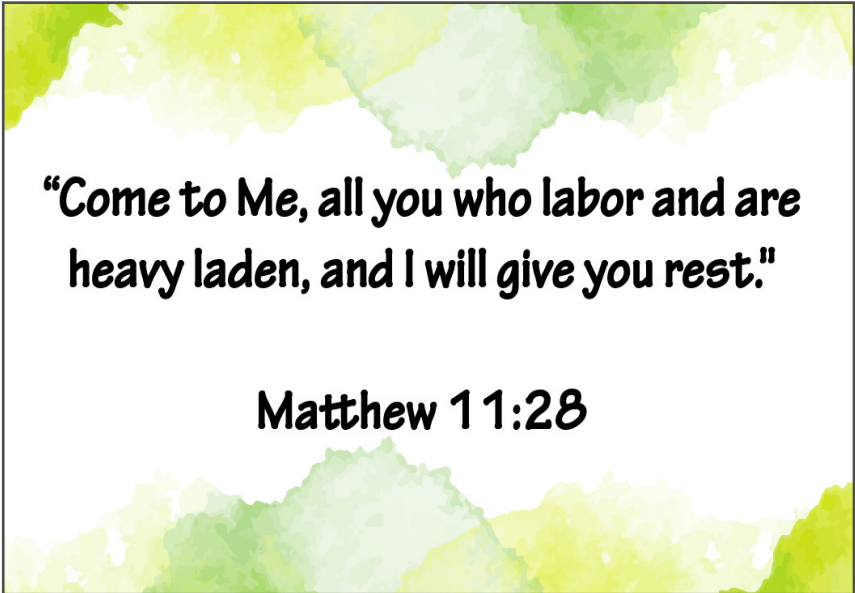
verses. And it could only refer to one Man! For now, however, notice how God has given Him **the tongue of the learned** so that He would **know how to speak**. This means that God had given Him the exact words that He wanted Him to deliver to the people! The source of His message was from the Lord! In John 12:49-50, Jesus reveals to us the source of His message: “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

Question
4

How faithfully do you communicate the message that God has given you?

Next, the Servant describes the content of this message. At the appropriate time (i.e., **in season**), He will speak **a word** to the one **who is weary**. In other words, He will communicate with us how to find eternal hope and satisfaction that refreshes the soul! This isn't just a momentary respite from our life-long struggles, but it is the salvation which brings eternal life that He offers—the redemption on which we've focused the last three weeks! In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus makes this point clear, “Come to Me, all you 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 and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

This Servant also shows us that communication not only involves speaking, but also listening. And listening plays the most prominent role between the two! How can we faithfully communicate the **word** which we have received if we don't first listen? The next four stanzas in these verses describe the importance of listening. God **awakens** His Servant every **morning** to listen! Notice how **the Lord awakens** His ear



“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28

Instruct

and opens it to **hear the learned** (vv. 4f, 5a).

Jesus illustrates this principle throughout His ministry by going to a secluded place where He spent time in prayer seeking the will of the Father ([Luke 5:16](#)). In fact, after sharing His last Passover meal with His disciples before His crucifixion, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray—which He did regularly, for it was His custom ([Luke 22:39](#)). Certainly, we can take our requests to the Lord in prayer, but prayer also requires that we listen—we wait upon His response. Therefore, prayer shouldn't ever become one-sided—a monologue from us—but we must always treat it as a conversation where we listen so that we might discern what is God's good and perfect will!

Question
5

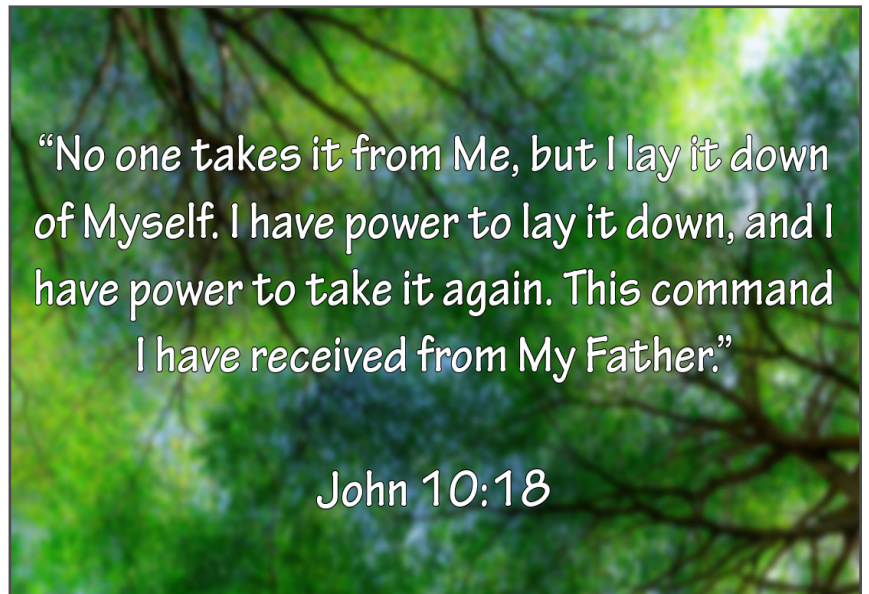
When you pray, how do you ensure that you also listen to God rather than simply giving Him a list of problems and requests?

Second, we see the Servant's obedience to the Lord's call even if that meant enduring pain and suffering. Although innocent of any wrongdoing, this Servant willingly endured beatings; He **gave His back to those who struck** Him (v. 6). But these violent aggressors didn't stop there! They struck Him on His **cheeks** and **plucked out His beard**. Still, he did not **hide His face** in guilt or **shame**, but continued to endure their abuse as they spat upon Him. This horrendous violence undeniably occurs to only one Man: Jesus. During His trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus is **struck** or slapped on the cheek by the guard of the high priest ([John 18:22](#)) before other soldiers join in hitting Him on the **cheeks** with their palms while ridiculing Him to prophesy who had hit Him ([Luke 22:63-64](#)). Others further mocked the Lord by spitting upon Him ([Mark 14:65](#)). Despite all this brutality directed against Jesus, it led Paul to assert that "He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross ([Phil 2:8](#)).

This Servant stands in stark contrast to the nation of Israel as presented at the very beginning of this passage. Even though guilty as charged, Israel balked at their current situation. They complained that they had been poorly and unfairly treated; they felt that they didn't deserve this fate they suffered! This Servant, however, doesn't complain at all. He willingly endures these hardships so that He can bring life to a wayward people ([John 10:18](#)). If anyone could have ever claimed to have been this

innocent and without guilt, it would have been this long-awaited Messiah, for He was perfectly righteous! Even the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, could find no fault in Him (Luke 23:4, 14).

Humans have the propensity to complain when things don't go their way; some may even throw a tantrum when they fail to get what they want. Yet, we all have one thing in common: we stand guilty before the Lord! When we compare our lives to that of Christ's, we will see how far short we fall from



that perfect standard. Fortunately, we don't have to mend this broken relationship ourselves. Israel couldn't and neither can we. They needed a Savior to **redeem** them! We also need that same Savior to **redeem** and **deliver** us. Only through Christ and His perfect sacrifice can we be restored in our relationship with God!

