

Isaiah (Part 6) - the Character of the Servant

by Ron Bailey

The servant of Jehovah, representing the Lord Jesus Christ, reveals the character and ministry of the kingdom, characterized by meekness, humility, and love.

Duration: 1:18:49

Scripture: Exodus 31:18, Isaiah 42:16-17, Isaiah 50:4, Isaiah 58:6-7, Isaiah 59:19-20, Jeremiah 31:33, Galatians 6:1

Topics: "Isaiah"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the overwhelming amount of information and messages they receive from God while meditating on scriptures. They describe how these messages spread and how it becomes difficult to keep up with them. The speaker then shares the story of the prodigal son, emphasizing the father's unconditional love and forgiveness. They also mention the elder brother's reaction to the celebration, highlighting the different characteristics of people in the kingdom of God. The sermon concludes by mentioning the idea that everyone has the potential to be transformed and participate in the kingdom.

Transcript

If I was trying to do a complete exposition of Isaiah, or even of these things that they call the servant songs in Isaiah, really we wouldn't have done very well so far. There's more to do, much more, than we've already done. And I find myself at this place often, that as a result of meditating on scriptures and opening them out in a gathering like this, and knowing the things that God is saying at the time.

Often things that we share with you, we have heard perhaps five minutes earlier, perhaps an hour earlier. Sometimes we're hearing them at the same time as you are hearing them. And it just spreads and spreads and spreads, and any kind of schedule you might have had just has to go to the wind because you just can't keep up with it.

And I nearly always find myself like this in the last session, with so much to say that there's no possibility of getting it all together. It's like the little story, you know the dog or I'll do you the limerick about the man from Japan. There was a young man from Japan whose poetry would never quite scan.

He said in my ear, the reason it's clear is because I always try to get too many words into the last line. Well, I always try to get too many words into the last line, but we'll see how we do. Even before we get to Isaiah, let's go to Genesis chapter 1. Genesis chapter 1, and the third day, that's verse 9. God said, let the

waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so.

And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas, and God saw that it was good. And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth, and it was so. On the third day, which I think to most of us will immediately begin to speak about resurrection, on the third day God began to speak about seed.

This was the first kind of created life upon the earth. And as God brings life into the earth, even at this simplest level of the seed of herbs or of trees, he builds into his statement an unchangeable principle of life. And the unchangeable principle of life is that like must beget like.

Apple trees must always produce apple seeds. It can't be any other way. And the life that the Lord Jesus lived upon the earth, he referred to it as a seed.

And he said if the seed abides alone, if it doesn't fall into the ground and die, well it abides alone. But if it falls into the ground and die, then there's that possibility of that seed to be reproduced again and again and again. It's the same seed, it's the same life.

And we have been concentrating our thoughts on this person that the prophet Isaiah speaks of, by the Spirit, as the servant of Jehovah. Well, the servant of Jehovah began his service of God upon the earth. Let's turn now briefly to Matthew's gospel.

If we really wanted to make a meal of this, we really ought to go through the whole of Mark's gospel. Because Mark's gospel is the gospel of the servant. In Mark's gospel, right the way through, you will see the servant of Jehovah at work, step by step, stage by stage.

But we have just dipped from time to time into Matthew. And we spoke yesterday morning, I think it was, about the time when the Lord Jesus was poised to begin his vocation as the servant of the Lord. Ready to go into the land, to bring effectively heaven's rule upon earth, the kingdom of heaven, to make it manifest in his life.

And if we began to read just, I'll read from verse 17 to pick up that theme. From that time, chapter 4, verse 17, from that time Jesus began to preach and to say, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers.

And he said unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed him. And going on from thence he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets.

And he called them, and they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with dire diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with demons, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy.

And he healed them. And they followed him great multitudes of people, from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, he went up

into a mountain.

It's one of those times again where you must read past the end of the chapter to get the flow of what's being said here. He had begun his ministry, he had begun the fulfilling of his vocation as the servant of the Lord. And he begins to dispossess the land, that's to say, take it away from those who had wrongly possessed it.

To take it away from evil things, and things which it crippled, and made it so that it was not like heaven upon earth. And the result of all this is tremendous popularity. Such popularity that you have multitudes, not just one multitude, but I don't know how many people there are in a multitude anyway.

But this is multitudes of people. And you've got great multitudes of people, from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain.

When he was set, his disciples came to him. He withdraws himself from everything that is happening. We can speculate, maybe to pray, maybe to think, to meditate, to consider the things that his father was speaking in his heart.

But his disciples follow him. He didn't call them up to the mountain, this was their own initiative. He chose to go up into the mountain, and they chose to follow him.

And when they had followed him up the mountain, he began to speak. I'll read chapter 5, verse 1. Seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain. And when he was set, his disciples came unto him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. You see, that very first beatitude, as we usually call them. Beatitude, I think, is from the Latin, meaning blessed.

Campbell Morgan, who was a very great Bible teacher in the first half of this century, this particular passage, this period, this event in the life of the Lord Jesus, he didn't call it the Beatitudes. He gave it a title which I think is much more expressive. He called it the Manifesto of the Kingdom.