Isaiah 50:7-11

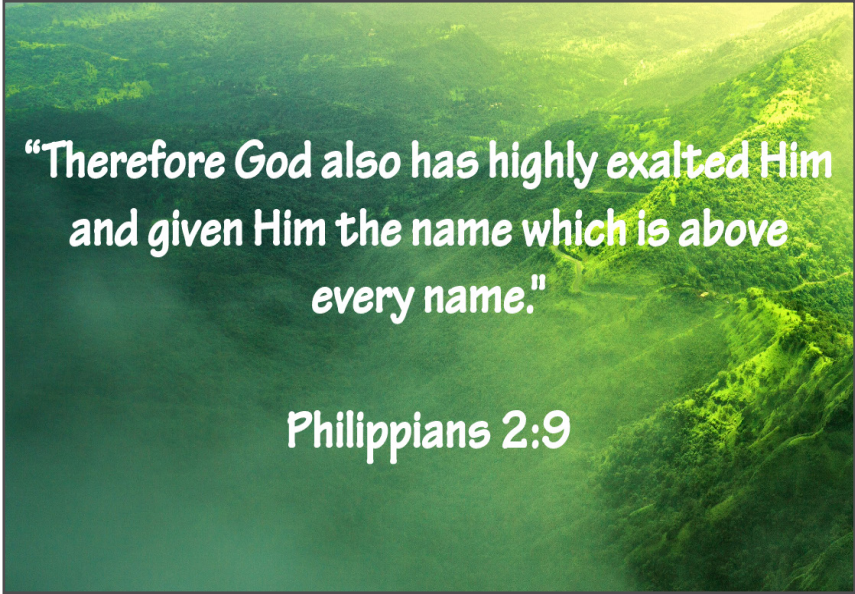
THE CONFIDENCE OF THE SERVANT:

In the last section of this passage, we see the confidence of the Servant. His confidence stems not in Himself or from His own power, but in **the Lord God** who **will help** Him (v. 7). Therefore, the Servant doesn't constantly worry about declaring His own innocence; He doesn't become so distracted by a pursuit to clear His name that He misses the task to which He has been called! He focuses solely upon doing the will of the Lord and fulfilling the purpose for which He was specifically called. Because the Servant had confidence that the Lord would vindicate Him in the end, He would **not be disgraced** nor **ashamed**, but He would **set His face like flint** to accomplish God's plan that had been set before Him.

The New Testament uses this very verse to describe how Jesus resolutely, or firmly, embarked upon His journey to Jerusalem to be crucified for our sins. Luke 9:51, therefore, reveals, "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." The phrase "steadfastly

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set” literally means “set His face **like flint.**” In other words, Jesus did not let anything distract Him from fulfilling His purpose. He was focused on this one singular goal: to provide the unblemished sacrifice which would save the world. In the end, Jesus was indeed vindicated, for God exalted Him by giving Him a name above all names ([Phil 2:9](#)). And one day, all will fall in worship at His feet.



“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name.”

Philippians 2:9

We also need to follow Jesus’ example and keep ourselves from becoming distracted in our service to the Lord. We live in an age of sensory overload in which external stimuli constantly vie for our attention. People tend to watch only short clips on YouTube or social media for a few seconds until something else catches their eye and they click on another link. It only takes people a few seconds to scroll a website, looking at pictures or reading only the headlines before they click on another page. We constantly allow ourselves to become distracted by the world around us. We quickly move on to the newest and latest fad that the world deems worthy of our attention. But when it comes to serving Christ, we cannot allow this to happen. We must remove everything that hinders our service and fix our eyes upon Him ([Heb 12:1-2](#)).

Question
6

What things have the tendency to cause distraction in your life? How can you overcome them and keep your eyes focused on Christ?

Despite all the hardships this Servant will face, God has not abandoned Him nor forsaken Him, but instead **He is near who justifies** Him (v. 8). In a taunt against His adversaries who have tried to bring these baseless charges against Him, He demands that they come and confront Him face to face. In a sense, the phrases **stand together** and **come near** are functionally equivalent to our modern phrases “bring it on” or “take your best shot.” The Servant knows that their charges will not stand because He has confidence that **the Lord God will surely help** Him (v. 9)! As His defense attorney, God

will poke holes in the case of those who **condemn** His Servant like **a moth** that eats holes in clothing. These people have no leg on which to stand. They cannot win this case, for God will triumphantly exalt His Servant.

In Reference



In verses 8 and 9, Isaiah employs the illustration of a courtroom in which a brilliant attorney (God) successfully defends the character of his client (Jesus). If we don't understand the phrases **contend with** and **stand together** in light of this metaphor, we will miss the intended meaning of the passage. To contend with, therefore, means to argue, dispute, or indict (i.e., bring charges against). Thus, Jesus asks, "Who has indicted Me? Say those things in my presence."

The point of this metaphor then becomes evident in verse 10. God has vindicated His Servant and declared Him innocent of these unfounded charges. With power, God has declared Him to be His Son whom He sent to save the world. Jesus trusted the Father's plan which led Him to abide by it and participate obediently in it. Like this Servant, we too can experience victory when we **trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon God**. Consequently, we demonstrate our **trust** in the Lord by fearing Him and obeying **the voice of His Servant**. Therefore, the **Servant** shows us how to have life by illuminating the way to salvation in Him for those who walk **in darkness** and have **no light** ([John 3:19-21](#)). We too must abide by God's plan and obediently participate in it!

"But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

John 3:21

Question
7

When someone offends you or even makes malicious accusations against you, how do you respond?

Instruct

Isaiah ends by contrasting one's reliance upon the Lord with the foolish self-reliance of mankind which leads to their destruction and **torment** (v. 11). Self-reliant people attempt to illuminate their own path (i.e., **kindle a fire**) and resolve their own problems apart from God. In other words, they try to find their own way in life—often through trial and error. As a result, self-reliance leads to a whole host of problems; these problems may not manifest themselves immediately, but over time they will become more prominent and pronounced. To have victory, we must not trust in ourselves, but we must **trust wholly in the Lord**. For only when we trust Him and surrender to His plan can we have an abundant life. This doesn't mean that things will always go smoothly in life and we'll never have any difficulties. Rather, it means that we don't have to worry because God will see us through and we can be confident that He will give us victory in the end if we follow His plan and find life through His Servant.

Inspire

We face distractions all the time in life—not just in the sport of baseball that we saw in the introduction. Some distractions, like distracted driving, can have deadly consequences. Still, we become distracted from projects almost seemingly daily in our lives. Something else gets our attention and we never complete the first thing which we originally set out to do! Fortunately, God is not distracted and He followed through on His plan to redeem us. As Paul writes, “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it” ([Phil 1:6](#)). Let us follow the Lord with the same resolve which He has shown us. May we serve Him obediently and faithfully, focusing on Him alone. Therefore, we must get rid of the distractions in our lives and devote ourselves to the mission to which He has called us. We can only do this when we have fully surrendered to Him, trusting and relying upon Him daily to work through us to accomplish that purpose for which He has called us!

Incorporate

After examining the character of this Servant, how does your character compare to His? What areas do you need to work on to become more like Him?

During times of trouble, how did knowing that God is near to you help comfort you to reduce your anxiety?

At what times in your life have you become self-reliant? How did God reorient your thinking to rely upon Him?

March 24, 2024



A Servant who is Rejected

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Focal Verse:

"He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Introduce

With the death of the longest serving monarch in British history on September 8, 2022, tributes and recollections of Queen Elizabeth II began pouring in from all over the world. From some who knew her best, including one of her personal bodyguards named Richard Griffin, we began hearing details about her character and personality that the public may have rarely seen. Mr. Griffin fondly recalled the Queen's penchant for humor in telling of an encounter she had with two American tourists hiking in Scotland near her Balmoral Castle.*

The Queen loved to take leisurely strolls in the hilly countryside near her lavish estate. On one such occasion, dressed inconspicuously for the chilly, damp air of Scotland, she and her bodyguard set out only to meet two tourists from the United States who failed to recognize her. Wishing to be friendly, one



of the tourists struck up a conversation with the Queen. Like any typical introduction with a stranger, he began by asking her where she lived. Realizing they had not yet recognized her, the Queen quickly responded, "London," but indicated that she "had a holiday home just over the hill."* However, she did not divulge it was Balmoral Castle!

The hiker at least knew enough history to realize the Queen had a residence near there. So, shockingly, he inquired whether she had personally met the Queen! In stride with her trademark wit, the Queen didn't miss a beat and replied, "I haven't, but Dick here meets her regularly." This prompted the American to ask Mr. Griffin what she "was like in person." Knowing that he could join in on the Queen's rouse, he said, "Oh, she can be very cantankerous at times, but she's got a lovely sense of humor."

At that point, the two tourists asked Queen Elizabeth if she would take their picture with Mr. Griffin. To which she obliged, so they handed her their camera. But then Mr. Griffin returned the favor and snapped their picture with the Queen! After they parted ways, the Queen chortled, "I'd love to be a fly on the wall when he shows those photographs to friends in America and hopefully someone tells him who I am." Even though the Queen has an immediately recognizable image from plentiful

Introduce

photographs to engraved currency, these two hikers did not recognize her because she looked like any other citizen taking a walk. Nothing about her appearance alerted them to her royalty. They weren't expecting to run into the Queen that day and certainly not under such mundane, ordinary circumstances as a casual walk. They looked for the royal raiment and fanfare that would surely accompany her and identify her as the Queen!

From Isaiah 52-53, we learn that people didn't recognize the Messiah either. The One who created us made Himself flesh so that He could walk among us to save us. When He came, however, many did not recognize Him, causing many to despise and reject Him. They expected a different kind of Messiah; they looked for a type of king in the way that the world defines royalty. They sought someone who would come to conquer the earthly political kingdoms and establish a temporary peace in Israel from its subjugation to foreign nations. However, Jesus came for something much greater. He came to offer life through His sacrificial death. To many, as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus wouldn't look like the Messiah who saves eternally because they only looked for one who fit their ideas and expectations. Let's not miss out on encountering the Messiah, Jesus, who came to save us because we're too busy looking for what we expect rather than what Scripture has declared about Him!

Key
Question

In what ways does the world misidentify Jesus today?

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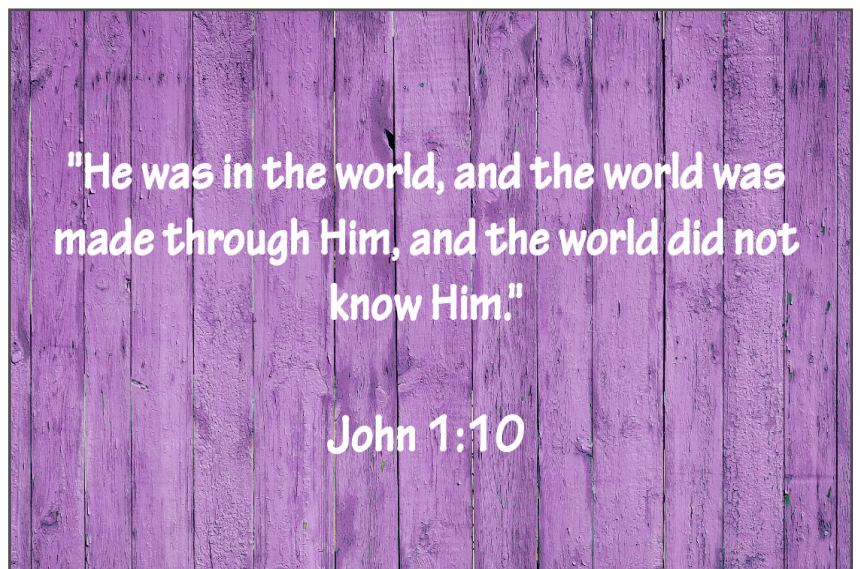
All quotes are taken from the article by Estelle Shirbon, "[What Queen Elizabeth Said When Asked, 'Have You Ever Met The Queen?'](#)" Reuters (September 9, 2022), available from www.reuters.com

THE SPRINGKLING BY THE SERVANT:

On Sunday, we will remember the last week of Jesus' life on earth as He triumphantly entered the city of Jerusalem on the back of a donkey as people paved the way with palm branches and their coats while shouting "hosannah"—salvation has come! Only a few short days later, these grateful cries of "hosannah" turned into jeers of "crucify Him." The events surrounding His crucifixion should come as no surprise, however, because Isaiah recorded them in detail some 700 years earlier. This **Servant** who came to save the world from sin and death would be rejected and counted as worthless by the very people He came to save ([John 1:10](#)). The world would treat Him contemptuously and commit brutal violence against Him to the point of death. But it was through His violent death that He brought redemption to all who would accept it! With this background in mind, we can turn our attention to the last of the suffering **Servant** passages in Isaiah.

The passage begins with a call to **behold** or look upon this **Servant** who acts wisely (v. 13). This command to examine the **Servant** closely carries with it some irony. As we shall learn, He doesn't look appealing to the world. He doesn't appear as victorious. He doesn't attract people with His charisma if one were to look only at His exterior persona. If we look closely as Isaiah bids us, however, we will find a conquering Savior who accomplishes the purpose of God. To **deal prudently**, therefore, indicates that the **Servant** acted wisely precisely because He dedicated Himself to the fulfillment God's plan. Because He submitted Himself to that plan, God would exalt, extol, and make Him **very high** even though the world in general would treat Him as worthless.

Because the world has already written Him off, they will be **astonished** or amazed when God exalts this **Servant** on **high** (v. 14). When we picture someone victorious, we typically don't envision them as bruised and battered. And we certainly wouldn't say that they had achieved victory if they



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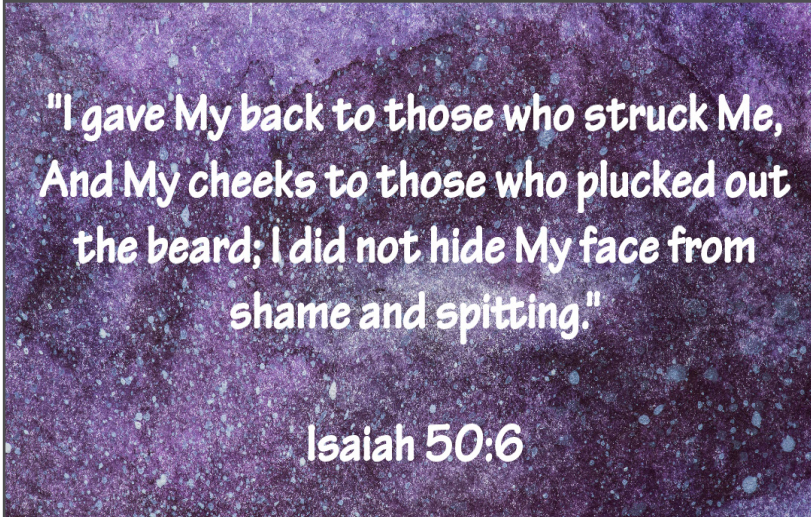
had died. On the contrary, we picture a victorious person as strong, ingenious, and defiant—not humble, submissive, and obedient. Consider some of the protagonists in movies, especially ones from several decades ago. The “hero” or “victor” often came out of the fight without even a scratch—alive and celebratory. We could usually predict how a movie would end because the “good guy” never died no matter how perilous the situation may have seemed.

This is what is so shocking about this **Servant**. He doesn’t fit the pattern we have come to expect in the world. Through the torture and death He endured for our sakes, He brought victory and life! In verse 14, Isaiah vividly depicts the extent of the torture and pain that the **Servant** would suffer. Yet, mere words cannot describe the brutality and anguish of what Jesus underwent for us. The Holman Christian Standard translation best captures the interpretation of this verse: “His appearance was so disfigured that He did not look like a man and His form did not resemble a human being.” In other words, this **Servant** would be so severely beaten that one could not even clearly tell He was a person!

Question
1

What are some of our culture’s expectations that Jesus confronts and turns upside down today?

Isaiah 50:6, which we studied last week, already alluded to these beatings. Here, in verse 14, we learn more about their severity. The Greek word “to crucify” is from where we get our modern word to describe tremendous pain: “excruciating.” As painful as the cross was, Jesus had already experienced hours of excruciating pain even before they nailed Him to it. From the beatings inflicted by the guards, Jesus’ face would have been bloodied, bruised, and severely swollen. As Jesus went through various trials conducted by the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod, the torture He faced only intensified as we shall see.



"I gave My back to those who struck Me,
And My cheeks to those who plucked out
the beard; I did not hide My face from
shame and spitting."