You know, when politicians are angling for your vote, they produce a manifesto. They say, this is the kind of society we want to create. This is the kind of country we're about to bring into being.

If we have your support, this is what we will do. Jesus, on the mountain, separate from the multitudes, with just ones and twos, just his immediate inner circle of disciples, he gathers them around him and he says to them, Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He begins to describe a kingdom and the characteristics of people who are part of that kingdom that is different to anything that they had imagined.

Down in the valleys, with the multitudes, tremendous success, popularity, every miracle bringing more to come and hear, constant rush, constant bustle. It must have appeared to the disciples that this really was it. Triumphalism, everything gathering together, this is it.

This is the time that has been promised. This is the time of the coming of our Messiah. This is it.

And he withdraws, and then when they come to him, he begins to speak to them of inequalities. Not just these outer manifestations of healings and miracles, but he begins to speak of the inner essence of the kingdom. And he says, these are the characteristics of the people who are my subjects.

This is the kind of kingdom that I'm going to bring in. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. I find it very interesting how people hate these words. I know they regard them as beautiful poetry and the most profound teaching that has ever been, but every now and again you'll touch a raw nerve in people and they will react very violently to these words of the Lord Jesus.

I remember hearing someone, I think he was a representative of the United Nations, who was speaking only just a matter of months ago. And he quoted part of this, and he said, the meek will inherit the earth in six-foot plots, he said. Do you understand that? In other words, the meek will not inherit the earth.

What he was saying is, you'll have to fight for it. Otherwise, all you'll get is a grave space. That's all you'll get.

Because that's all that happens to the grave, to the meek. Everyone walks over them. They don't stand up for their own thing.

They hate it. Kind of a hundred or so, a hundred years ago, there was a man named Rudyard Kipling. I know that maybe some here quite like Rudyard Kipling.

He wrote some very interesting stories and wrote some interesting poems. And he wrote one poem, which is probably his most famous, called If. And the whole purpose of that poem, really, is to run counter to this Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes.

That's why when you get to the very end of it, he's saying, yours is the earth and everything that's in it. And what is more, you'll be a man, my son. He hated this.

He was very, he was passionately anti-evangelical, Rudyard Kipling. If you should read any of this stuff, it might just be as well to remember that. If you ever read Kim, if you ever read Kim, you'll find that each chapter begins with a little verse, a verse of poetry that he has written.

And in the first chapter of Kim, if I can remember it, I'm not very good at poetry. I do appreciate poetry, but only if it's got the pictures of Rupert above it to explain what's actually happening. Um, but this, this goes something like this.

It says, um, O ye who tread the narrow way, Tofet lit to judgment day, Have mercy on the heathen when they pray, At, and I've forgotten where it was. What he's talking about is, he believed that the only reason that Christians lived their narrow way and walked upon it was because it was Tofet lit. Now, Tofet is the valley of Hinnom or Gehenna.

In other words, he was saying the only reasons Christians lived their narrow lives is because of fear of the flames. He hated evangelicals. He was raised by evangelicals in England.

And you get this thing, it comes out, it comes out, this strong anti-Christian thing all the way through. They hate this. The meek shall inherit the earth.

But this is the manifesto of the kingdom. Not we are the champions, we are going to ride all over the world and bring everyone into line with us. Not, no, the meek shall inherit the earth.

This is the manifesto of the kingdom. This is the essence of the servant. The reason I'm using essence is because this is in the seed of the servant.

This is in the servant's heart. This is how he is. He said, take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart.

The world has never understood meekness. It always confuses it with weakness. Meekness is really amazing strength.

If someone has the right to do something but for love's sake does not do that thing, that is meekness. Meekness is rights and privileges restrained for love's sake. That's what meekness is.

Moses was a very meek man, so the scripture tells us. Moses had great rights and privileges. He had the power to do certain things, but he was a meek man and he did not use his power.

And when a person refuses to use their power and refuses to use their rights for love's sake, not for fear's sake, not because they're cowards. When we were asked this morning whether we were all cowards, I wanted to protest, but I was afraid. Now I've put myself off.

Not for cowardice's sake, not out of something servile or cringing that doesn't want to get hurt, but someone who for love's sake knows he has the right, knows he has the power, has no fear, is willing to take all the consequences, but then for love's sake chooses not to exercise his rights. That's meekness. Jesus said, the meekness shall inherit the earth.

You see it in the servant of Jehovah. Let me go back to chapter 42 of Isaiah. Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delights, I have put my spirit upon him.

Let's go back into the book of Numbers. I hope I can find this. I think it's Numbers 11.

Yes, it is. Numbers 11. I'll begin to read from verse 11.

And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them that thou shouldst say to me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father bears the sucking child unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? For they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal'st with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, for I have not found favour in thy sight, and let me not see my wretchedness.

And the Lord said to Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be elders of the people, and officers over them, and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down, and talk with thee there, and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and write it upon them. And they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

I don't think we need to read on. You can read on at your leisure in this particular chapter and see how all this worked out. But can you see what's happening? What is happening is that Moses is the man of authority.

He is the man to whom God has given power and authority and responsibility for the people of Israel. At the same time, in their experience, there is a need for others to shoulder some of this responsibility. And what God is going to do is He is going to delegate responsibility.