Isaiah 50:6

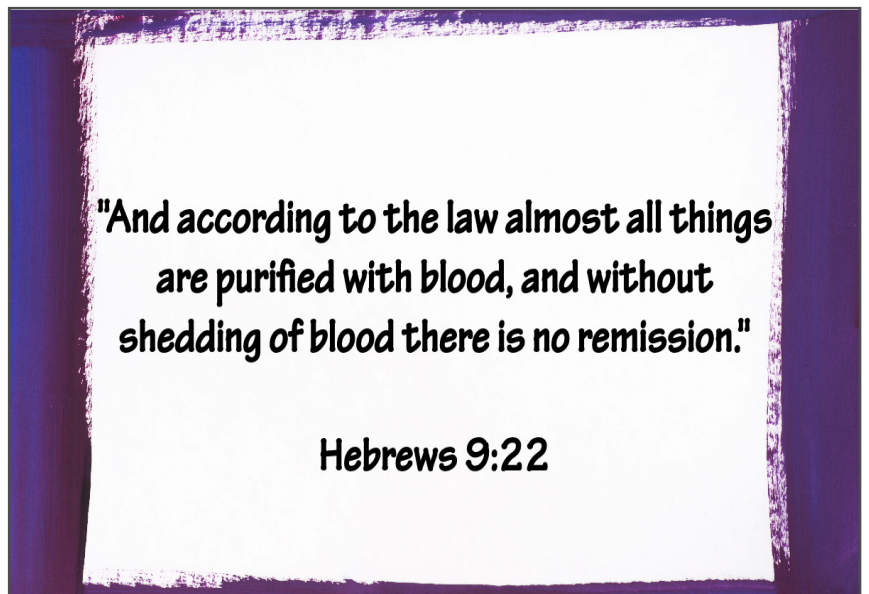
Because no one expects a victor to be so badly mutilated, everyone stands in complete shock. The word translated **sprinkle** by the NKJV is rarely used and difficult to understand (v. 15). It can mean either **sprinkle** or **startle**. Although most translations retain the meaning of **sprinkle**, the context seems to suggest the meaning **startle** or **surprise**. The horrendous treatment of this **Servant** surprises **many nations** so much that it leaves their rulers (i.e., **kings**) speechless. They don't know **what** to say or how to respond because they have never before witnessed anything of this magnitude!

Next, Isaiah explains the source of their shock. Their expectation of the way things work in the world will be turned upside down: **what they had not been told / what they had not heard**, they will now **see** and understand. This explanation serves a two-fold purpose to connect what has already been said in the passage to what will come. Therefore, their surprise centers around two primary aspects.

First, and most immediate, they stand in awe because they cannot understand how someone from such a humble, non-descript background can be exalted by God so highly. To put it this way,

how could a lowly child born in a stable and laid in a manger grow up to be used by God to save the world? Second, they cannot fathom how the death of this Man can produce life. It seems counterintuitive to the culture. Death never leads to life. But in God's plan, only the death of a perfectly righteous

Servant can lead to life ([Heb 9:22](#))! At that time, the **nations** were repulsed by His personality and appalled by His treatment, but later their surprise will stem from His exaltation by the Lord. They will then **see** Him as He truly is: King of kings and Lord of lords ([Rev 17:14](#)).



THE SUFFERING OF THE SERVANT:

Although a chapter division occurs after verse 15 in our English versions, the unit of thought actually continues into chapter 53 where it prompts Isaiah to ask two rhetorical questions: **Who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed** (v. 1)? The first question points back to the surprise that left the nations and **kings** speechless. To put it more colloquially, Isaiah asks, “Who would have believed that a Servant who suffered so much and looked so defeated could ever have delivered someone?” We still do something similar today when we experience something so shocking that it defies our expectation. We preface our comments by interjecting, “You won’t believe this!” Essentially, then Isaiah ponders, “Who will ever believe this?”

The second question addresses the need that both Israel and the world have for salvation and God’s ability to redeem them. To understand fully, this requires that we recall a question from last week’s lesson: “Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem” ([Isa 50:2c](#))? God has the authority and power to redeem anyone from any situation regardless of what they have done provided that they submit to His plan! Now, in verse 1, God has revealed that plan specifically—the source of our redemption. He has sent the Messiah into the world He created to save it ([John 3:16-21](#))!

Question
2

Why do so many people have difficulty in understanding the redemption that God offers through Christ?

Once again, Isaiah warns us to pay attention or we may miss this Messiah because He won’t look like anyone we would expect. The prophet describes Him as one who would **grow up** from humble beginnings like **a tender plant** or a **root out of dry ground** (v. 2). Thus, this metaphor pictures the Messiah like a tiny sapling which has sprouted next to a mighty tree that overshadows it. If you have ever seen a sequoia or redwood tree, you have probably stood in awe gazing at its girth, grandeur, and greatness. Most likely, you would have not ever noticed the tiny sapling which had sprouted at the roots of these giant trees. Humanly speaking, people failed to recognize Jesus because they had become distracted by the outward appearance of those who

seemed like good leaders.

Furthermore, Isaiah notes that this Messiah would have no charismatic appeal which would draw people to Him; instead, they would be repulsed, leading the prophet to reveal that He would have **no form or comeliness** that would cause people to **desire Him**. This does not necessarily refer to physical attractiveness, but more to the qualities and traits which we would identify Him as a good leader. In one sense, it reminds us of the difference between Saul



and David. Saul had an outward appearance of a good king, but lacked the mental fitness of a godly one ([1 Sam 9:2](#)). David, on the other hand, did not outwardly look like a king one would expect, but God used this willing servant in a mighty way—for God looks at the heart, not just the outward characteristics visible to mankind ([1 Sam 16:7](#)).

Question
3

What characteristics would our culture say defines a good leader? How would you evaluate those traits with respect to Jesus?

This **Servant** will also suffer ignominiously because people will turn their backs on Him. To view Him as **despised** in the Hebrew context, therefore, means to treat Him as worthless or useless; people do not see the value in what He offers (v. 3). And to be **rejected by men** literally means that they cut off or severed their relationship with Him. Our world often selfishly asks of other people: What can they do for me? Consequently, our culture primarily views relationships in terms of what benefits and privileges they receive from them. When a person doesn't seemingly contribute positively to another's life, it becomes easy to disassociate with him—unfriend, block, and have nothing to do with him if you will—because he has no perceived value to them. Because people perceived Jesus as having no value to them in relation to the apparent pleasure

Instruct

and instant gratification they receive from sin, they sever their relationship with Him and follow their own desires ([Isa 59:1-2](#)).

This especially proves true when people experience problems in life. People there during the good times will suddenly abandon us like a sinking ship the moment things start to go awry. At that time, we will find out who our true friends are—and we will usually discover that we truly have very few loyal friends who will stick with us through those tough times! For this reason, Isaiah describes how people **hid** from the Messiah **as a Man of sorrows** and **acquainted with grief**. In other words, they thought, “How can someone with so many problems help me? If He can’t rescue Himself, how can He rescue me” (see [Matt 27:42](#))? They abandoned Him because they saw Him as hopeless and helpless—not a Savior.

Question
4

Why is it so hard for people to recognize the value in Jesus and what He has done?

Isaiah 53:4-10

THE SACRIFICE OF THE SERVANT:

Although He was **a Man of sorrows** and well **acquainted with grief**, we come to a shocking conclusion in this text. They are **our griefs** not His (v. 4)! This **Servant** who outwardly looked like no one special sacrificially **bore our griefs** and **sorrows** upon Himself. He took our place and **bore** our punishment. **Yet**, we **hid** from Him and ostracized Him as if He deserved it—failing to realize it was our own sin, not His, that nailed Him to the cross! As a result, Isaiah continues to paint a vivid picture of our mischaracterization and mistreatment of Him. Although the word **stricken** can specifically refer to leprosy, it can also refer to illness in general or even “bad luck.” The point is clear. People treat Jesus as unclean and avoid Him like the plague; they don’t want anything to do with Him. They keep Him at a distance so they don’t “catch” what He has and avoid Him so somehow “bad luck” might rub off on them.

Similarly, the phrases **smitten by God** and **afflicted** depict the long-held, misguided belief that any kind of adversity or disease is directly the result of one’s own sin. In other words, people who face adversity in life have done something to deserve it. We only need look at the errant counsel of Job’s friends to see this belief, for they

continually accused him of wrongdoing which resulted in the wrath of God against him. Even though Jesus had done nothing Himself to warrant such abuse, people ignorantly treat Him as if He had—not comprehending that we are the ones who truly deserve to endure this penalty! Therefore, we must remember the words of the thief on the cross who rebuked the other as Jesus hung in the middle: “And we indeed justly [are crucified], for we receive the due rewards of our deeds, but this Man has done nothing wrong” ([Luke 23:41](#)).



Question
5

Why do people keep Jesus at a distance from them today? How would you describe your closeness to Him?

The remaining verses in this passage depict how the **Servant** took our place; He gave us His righteousness in exchange for taking the penalty of our sin upon Himself. Verse 5 describes how **He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities**. He received the full wrath (i.e., **chastisement**) for our sin—the wrath we should have received—so that we might have **peace** with God and be made in right standing with Him ([Rom 5:1](#)). Whereas we treated Him as diseased and distanced ourselves from Him, He loved us enough and drew near to us to offer healing or salvation through **His** suffering or **stripes**. This isn't mere physical healing, but spiritual restoration through which we can have a relationship with God which leads to eternal life. Rather than see us as worthless reprobates, Jesus saw our value; He didn't want to keep us at arm's length, but He wanted an intimate relationship with us!

Thus, Isaiah underscores why the Messiah had to suffer so much. Every one of us **like sheep** has **gone astray** (v. 6). Any shepherd would tell us that **sheep** are among the least intelligent animals and, as a result, often find themselves lost and in peril not knowing what to do. Without a shepherd, they wander aimlessly, following a path that

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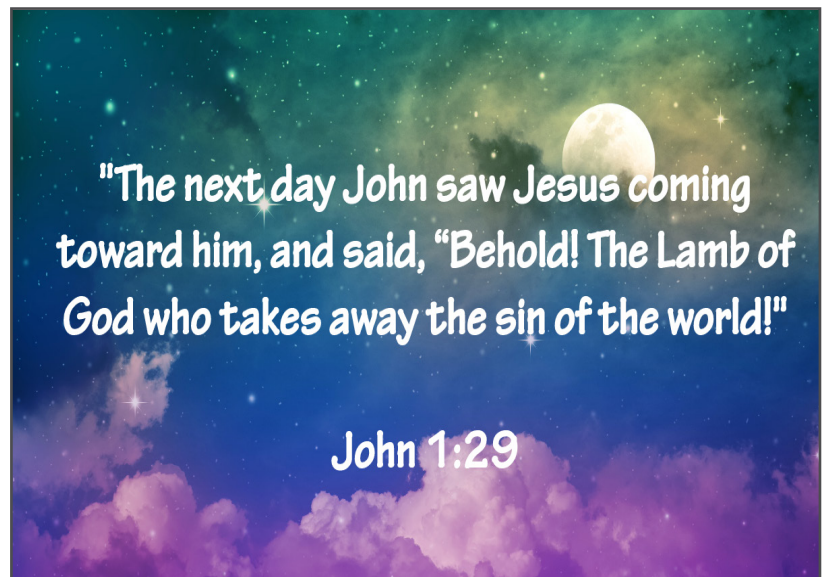
seems right to them but is most often filled with unknown dangers. Like Judges 17:6 where everyone did what was right in his own eyes, we have all **turned to our own way!** We go down our own path fraught with danger. Consequently, the Lord needed a way to rescue us—to restore us into a right relationship with Him and transform the trajectory of our lives. Therefore, He **laid the iniquity of us all** on the Messiah ([2 Cor 5:21](#)).

Whereas Isaiah compares us to lost **sheep** in peril, he compares this **Servant** to a perfect, unblemished **lamb** who gives its life sacrificially. The prophet notes that the Messiah **was led as a lamb to slaughter**, but never **opened His mouth** in protest (v. 7). In fact, three times does this one verse mention His silence. Indeed, Jesus spoke very sparingly during His trials and only answered direct questions tersely ([Mark 15:3-5](#)). But Isaiah here wishes to emphasize how Jesus never once complained about the injustice against Him or **opened His mouth** to defend His innocence. Because the seeming injustice of an innocent Man dying, it leads one like Isaiah to ask, “**And who will declare His generation**” (v. 8)?

If He died abandoned, without friends or family, who would carry on His name and defend His honor if He Himself didn't? Unlike Jesus, most of us would complain vociferously if someone falsely accused us. We would go to great lengths to defend our name! Jesus, however, didn't need to do this because He

recognized His death was in fulfillment of God's predetermined plan ([Eph 1:3-14](#)).

Like an obedient **lamb**, Jesus willingly submitted to God's plan, for He knew that only through the substitutionary death of a perfect sacrifice could the world overcome sin and death. Even though we may receive forgiveness, technically the consequences for our sin remain. Someone had to pay the penalty. And another corrupt, sinful human being couldn't take our place. It had to be a perfect, sinless sacrifice. Jesus knew that only He could fulfill this requirement. In the Jewish sacrificial system, the **lamb** used as a **sin offering** must be unblemished and spotless ([1 Peter 1:19](#)). And, in



verse 9, we learn that this **Servant** who would present Himself as that sacrificial **Lamb** had no fault at all; **He had done no violence** or spoken any **deceit**. Like a criminal awaiting trial, however, Jesus **was** figuratively **taken from prison** to receive **judgment** (v. 8). He received the death penalty—not for His own sins, but **the transgressions of His people** ([Heb 4:15](#)).

Question
6

How does Jesus taking the penalty for your sin impact your daily life? How does it show through your service?

Isaiah 53:4-10

THE SALVATION OF THE SERVANT:

In the last two verses, we see two results of the Servant's suffering and death: 1) the salvation of the people who accept Him and 2) His exaltation by God. First, the prophet declares explicitly how we can be made in right standing with God (i.e., justified). And it's only through this **Servant**. God's **righteous Servant shall justify many** because **He will bear their iniquities** (v. 11). Through His death, Isaiah explains, He has taken our place by dying as a criminal (i.e., **numbered with the transgressors**), **bearing the sin of many** and making **intercession for** sinners (v. 12).

If Jesus died for the whole world (all), why does the text state that He will only **justify many**? Jesus offers salvation to everyone, but some refuse. They continue to treat Him like the diseased outcast in verse 8. Jesus can only **justify** those who come to Him in humility and accept the sacrifice by repenting of their sin. He doesn't force us to have a relationship with Him, but He does extend the invitation to all! Many, unfortunately, just like this passage claims will continue to reject Him. Instead of the justification (salvation) Jesus offers, they will receive condemnation because they have taken the penalty of sin upon themselves by remaining in their sin and will die a second death to live eternally in torment ([Rev 21:8](#)).

Second, we see the exaltation of this **Servant** by God. As God has already promised in verse 10, the **Servant shall see His seed** and **prolong His days**. Through the **pleasure of the Lord**, He will **prosper**. This same theme of exaltation continues in verse 12 where God will give Him a **portion with the great** and **He will divide the**

Instruct

spoil with the strong. Next week, we will see how God vindicated His **Servant** by raising Him from the dead. But in these verses, we see why God exalted Him. Through His Servant's faithfulness, God has fulfilled His covenant to redeem us—a sinful, wayward people. As a result, Jesus has begotten us as children (i.e., **seed**) and has shared His inheritance (i.e., **spoil**) of eternal life with us. To God be the glory that we have a Savior who endured such suffering to die for us so that we might be justified through His righteousness to have eternal life.

Inspire

We all have preconceived ideas about what it would be like to meet a monarch or celebrity. And most of those ideas may not match reality as two American tourists discovered when they met the late Queen Elizabeth II. They completely failed to recognize this royal who has one of the most distinguishable faces in the world! When the God of creation made Himself flesh to dwell amongst us, many did not recognize Him either. They expected something completely different than they received in Him. They wanted a conquering figure who would establish an earthly kingdom. But Jesus came to do something far greater than this. He came to redeem us—to pay our debt and give us His righteousness so that we could have life. Let's not be too busy looking for our own interests and expectations this Easter season that we miss Jesus and what He wants us to become in Him.