He is going to take of the power and the responsibility that is on Moses and He is going to put it onto others. He speaks of it in terms of spirit and of course it is the Holy Spirit who comes to give power of this kind. But it's really in terms of the Holy Spirit that is upon Moses.

The unique anointing, if you want to use that language, that Moses had in order to enable him to be God's man in that situation. In order to equip him to be the leader, the instructor, the judge, the counselor, the lawgiver. All these things that the Spirit of God had made Moses to be, God says, I'm going to take the spirit that's on you, Moses, and share with you in your responsibility, in your authority.

They will be as you are in these terms. Now, I hope you can see why I'm pointing this out. Because Jehovah says of this servant, Behold my servant upon whom I have put my spirit.

He is the man under authority. He is the man who is equipped and empowered. In the way that Moses was equipped to carry out all God's will.

And Moses' word was law. So now, the servant of Jehovah, God puts his spirit upon him and he is equipped to carry out all God's bidding. And this man's word is law.

You know, don't you? I'm sure we know that on more than one occasion in the scriptures the early Christians were very aware of the fact of a certain prophecy that Moses had given. Moses had given a prophecy in which he had said that God would raise up from among them, from among the brethren, another prophet like me, Moses said. God is going to do it again.

He's going to raise up a prophet like me. Or if you want to put some other titles in, he's going to raise up a mediator like me. He's going to raise up a go-between like me.

He's going to raise up someone who will talk with God face to face like me. He's going to raise up someone who will have the word of God and bring it to the people like me. He's going to raise someone who will have the spirit of God upon him, authorizing him, giving him full power to do all that he wants to do like me.

And the early Christians knew exactly who Moses was speaking about when he said this, and they used it in their witness with other Jewish people. Jesus was the one who God had raised up. And if you want to do this study sometime, you may find it a very profitable study to trace the parallels between the life of Moses and the Lord Jesus.

I'll give you a starter for ten. You know what happened to Moses when he was just a babe? They tried to destroy him. The consequence of trying to destroy him was that lots of other babies were destroyed, but Moses was not destroyed.

Moses was in Egypt, and God called him out of Egypt. Now, you can make all these parallels yourself, but it goes right the way through. It's a thrilling study to go right the way through, particularly if you come to Exodus chapter 24, and you see Moses as the mediator, receiving the Lord, going up into the mountain, being covered with cloud, saying to the eldest, Tarry here, and I'll come back to you.

If you can't link all this together, well, just work on it a little bit and think, and I'm sure God will open it up to you. But Moses was a man with authority, and there was the Spirit of God upon him in a unique sense to equip, qualify, authorize him to do all God's will. Now, it says of the Lord Jesus in Isaiah 42, I'll read it to get it exactly right, Behold my servant, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit upon him. Can you see what I'm saying? Can you see that in the way that those 70 elders of Israel were the direct representatives of Moses with his authority because his spirit was upon them, so now the servant of the Lord comes with direct responsibility because the Spirit of God is upon him. He is the commissioned one.

He is the authorized one. This is what was happening when the Lord Jesus stood by the River Jordan and the Spirit of God came upon him in the form of a dove and God said, this is my son in whom I am well pleased. And this is the manifesto of his kingdom.

This is the characteristic of those who will be in his kingdom. When we were, just before we began the earlier session, a brother came and sat against me and began to talk a little bit about some of the things I was saying last night about genes and things and he's a doctor so I was wondering whether I was going to be put right, but I think in the main it wasn't too far off anyway. These genes, these spiritual genes, these characteristics that were in the Lord Jesus Christ, these are caught up, they are distilled in his Spirit.

There is within his Spirit the essence of all this life that was in him. So many of the things that we shall read concerning the servant of the Lord, if we think about them, if we meditate on these things, there will be areas of our life where God will instruct us and teach us the way in which we should live. One of the questions that educationalists used to like to talk about a lot, I don't think they talk about it quite so much now, was the question of whether it was nature or nurture.

If any of you come from kind of teaching backgrounds you'll know that this was really quite an issue at one time. I don't know whether it is now. Nature means what you are to start off with.

Nurture means what you can be developed into. And different educationalists had different theories about this. Some people would say, okay, you know, you can test a child at nine and you can decide on his IQ and whether he's going to be a ballet dancer or an engineer or something like this because it's all in his nature.

And all you have to do if it's in his nature is just provide the right circumstances and it will happen. And then there were another group of people who said, no, we're all exactly the same to start off with. Each one of us is a potential ballet dancer.

Obviously I wasn't in his class. Every one of us is a potential ballet dancer or engineer and all we need is the right nurture. If we receive the right kind of environment and encouragement we will become that thing that's necessary.

If you think just for a moment I think you'll realise that any individual character, every single one of us in the natural, what we are, we are as a result of our heredity and our environment and our reactions to the combination of those two things. Sounds very philosophical doesn't it always? But the Lord says on occasion let nature teach you and there are some things that nature can teach us and what we are in our character we are partly as a result of our heredity partly as a result of our environment partly as a result of

our response to our heredity and our environment. I mentioned this home that I'm staying in and we as well as the little girls there's a baby there who's just I think about four weeks old and one day he was just lying in his crib and his mum said just look at the way he's lying.

He's lying with his hand over his face so that's exactly how his dad sleeps. Now I mean he hasn't learned this he hasn't been watching there's just something that somehow comes down in generations like this. It's heredity.

I can recall when I was about nine or ten at home sitting by a coal fire and the embers were kind of dying away and I just sat by the not too close to it in fact hardly close enough to get any benefit from it but I sat there with just one hand stretched out towards it so that I could just about feel the warmth of the glow on my hand and my father came into the room and I can remember the look of surprise almost apprehension on his face and he said why are you sitting like that?

And I said well it's just it's comfortable just and he said my father used to sit like that and his father died when he was thirteen It's strange isn't it?

Just little bits of things that for no apparent reason they are just locked in and you see people you know I'm thinking of someone now at Reading and he's a boy I suppose about eleven or twelve and he walks and he's his dad he's the walk is exactly the same all the way through just just exactly his dad in the way that he walks I was at a funeral my last surviving aunt just a couple of weeks ago and I met there one of my cousins that I haven't seen for years and years and we were just sitting talking about standing talking about something and he just he just kind of stood with his legs wide apart and his hands in his pockets and he just tipped his head back and he laughed about something and I thought I can remember his dad doing that when I was little just little things you see all

kinds of little things apparently for no purpose apart of heredity but we're not just the victims of heredity you know well maybe you don't know but some psychologists and things like to examine twins that are separated at birth and the reason they like to examine them and to watch their lives is because they like to try and see what the difference is because particularly identical twins because these are supposed to have the same heredity the same genes all the rest of it but if they're separated at birth and then to see how things develop and they discover that there are similarities but there are differences too so there is heredity and there is environment there is nature and there is nurture and there is our response to our environment and to our heredity we are not automatons we are

not just photocopies of the Lord Jesus we're not just the same thing exactly reproduced the essence is the same in the spirit but our environment is different and all kinds of other things are different and there are aspects of his character which are in his heredity which we receive in regeneration by that seed I was reading when I was at Tom's a little book about George Fox and some of his letters and one of the quaint expressions of George Fox you see it I think even more in his diary is he would meet people and maybe he'd pass a little comment about what he'd discovered in this person and then there's this little cryptic comment and he will say and the seed was in him it's a quaint little saying what he was saying was he'd seen the life of God in him manifest in different kinds of

ways that the seed was in him the seed was in him if the seed is in us the life of God is in us he has sent us the spirit of his son the spirit the law of the spirit of the life that's in Christ Jesus has freed us from the law of sin and death the other heredity the other spiritual genes we are freed from by the coming in of the new law Moses was a law giver wasn't he he went up to God and he I said I wasn't going to do this but I'm

doing it now he went up to God and he received from God the law in order to bring it down so that the people should have it he was the mediator of that particular covenant our Lord Jesus went up too to receive a law but his law wasn't written in tablets of stone his law was distilled in the essence of the spirit that he brought down and put into the hearts of

men and women he did exactly what Moses did but on the inside not on the outside he went up to God like Moses went up to God he vanished in the cloud like Moses vanished in the cloud and he brought down this thing that was the testimony of God that's what they call the ark you know they called it the ark of the testimony the testimony of God in a restricted form the character of God expressed in just a few words it was the ark of the testimony well that was just in pieces of stone written with the finger of God but now God sends his spirit to put into us into our hearts into our beings into that inner me a new law that's written still with the finger of God or with the spirit of God but not now in tablets of stone but in the fleshly tables of our hearts so that we know his will we have

that written into us I want to pick out just a few things concerning the character of the servant and aspect that the Lord wants to make real in us let's take to begin with Isaiah 42 and this section I'll read from verse 17 oh no, I'll read from verse 16 and I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not I will lead them in paths that they have not known I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight these things will I do unto them and not forsake them they shall be turned back they shall be greatly ashamed that trust in graven images that say to the molten images you are our gods and then it says this hear ye deaf and look ye blind that ye may see and then in verse 19 it says this who is blind but my servant or deaf as my messenger that I sent who is blind as he

that is perfect and blind as the servant of Jehovah remarkable language isn't it who is as blind as the servant of Jehovah who is as deaf as the servant of Jehovah let's go back to Isaiah chapter 11 and we'll just pick out a verse which will really explain what's being said here the Bible is the best commentary on the Bible it's what John Wesley's mother told him I think I think it was what Charles Spurgeon had in mind as well when on one occasion he remarked that the Bible threw great light upon some of the commentaries this is Isaiah chapter 11 there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow up out of his roots and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him the spirit of wisdom and understanding the spirit of counsel and might the spirit of knowledge and of

the fear of the Lord and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord and he shall not judge according to the sight of his eyes neither reprove according to the hearing of his ears who is as deaf as my servant who is as blind as my servant the servant of Jehovah the Lord Jesus was not going to live according to what his outward senses received he wasn't going to make judgments based upon visual or orderable things he was going to make different kinds of judgments altogether how about you and me if we have within us the seed which is the servant how do we judge or do we judge at all let's go to the manifesto of the kingdom for a moment to Matthew chapter 7 this is the manifesto of the kingdom this is how he lives this is how his servants are to live I'll just remind us