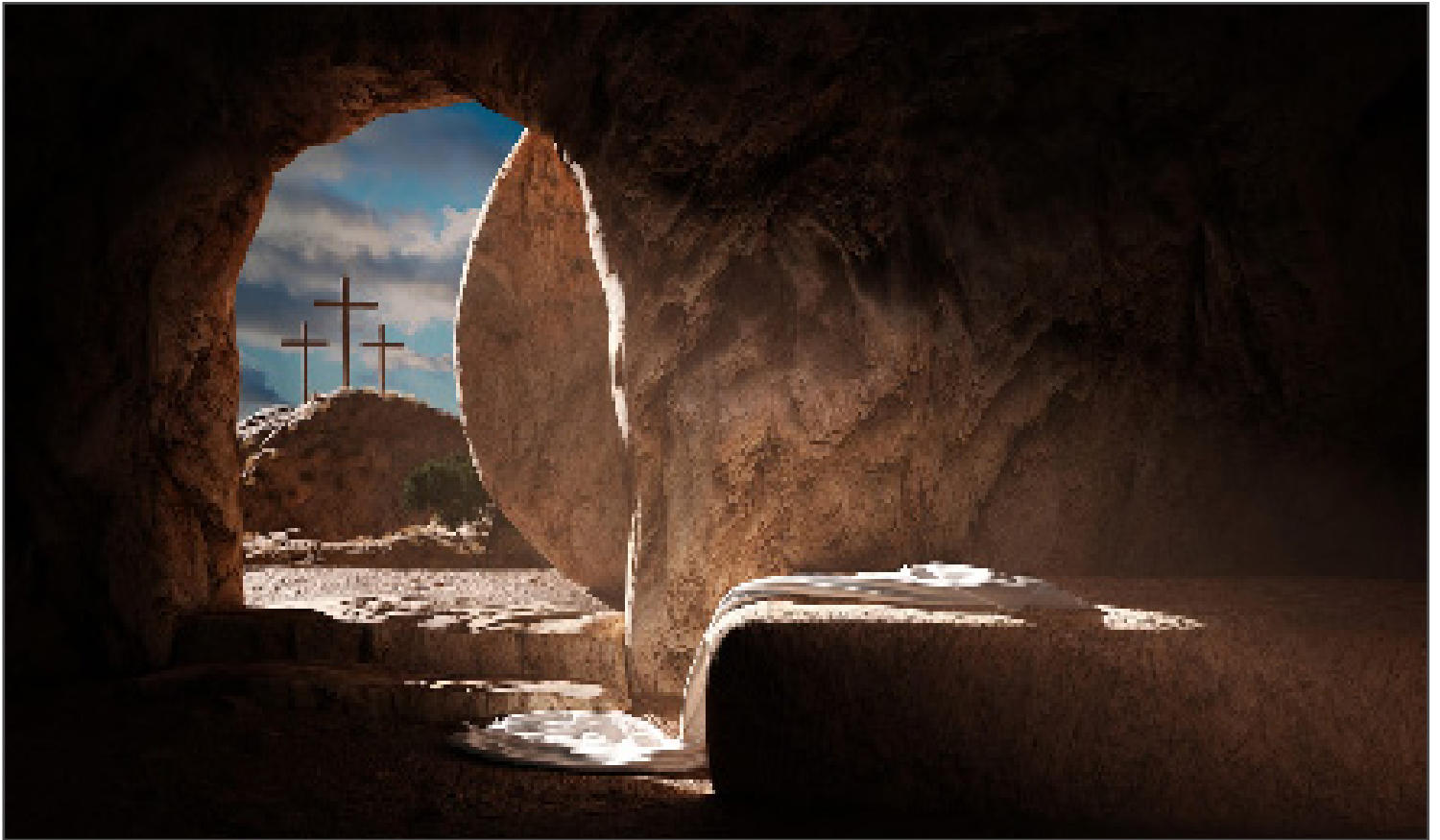
Incorporate

What are some reasons that people cite for rejecting Jesus today?

How should the suffering that happened to Jesus change the way we perceive other people in relation to their value and worth?

We've talked much about the world's expectations of Jesus, but what expectations does Jesus have for us according to His Word? How do they specifically relate to you?

March 31, 2024



*A Servant who is
Resurrected*

Psalm 16:1-11

Focal Verse:

"For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

Psalm 16:11

Introduce

After man ate from the forbidden tree in disobedience to God's command, he subjected all creation to a curse. As part of that curse, man introduced death into the world. With one bite, "sin [had] entered the world" and "death [now] reigned" ([Rom 5:12, 14](#)). Just as God had warned, the day on which Adam ate of that fruit he "surely" died ([Gen 2:17](#)). He first died a spiritual death that separated him from fellowship with the Lord ([Gen 3:8](#); [Isa 59:2](#)). Although Adam did not die physically at that time, his rebellion against the Lord set in motion physical death as the penalty for sin. When outlining Adam's punishment, God tells him, "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" ([Gen 3:19](#)).

We all can expect to die physically one day unless Christ returns to call His beloved home and establish His kingdom in full. Death comes to everyone—the young and the old, the rich and the poor, and the godly and the ungodly. We have no way of avoiding the effect of this "curse" because we have all perpetuated Adam's sin and willfully chosen to



rebel against the Lord. Paul plainly states, "And thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" ([Rom 5:12](#)). Therefore, every community around the world has at least one cemetery where we find both saint (i.e., the one who has a relationship with Christ) and sinner (i.e., the one who has rejected a relationship with Him by refusing to repent).

When we go to a cemetery, we expect to find a manicured lawn, a headstone with an overview of people's lives, and hopefully some flowers or decorations in memoriam. There we would also expect to find a body in various states of decay inside the vault or crypt if we would have exhumed the grave. It doesn't matter what culture, town, or homestead we visit. We can expect to find something very similar. However, there is one tomb wholly different from any other in history. It was a new family tomb in which no one had yet been buried ([Matt 27:57-61](#)). If we went to this tomb seeking its first occupant, we would find nothing there—no body or even any dust!

Introduce

This shouldn't come as a surprise to us. We should have expected it, for Scripture prophesied long ago that His tomb would be empty! Psalm 16:9 declares, "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." Throughout His ministry, Jesus foretold of His impending death, but promised that He would be raised from the dead three days later ([Luke 9:21-22](#)). And history bears witness to this promise through a vacated tomb! Today, we have gathered together as God's people to celebrate a risen Savior who sits at His right hand making intercession for us!

Although we can still expect to die physically one day, Jesus has overcome this "curse" so that we would not have to die a second death and spend eternity separated from Him ([Rev 2:11; 21:8](#)). He died in our place! For without Someone perfectly righteous to die in our stead, we would have no forgiveness for our sins ([Heb 9:22](#)). But Christ did not remain in the grave! God raised Him from the dead with power as an example, or firstfruits, of the eternal life that awaits those of us who trust in Him ([Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:20](#)). Praise God He made way for us to remove this curse and allow us to have restored fellowship with Him in heaven for eternity when we die. All we must do is surrender our lives to Him by confessing and repenting of our sins. And then we, too, will be resurrected bodily from the grave to spend eternity with our resurrected Lord and Savior forever.

Key
Question

How has the resurrection transformed your life?

THE PRAYER FOR PRESERVATION:

Based on the inscription affixed to this psalm, David has penned this beautiful hymn to commemorate our need to depend upon the Lord as well as to remind us of His faithfulness. David begins with an earnest plea that God **preserve** or protect him, acknowledging that he puts all his **trust** in Him (v. 1). The phrase “**for in You I put my trust**” can also mean “for in You I take refuge” which is how most modern translations interpret it. But, if we don’t exercise caution in our understanding here, we can begin to regard “refuge” solely in terms of the protection God graciously affords during difficult times. Certainly, we can **trust** God to **preserve** us during those times. And we should always seek Him first when we find ourselves in distress and need. Yet, this limited understanding of “refuge” would miss David’s point entirely! We must **trust** the Lord to protect, guide, and sustain us at all times, every day, and in every area of our lives—not just when we struggle and find life difficult to navigate.

Therefore, David emphasizes the sole source of his **trust** and devotion by declaring to the **Lord**, “**You are my Lord**” (v. 2). In English, we can’t easily see the difference between the two words that David uses for **Lord** in this verse, but we need to distinguish them in order to understand his point. We tend to think of the first use of **Lord** (Yahweh) as God’s proper name ([Exod 3:14](#)) whereas the second occurrence of **Lord** (Adonai) bears more similarities with our modern term “Master.” Thus, David sees himself as God’s servant and expresses his complete allegiance to Him as Master. As we shall see from the second part of this verse, we should devote ourselves to the Lord as Master because we owe every good thing in our lives to Him!