again as we gather of that little phrase in Psalm 22 which says the seed shall serve him and the seed will continue to serve God the life of God that is within us if we allow that life to express itself and we nurture it it will bring forth all the full potential that's in it here's the manifesto of the kingdom chapter 7 verse 1 judge not that ye be not judged for with what judgment you judge you shall be judged and with what measure you measure it shall be measured to you again and why beholdest thou the splinter that is in thy brother's eye but considerest not the plank that is in thine own eye that's really the significance of all this or how wilt

thou say to thy brother let me pull out the splinter out of thine eye and behold a plank is in thine own eye
thou hypocrite first cast out

the plank out of thine own eye and then shalt thou seek clearly to cast out the splinter out of thy brother's
eye give not that which is holy unto the dogs neither cast ye your pearls before swine lest they trample
them again under their feet and turn again and rend you now the reason I went on to that next verse
verse six is because if you're going to carry out the instructions of verse six you're going to have to make
judgments you're going to have to decide who are swine before which pearls must not be cast so we've
got a real paradox on our hands here he says in the same breath don't judge because if you do judge this
will be the consequences but here he says make this judgment don't cast your pearls before swine now
are Christians to judge or are they not to judge Paul when he writes

to the Christians at Corinth on one occasion says what's the matter with you that you can't judge between
yourselves why is it that you're having to go outside the family of God and let others judge and then writing
to the same people Paul says I don't judge anyone and I don't think it's special of anyone's judgment he
said I don't even judge myself I'm not swayed by the judgment of man's day the one who judges me is the
Lord now this really seems like a recipe for utter confusion do we judge or don't we judge what's taking
place here in the midst of all this you are to never you are never to judge anyone's motive you are not to
have this sensoriousness that is in some people who can always see what's wrong I can remember doing
this in Sunday school a long long time ago when I was

teaching in Sunday school and taking a big white bed sheet and I suppose what that would be six feet by
six feet or something like that and you put a black dot in the middle of it and you say to the children what
can you see and they say a black dot and no one says a bed sheet no one says a great big piece of white
everyone says I can see a little dot of black right in the middle of it that is not discernment which is a gift of
the spirit that is just the simple natural critical faculty of men and women and you are not to have it you are
not to have it you are not to judge he did not judge have you noticed the kind of people that he dealt with
the one that we had read to us this morning of the woman who was a sinner and a woman from the city if
you put those two statements together that

she was from the city and she was a sinner it's almost for sure that it's a euphemistic way of saying that
this woman was off the streets and that's why they said or that's why they thought if he knew what kind of
woman this is he wouldn't allow this he had no interest in what kind of woman it was he wasn't judging
according to the judgment of his eyes or of his ears he was listening to hearts and listening to responses
that had nothing to do with circumstances of things we have within us a seed which can operate like this if
we will nurture it we do we have within us a seed that can work like this I recall a few years ago being in
India and I was invited to go and speak at the Loreto Convent which was a kind of a Catholic institution
and there were lots of nuns there from the Loreto

Order and there were one or two priests who did the kind of priestly functions and things for them and
there were one or two lay folk as they called them I suppose there were perhaps about twenty people and
I have very strong doctrinal problems with Catholicism not Catholics Catholicism make a distinction
between the two things and I was in this meeting and I looked around and I was supposed to be speaking
and I was talking to the Lord in my heart and saying I don't really want to be here I don't like this these are
the times when I probably some of you have heard me say this is when I quote Hardy not Thomas Hardy
the other one who said this is another fine mess you've got me into and you're kind of sitting and you think
what am I doing here there are all kinds of other people who could

be here and why am I here and they give me a chorus sheet and the chorus is there spread out and on one side it says all over the world the Spirit is moving and the next chorus to it is Hail to the Virgin of Lourdes and I'm saying Lord what am I doing here and there was a little conversation that went on in my heart between the Lord and me and it went something like this and I said Lord what am I doing here and the Lord said can you love these people and I said oh yes no problem and he said do you want to be a blessing to them and I said oh yes and he said that's how I feel that was the end of the conversation it stopped as quickly as it had begun that's how I feel there is a love which does not keep accounts it does not keep a score it doesn't say now I remember you doing this to me once

before when people learn things in the natural we learn by experience the baby that's in the home wire he's learning by experience he's learning that if he cries loud enough he'll get fed he's learning all kinds of things by experience he's adding one fact to another fact and this is the way he learns we are not to learn like this in things of the spirit we're not to learn like this in things of the spirit we are not to learn to assess someone's character by saying yes I remember he did that and I remember he did this and I remember he did this so he'll probably do that so I better be on my God against him now that's the way nature works but we're not to work like that God doesn't work like that God's heart is enlarged love believes all things hopes all things keeps no account of sin this

is the way he works God says that he will remember our sins no more he doesn't actually say I'll forget them that is a difference forgetting is a failure it's something that isn't working properly God has no failures he does not forget he refuses to remember he refuses to remember he says I will not remember I remember hearing a story of a lady there was a visiting creature who went to a particular church and then he went again some months after and he was talking to a lady and he was asking this lady how she was and she said oh we was fine and he said I'm glad you're better now because I remember the last time you were here you'd been having some problems in the church and people had been unkind to you do you remember that and she said no and he said well he said you told me that this

brother had said this and this and this do you remember that and she said no and he said but you told me this and this and this do you remember that and she said no No, she said, in fact, are remembering distinctly, deciding not to remember.

That's how God works. Your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more.

I will not call them to mind. He makes a choice in this thing. He's not forgetting anything.

He's making a choice. You're not to have memories like elephants, as they say. You're to leave it.

You're not to judge. You're not to judge. This is the way the kingdom works.

Is this unreality? Is this utterly impossible? Or is this possible upon the earth? Is it possible to live like he lived? Is it possible to be like the servant who doesn't judge according to what his eyes see or what his ears hear? Is it possible? Please turn with me to John's Gospel, Chapter 6. Sorry, John's Gospel, Chapter 5. John's Gospel is the gospel that tells us so much about the fellowship between the Father and the Son. That's how it begins. It says, we beheld his glory, the glory as of an only begotten Son by the sight of a Father.

And all the way through John's Gospel, you have these expressions of fellowship and the harmony, the union and the communion that was always going on. All these phrases that you know, things like, I always

do those things that please him. I know, Father, that you always hear me.

I and the Father are one. This is all John's Gospel. John's Gospel is a gospel that's constantly speaking of the relationship of the Father and the Son.

And one of the hearts of it is here in John, Chapter 5, where the Lord Jesus is speaking to some Jews who had begun by believing on him, but then didn't like the things he told them, and now are opposing him. And where shall we read from? Let me read from verse 17. This is in the middle of it all, but I think this is sufficient for us to get the sense of it.

I'll go back to verse 16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay him because he had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father works hitherto, and I work.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the Father do. For what things soever he does, that's the Father, these also doeth the Son likewise.

That's the fulfillment of what we read in Isaiah, Chapter 11, that he would not judge according to the appearance of his eyes. I can't do anything, he says, I'm not working on that basis. I'm not working from an accumulated knowledge or the wisdom of the years or an ability to diagnose this condition because I've seen it before.

I'm not working like that. I can do nothing unless I see my Father doing it. And what I see my Father doing, that's what I do.

Verse 20, For the Father loves the Son and shows him all things that himself doeth. And he will show him greater works than these that ye may marvel. For as the Father raises up the dead and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom he will.

For the Father judgeth no men, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. There are very serious implications that follow from that verse. If it is true that the Father judges no men, but has committed all judgment to the Son, it means every time you judge someone, you are actually stealing the crown rights of the Lord Jesus.

Do you follow that? So, if it is true that he has committed all judgment to the Son, every time that you judge someone, you are going contrary to this declaration of Scripture that all judgment is in the hands of the Son. There are some things that he will delegate to you. He will delegate ability to forgive to you.

He will delegate ability to refuse to remember to you. He will not delegate to you power to judge. He will keep it in his own hands.

And those are the only hands they are safe in, because he knows all things. And you only need to be missing one little bit of information to come to a completely wrong conclusion about what you are seeing. He has all power.

He has all authority. In the book of Revelation, John sees in image the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb who is upon the throne. And he sees him with seven horns and seven eyes.

He sees him in the place of power and authority. And he sees him in the imagery of it. He sees him with seven, which is the number of completeness and perfection, fullness.

He sees him with seven eyes, that is to say, with complete, full, perfect knowledge. And he sees him with seven horns. They are the symbols of power.

He sees him with complete, full, perfect power. Now he is also the Lamb who is upon the throne. And God has committed judgment into the hands of one who has all knowledge, who sees everything, has all power, and is a bleeding Lamb upon the throne, one who has laid down his life for those he is going to judge.

Now I think he is qualified to judge. I am very happy for my judgment to rest in his hands, because I know exactly what he thinks about me. Do you know it is impossible to judge someone properly if you don't love them? It is impossible to judge someone correctly if you don't love them.

So if you don't love them, don't judge them. And if you do love them, you won't judge them. All judgment is committed into the hands of the one who sits upon the throne.

The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son. Can I just share something with you? And in sharing this, I don't want to be judgmental in sharing it. There are times when I think, amongst us, we are very quick to spot what isn't right.

Very quick to notice something which is less than the very best. It's a form of judgment. And if God doesn't deliver us from it, it will destroy us.

It will destroy us. It will destroy the assemblies we are parts of. It will destroy the wider fellowship of which we are part.

If God does not deliver us from it, it will destroy us. Some of us, I trust all of us, at times in our hearts, lift our hearts to God in prayer for revival. That God will do, He'll glorify His own name and do something that He has not done.

Will you turn with me to Isaiah 58? These people prayed earnestly. With fasting, they prayed. Isaiah 58.

They didn't understand why God wasn't answering their prayers. Verse 3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge? Can you see what their complaint is? They're saying, God, haven't we done everything? Haven't we prayed? Haven't we fasted? Haven't we afflicted ourselves? What more do you want? Here's the answer. Behold, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure and exact all your labors.