Question
#1

How should our lives look when we declare that God is our Master?

But first, we must carefully evaluate in whom or what we place our **trust** because everything and everyone will fail us at some point in this life! Some of us may have had the fortune of owning a car on which we could confidently depend. We never had to worry. We just jumped into the driver’s seat, turned the key in the ignition, and it started immediately. As dependable and worry-free as these cars might have been, they still failed at times! Even in the most dependable car, we probably more than once

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heard that unsettling clicking noise and saw the electronics on the dashboard dimly flash only to discover the battery had died. Over the years as parts aged—whether alternators, water pumps, tires, or brakes—they became less reliable as the wear and tear of life took its toll on them. Although we had a car on which we thought we could depend and **trust**, like anything in this life, it failed us at times.

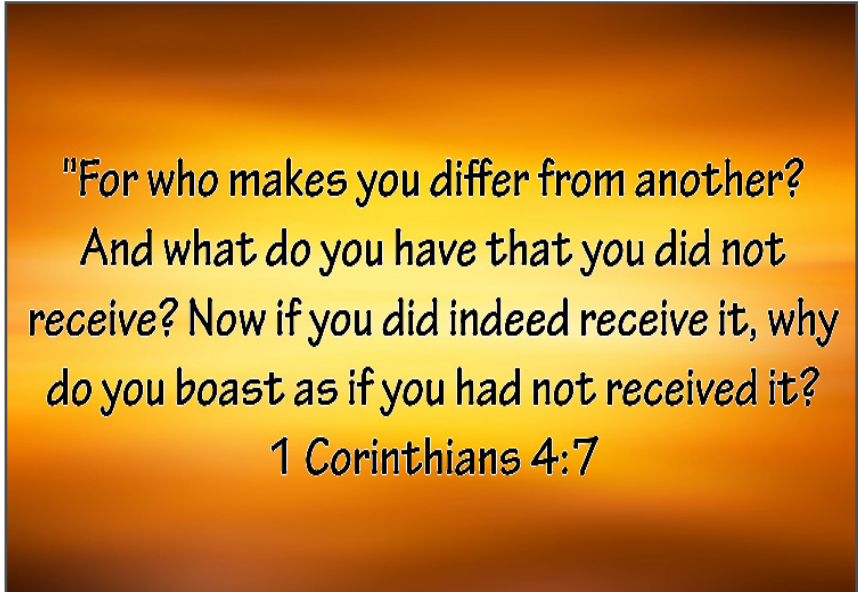


Question # 2

What are some of the things on which you depend in this life? At times, how have they failed you?

In all our lives, however, only one Person has never once failed: God. The only thing that prevents us from experiencing the hope and assurance He offers is when we fail to devote ourselves to Him and **trust** in Him alone! Many may verbally profess to **trust** in the Lord, but their lives visually indicate that they depend on many other temporal things. They only run to God to find refuge in times of dire distress when they have exhausted all their other means of help! True **trust**, therefore, requires a consistent relationship in which we are in right standing with the Lord and abide by the principles that He has set forth in His Word. In other words, we make Him our Master! And, like David, we should express our complete allegiance to Him by obediently serving Him alone.

Consequently, David realizes that he must depend upon the Lord for everything, leading him to assert that his **goodness is nothing apart** from the Lord. The word translated **goodness** can mean either welfare or prosperity rather than **goodness** in the sense of moral righteousness. We certainly must depend upon the Lord for our righteousness because our own Scripture reveals that “there is none righteous” ([Rom 3:10](#)). Here, however, the idea behind this choice of words lies with the emphasis that all blessings—everything we have—come from the Lord. Through this, David demonstrates how truly indebted we are to the Lord for the good things we’ve received and experienced in life!



*"For who makes you differ from another?
And what do you have that you did not
receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why
do you boast as if you had not received it?"*
1 Corinthians 4:7

Moreover, we can also translate the Hebrew phrase in this verse one of two ways. The NKJV, for example, translates it as “**my goodness is nothing apart from You.**” But we can also translate it as, “my goodness is indeed from You,” which seems to best capture David’s point. We owe everything to the Lord: what we have in terms of physical possessions, what we have achieved in life through triumphs and successes, and what we have become through the transforming power of Christ. God has made us who we are! And this should give us hope if we focus our trust completely on Him.

In the New Testament, Paul also puts this principle into perspective when he asks this question of the Corinthian church who allowed their wealth and wisdom to become a distraction to their calling in Christ: “What do you have that you did not receive” ([1 Cor 4:7](#))? Arrogance tells us that we achieved these things on our own, but reality tells a different story. They all come from the Lord! We live in a world that champions being “self-made” and independent. People like for others to notice their accomplishments and give them credit. But apart from the Lord, these achievements mean nothing and produce no lasting results ([Phil 3:8](#))!

Still, the world continues to seek self-satisfaction by striving to fulfill their dreams and aspirations—even if they conflict with God’s Word. Thus, we hear phrases like. “Be

who you are.” Let’s not “be who we are” which is merely an excuse to fulfill our selfish desires and see the world through our self-centered perspective. But let us devote ourselves fully to the Lord, serving Him wholeheartedly. Therefore, let’s be who Christ has transformed us to be which is created in His image and restored to our original purpose to live holy lives that honor and worship Him, realizing that we owe everything good to Him!

Question # 3

How do you use the things that God has given you to serve Him?

David now shows us what happens if we forget our source of blessing and become distracted in our thinking by contrasting those who worship the Lord with those who serve false gods. First, he takes **delight** in the **saints** or **excellent ones** who worship God faithfully (v. 3). In this context, the word saints simply means one who has a relationship with the Lord and obediently worships Him alone. From our perspective, it means that we have a relationship with Christ and have been transformed by the power of His resurrection. When we devotedly serve the Lord, it brings joy and delight.

But to whom does it bring this delight? That answer depends upon the person to whom the pronoun **my** refers. If it refers to David which seems most likely in the context, then he delights or finds joy when people worship the Lord and turn from serving false idols. To be clear, David doesn’t find joy purely in people. On the contrary, he finds satisfaction when people worship the Lord and point others into a relationship with Him! If the pronoun **My** refers to the Lord, then God takes **delight** when the **saints** worship Him in obedience to His Word ([Psalm 119:16](#)). In other words, it pleases God when we worship corporately as his people—for this is what He created us to do in the first place. Therefore, we can find joy in our worship because our worship delights the Lord

So Samuel said:

*“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings
and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.*

1 Samuel 15:22

(see [1 Sam 15:22](#); [Psalm 51:16-19](#))!

Second, David underscores that those who follow other gods will have **their sorrows multiplied** (v. 4). In part, they experience sorrow because they must navigate life alone, for these idols cannot hear, speak, or act ([Deut 4:28](#), [Psalm 135:16](#)). People who worship these idols remain without hope because they have no one to guide or help them! Moreover, when it comes to the end of life for them, they will also realize that the “good” they sought in this life really didn’t matter. The only good thing, as we will see in verse 5, is our inheritance of the Lord! Consequently, David reaffirms that he will not trust in these things nor serve them. He won’t **offer their drink offerings of blood** or even utter **their names on his lips**. Like Joshua, David wants to be numbered among those who serve the Lord faithfully ([Josh 24:15](#)).

Question
4

In what do you find the most delight in life — that is what gives you the most joy? How do things compare to what the Lord delights in or pleases Him the most?

Psalm 16:5-8

THE PRAISE FOR THE PORTION OF OUR INHERITANCE:

Next, David shifts from the topic of preservation to **inheritance**. He rejoices in the fact that **the Lord is the portion of his inheritance and cup** (v. 5). When we think of an **inheritance**, we often associate it with a last will and testament. To receive an inheritance, therefore, our names must be included in that will. Physical family members, for example, sometimes do not receive any **inheritance** while those outside of the family may be graciously invited to participate as an heir! The testator, or the one who has died, names the people included in the will. God does this with us through Christ. We don’t automatically inherit eternal life by being born into a “Christian” family or even based upon anything we do. The Lord writes our names in that will (i.e., the Lamb’s book of life) when we respond to the call of Christ and receive the salvation He offered through His death on the cross ([Rev 3:5, 21:27](#)).