Behold, you fast for strife and debate and to smite with the fist of wickedness. You shall not fast as you do this day to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked that thou cover him? Oh, brothers and sisters, do we? If we see someone who has become exposed, do we cover him? Or do we draw attention to him? Do we say to someone, you know what's happened to so and so and so? What do we do? Do we cover or do we expose? When thou

seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh, do you shut yourself away? General Booth, speaking sarcastically, perhaps, or cynically, but trying to make a point, on one occasion misquoted that passage in Galatians to some of his young officers.

And he says, if you see a man overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, kick him while he's down. You know, he doesn't say that. Do you cover him? Love covers.

It's instinctive. It is instinctive for love to cover. Make me speak to, can I say, husbands or wives.

If there is something that is not the highest in your partner, if you love your partner, you're not going to tell anybody about them. My wife has all kinds of idiosyncrasies. I have no intention of telling you about any of them.

I've got to go home after this, anyway. You wouldn't do it. You wouldn't do it.

And God wouldn't do it. And if God sees something that's wrong in me, unless you have particular help that you can get to me, he's not going to talk to me about you. He's not going to talk to you about me.

He's not going to do it. So, what you're getting is not discernment. It's human critical faculties.

He won't do it. When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh, then, verse 8, then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer.

Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here am I, if thou take away from thee, from the midst of thee, the yoke, the putting forth of the finger. Can you see the picture of that? He says, if you'll stop doing it, if you will cover those who are naked. Now, I'm not pleading for compromise.

I'm not saying that we should ignore sin. I'm not saying that at all. But if you see a brother that's overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.

This is the manifesto of the kingdom. This is how the servant worked. Let me see if my eyes can just drop on another verse or two.

Chapter 50 of Isaiah. Another little testimony coming from the servant. Isaiah 50 and verse 4. The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

That's the servant. The Lord has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that's weary. I notice things that aren't there.

I notice it doesn't say so that you can educate people, so that you can get them so full of knowledge that they can pass their GCSE with flying colours and New Testament theology or New Covenant theology or Fellowship theology. I notice it speaks here about speaking a word in season to him that's weary. It's the whole tenor of his life, isn't it? It's the whole atmosphere of his life.

He will not break the bruised wreath. He will not quench the smoking flax. Now, he doesn't compromise.

That's not it. But his whole attitude is so different. Neither do I condemn thee, but go and sin no more.

He doesn't pretend it doesn't happen. In the story of the prodigal son, there's an interesting thing that happens. He goes away.

He spends his inheritance, wastes everything that the father had given to him, and then when it's all gone, he begins to have second thoughts. He comes to himself, and he decides that he will acknowledge what he has done. And he says, What I will do is I will go, I will rise, I'll return to my father, and I'll say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called your son, but make me like one of the hired servants.

And having made his resolution, he then begins to carry it out. He turns his back on the pigsty. He starts the journey home.

While he's still yet a great way off, his father sees him, comes running to him, and when they meet, the son begins this thing that he has rehearsed in his mind. He knows what he's going to say, and he begins it, but he doesn't get all the way through it, if you notice. He only gets part way through it because he's interrupted.

This is how much he gets. He says, Father, I've sinned against heaven and before thee. And the father wraps him up in a great embrace, and he kisses him with the stink of the pigsty still on him, and he says, get the best robe, the ring for his finger, shoes for his feet, kill the fatted calf.

He was dead. He's alive again. He was lost, and he was found.

The story goes on. As he was home, the elder brother heard the noise of what was happening and protests. And his protest is this.

He says, the father, I'm putting it into different words to make a point. He says, the father has received this man back all too quickly. What he should have done is insisted on some kind of quarantine or something.

He should have insisted on some kind of penance. He should have insisted on some kind of retribution. He should not have done this.

He shouldn't have done it. He sinned, and then he begins to uncover the boy, his younger brother. And he says, he's wasted your substance with harlots and riotous living.

And I notice something about the father in this story. He never mentions sin. The two brothers mention sin.

The younger brother mentions sin. He acknowledges it. I have sinned against thee.

The older brother mentions it. He tries to remind the father. And notice what the father says.

The father says, he was dead, and he's alive again. He was lost, and he's found. The father will not enter into discussion concerning the son, the sin of the younger son.

He will not enter into discussion with it. He has already refused to remember it. It's part of the paradox of God's workings with us that while we are refusing to acknowledge what we are, God in his love, in his grace, will keep his finger on the spot and make sure that we know that what we have done has displeased him.

And as soon as we acknowledge it, he'll never mention it again. As soon as we acknowledge it, as soon as we say, Father, I've sinned. Well, it says it.

If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's Tyndale's translation. The Avey changed it to confess, which has all kinds of ritualistic and Anglican connotations, but the word is acknowledge.

It literally means saying the same thing as. If you say the same thing as God, if God puts his finger on something in your life, you say the same thing as God has said. You acknowledge it.

You own up to it. And the moment you own up to it, that is the end of your responsibility in it. Just apportion responsibility in this verse, will you? Just apportion responsibility in this verse.

Tell me who is supposed to do what? If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. What's your responsibility in that? Acknowledge our sins. The rest is God's responsibility.

The rest is his. It's the trigger that morally, if we can use that, of God releases him to be able to do all that was in his heart. To cleanse and forgive and to make new.

It goes on in verse 5, The Lord has opened mine ear. I was not, He wakens morning by morning. He wakens mine ear to hear as one, as the learned.

The Lord has opened mine ear. That word opened is the word that in Psalm 22 is translated pierced. They pierced my hands and my feet.

And here it says, He has pierced my ear. Now, what do you think all that is about? Well, I haven't got the time to go into it, but just read around the story of the giving of the law from Exodus chapter 20. I think it's probably in chapter 20 or chapter 21.

And you'll hear a story of what was to happen to someone who was a slave but had the right to be free. He had the right to be free. He'd come to the end of his period of service or his master had released him in some way and he was now able to go free.

But if he chose, he could plainly say, there had to be no doubt about this, he could plainly say, I love my master. I will not go out free. And if he plainly said that that was the way he wanted to live his life, they took the slave and they took him by the ear, I suppose, and they put his ear on the wooden door post and they pushed a nail through it.

I'm using the word nail for a purpose. They pushed a nail through it. They pierced his ear as a way of saying really that this man's ear belongs to his master forever.

You know, the one who has your ear has you. Who do you listen to? Who do you listen to? The one who has your ear has you. This is a man saying, I don't want to be my own.

I don't want to exercise my rights. I don't want to go out free. I love my master.

So they put this brand in his ear. They pierced him as a way of saying that for the whole of his life upon the earth, he would belong to somebody else. He would not please himself.

He would not do his own thing. He would be someone else's servant. The Lord hath pierced my ear.

I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. When they finally pierced his hands, it was just the outward expression of something that had always been. He'd lived a pierced life.

His whole life had been pierced. He'd always been at somebody else's will. You know, if you crucify someone, your hands can no longer do what you want to do and your feet can no longer go where you want to go.

You are utterly at the mercy of someone else's will. But he chose that. And all through his life, he lived it at the mercy of someone else's will.

And there is a seed in us which can take the same path. You can use, you can walk this way if you will. If you will.

That we should show forth the praises of his name. That all that intention that was in the seed is now passed on through those who have the seed. So that they may be equipped to be what God intended us to be.

But it's both nature and nurture. It's both heredity and the choices concerning your environment. He will not impose this upon you.

If you would be my disciple, you take up your cross. He didn't say you're going to get this whether you like it or not. He said, if you would be my disciple, you must make these choices.

There is in us by a new seed, a new instinct, a new ability to live in an entirely different way to the way that we have ever lived our lives. If we will live in that way, we'll know the blessing of God upon us. I'm just looking for a verse of Scripture if my eye drops on it.

Verse 20 of chapter 59. Chapter 59, verse 20. Let's go back a verse, shall we? And pick up this verse as well.

So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall raise, lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion.

And unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, it is God speaking, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord. My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord.

From henceforth and forever. The generation of Jesus Christ. A new generation, born of the same seed, living the same life, glorifying the same Father.

Not a pipe dream, not an impossible thing just to wish for, but something that God has made gloriously possible by his Spirit within our hearts. Let's pray. The Lord Jesus said something that's very key about judging.

Later on in John's Gospel, chapter 5, we didn't get to it, but he just said this. He said, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will. When he made his judgments, he wasn't judging in a way

which set him above somebody.

He wasn't judging in a way that made him feel superior. He wasn't conscious of his own thing in it. It wasn't his own will he sought.

It was the will of him that sent him. If the Lord is speaking to our hearts, brothers and sisters, let's just hear what God is saying. Let's hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the churches.

And if there's been in the pattern of our life uncoverings and the pointing of the finger and judgments, well, if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It's the work of a moment to acknowledge what God is saying in your heart. It's the word of a moment to say the same thing as He is saying.

And it's the work of a moment to clear it entirely by the one who says, your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more. He won't hold it against you. O Lord, we do lift our hearts to You.

Lord, in our weariness, Lord, sometimes we may lift our hearts and we may say, who is sufficient for these things? Who can live this kind of life? But our sufficiency is of God. And You have given to us exceeding great and precious promises. And You have made all grace available to us.

And You have given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. And You have, and You have, and You have. And if we will, Lord, we shall fulfill all Your will.

I do pray, Lord, that in the accumulation of all our knowledge, help us, Lord, not to get puffed up by it all. Pierce it, Lord. If it's being puffed up, pierce it.

Bring it down with a big bang, if need be. But just pierce everything that gets puffed up. Pierce it, Lord, and let us be real.

And enable us, as You will, to live this life which glorifies You. O God, Lord, this ability to surrender every right, to live the pierced life that claims nothing for itself, but says, I'm another's. I cannot go where I would have gone.

Another's will, another life. O Lord, Lord, Father, glorify Your Son. This seed which will serve You, Lord, let it flourish.

Let it spring into all its ripe fruitfulness. Let men see it. Let them taste it.

Let them taste the consequences of this life, Lord, and know that there's something different from all the tarnished, tawdry, spoiled things that they've spent their days on. Let them know that there's another realm, another kingdom, another seed, another God whose hands are pierced and open and stretched out to them. O Lord, O Lord, we would please Thee, Lord, but not ourselves.

This life, Lord, that we have come to love, that was laid down for us, let it spring up to the glory of God. Let all the promises of God in Him be yea. And amen to the glory of God by us, Lord, even by us.

Amen.

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