When we think about an **inheritance** what do we usually think about? In a will, the testator, dispenses all his or her worldly possessions—whether land or property, houses, heirlooms, monies, stocks, or other material goods. Imagine a will in which a

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person had just left us a piece of his mind—perhaps even a good piece of advice! Or someone that just left us memories. We probably would become bitter and resent it. We usually expect some type of **inheritance** which has monetary value. For example, when we think of Israel's **inheritance**, we most likely think of the land that God had promised their forefather Abraham—a land flowing lusciously with milk and honey. Very rarely, however, would people think about the spiritual legacy that these forefathers left as their inheritance—namely fulfilled through the coming of Christ.

Question
5

What is the greatest thing that you have ever inherited? What value did it have to you?

But the **inheritance** mentioned here is not some earthly possession or mere spiritual blessing—whether land or anything else. God Himself is our **inheritance**! Notice specifically how David phrases it: “**O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup.**” Certainly, God has given His people both physical and spiritual blessings beyond measure which the metaphor of the **cup** pictures (see [Psalm 23:5](#)). And David has already mentioned we owe every good thing that we have to the Lord. But the focus in this passage resides on God as our **inheritance**.

Certainly, part of our spiritual **inheritance** is that we will have eternal life through Christ! The Bible indeed promises such an **inheritance** for those who have confessed their sins, repented, and surrendered to Him ([John 3:16](#)).

The greatness of our **inheritance**, however, resides not primarily in the fact that we will live forever where there will be no more sickness, sorrow, suffering, and sin. Rather, the greatness of our **inheritance** is that we will dwell forever in the presence of the Lord, spending time at the feet of our Savior in worship! And this should be our focus.



Many people who often ponder what heaven will be like tend to focus on the

physical description found in Revelation which depicts it as a place with a gold street, mansions, pearly gates, walls of jasper, and many other fantastic sights. However, our **inheritance** is much more than a place called heaven; it's much more than eternal life. It's the presence of God in our lives who guarantees this future hope. Let's have the proper perspective. For those of us who have a relationship with Christ, we have already received the down payment of our **inheritance** ([Eph 1:14](#)). God is already present in our lives through His Holy Spirit. We have already received the greatest gift! We have His hope dwelling within us if only we would submit to Him and seek Him daily.

Question
6

How has understanding God as our inheritance changed your focus and perspective?

God is not stingy with His **inheritance**, but He gives it to all generously who accept it on His terms! When David speaks of the Lord as his **cup**, he is referring to the abundance of the incomparable blessings the Lord has given. The Lord has given us His very best. He didn't send a second-rate sacrifice by which to offer salvation; He sent the very best—His Son. Jesus didn't just promise life, but an "abundant" life to those who follow Him ([John 10:10](#))! Our Savior also taught that if we as humans know how to give our earthly children good gifts, then how much more will the Father give even better gifts unto us according to His will ([Matt 7:11](#)). What an awesome God we serve who loves us so much and wants to share His **inheritance** with us, restoring us from a rebellious and disobedient spirit to eternal life and blessing through His Son so that we might have a relationship with Him.

Because God is our **inheritance** and dwells within us, we also receive other benefits. For example, God gives us **counsel** and corrects us when we err (v. 7). Therefore, David praises God **who** gives him **counsel** and **instructs** his **heart in the night seasons**. The phrase **in the night seasons** may sound puzzling to us. But

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

John 10:10

Instruct

what David means by this phrase is that God speaks to and guides his **heart** even during the **night!** God never sleeps nor slumbers as we know from other psalms, but He's always watching over us and guiding us—whether in the day or at **night**. Therefore, we shouldn't follow our hearts which sin has corrupted ([Jer 17:9](#)), rather we should follow the Lord who will never lead us astray.

Counsel, in this context, refers to the divine plan by which God has commanded us to live. We find that **counsel** in His written Word. Psalm 32:8 uses this same word to capture this idea: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go, I will guide (i.e., **counsel**) you with My eyes." God's **counsel** is not merely a suggestion, but a mandate which we must follow! Moreover, it's not mere advice containing the best collective thinking humanity can muster, but it's God's perfect plan that works 100% of the time if only we would follow it. Even if we don't understand the plan fully from our perspective, we must trust in the omniscience of the Lord to know and do what is best.

Question
7

In what ways have you found God's counsel as a valuable part of your inheritance in Him?

Second, David also praises God for even the correction he receives. The phrase the NKJV translates as **instructs in the night seasons** can also mean corrects or chastises. Not only does the Lord give us **counsel** on how to live, but He also corrects us when we go astray. In other words, God loves us so much that He wants to guide us back on the right track rather than allow us to continue down a destructive path. For that correction, we should be grateful rather than resentful, allowing God to renew our hearts and minds daily as we serve Him.

Psalm 16:9-11

THE PROSPECT OF DWELLING IN GOD'S PRESENCE:

To this point in the lesson, you may be thinking, "What does all this have to do with the resurrection?" Certainly, all these blessings should give us an optimistic outlook on life, for God has given us manifold blessings beyond compare. But the greatest **hope**, however, which causes the psalmist to break into spontaneous praise is the **hope** of resurrection—not just in the general resurrection of the dead, but in the

resurrection of the **Holy One**, or Messiah, who becomes the guarantee of life! David, therefore, explains that he can rejoice and find **hope** that God **will not leave** his **soul in sheol** because it will foreshadow His promise to us by **not** allowing His **Holy One to see corruption** or decay (v. 10). Through this resurrection of the **Holy One**, God show us the **path of life**—what the New Testament refers to as firstfruits if we follow God’s divine plan (v. 11).

To help us understand these verses better, we must first define the term **sheol**. In Hebrew, **sheol** broadly referred to the abode of the dead; today, we would call this the grave. Thus, it doesn’t refer to a proper place like heaven or hell, but simply put God will not abandon our soul in the grave. He will raise us to **life** in His divine **presence**

forevermore. From our perspective, we can be confident of this promise because we have evidence in the empty tomb! God has already done it, for He raised Christ from the dead on the third day.

Jesus’ body wasn’t even in the grave long enough to see **corruption** or decomposition! In ancient Jewish thought, decay of a corpse started after three days—the reason the Gospels made the point that Lazarus who had laid in the tomb four days would have already begun to stink. Yet, Jesus, though badly bruised and battered, did not suffer this fate. God triumphantly raised Him from the dead on the third day! And He has promised to do the same for us if we have a relationship with His Son who came to show us the way to have **life!**

God has given us every good thing we have in life. He has given us Himself as an inheritance, promising that we will dwell with Him forever in eternal life. God counsels us with the wisdom of His divine plan and corrects us when we err. Yet, all this is predicated on one event with two parts which God planned before the foundation of the world. An event promised in Isaiah which we’ve studied the first four weeks of this month where God’s Servant would suffer and die, taking on the penalty for our sin. But God’s plan didn’t end in death. For God raised that same Servant from the grave

Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, “saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’”

Luke 24:5-7

Instruct

(**sheol**) three days later as a promise of the **life** that awaits to those of us who follow Him. To God be the glory that we have hope in the resurrection—the best thing that we could ever inherit from the Lord because it guarantees a life eternally spent with Him for those who accept it.

Inspire

In life, every good thing we have comes from the Lord. And the best thing that we could have ever received is the promise of a bodily resurrection through which we can spend eternity in His presence. God has guaranteed that resurrection by first raising His own righteous Son from the grave who shows us the way to have life exclusively through Him ([John 14:6](#)). Through His Son's resurrection, God has overcome sin and death to offer Himself as our inheritance. The empty tomb should have such a profound impact on our lives because we don't serve some wise teacher or mere prophet who gives keen advice humanly speaking. We serve the Lord who gives perfect counsel along with correction when we need it if we abide by His plan and are made in right standing with Him through the work of His Son. Psalm 16, therefore, demonstrates the hope we can have in our salvation or preservation because we have a Savior who has paved the way through His own death and resurrection.

Incorporate

How does the resurrection of Christ Jesus give you hope? What Scriptures speak about the hope we can have through His resurrection?

Why should the resurrection be a present reality in our lives manifested in the way we live rather than something wholly future?

Journal: Document God's Work

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