

# Isaiah Chapter 42

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon highlights the significance of Jesus Christ as the Servant of God, who brings the kingdom of God by quietly and persistently working to bring the rule of God over our lives.*

**Duration:** 46:41

**Scripture:** Isaiah 42:1-4, Isaiah 42:19-21

**Topics:** "Isaiah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having the attitude of a servant towards the world. He encourages humility and the willingness to listen to constructive criticism. The speaker also highlights the negative and positive aspects of Christ's work, which include opening the eyes of the blind and bringing the rule of God into our lives. The sermon emphasizes the need to focus on the Lord and be deaf and blind to the opinions of the world. The speaker also mentions the significance of the Holy Spirit in equipping Jesus as the servant of God.

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## Transcript

May we turn to Isaiah chapter 42. Isaiah chapter 42, verse 1 through verse 4, and then verse 19 through verse 21. Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighted.

I will put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flecks shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment according to truth. He shall not faint, nor be in haste, till he hath set justice in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law.

Verse 19. Who is blind but my servant, and deaf as my messenger whom I sent? Who is blind as he in whom I have trusted, and blind as Jehovah's servant, seeing many things, and thou observeth not? With open ears he heareth not. Jehovah hath delight in him for his righteousness' sake.

He hath magnified the law, and made it honorable. We mentioned before that this second part of the book of Isaiah, beginning with chapter 40 through chapter 66, is a very distinctive part. Because the theme of this part is very clear.

It speaks of the salvation of the Lord. The salvation of the Lord is more than the Lord's way to save people. The salvation of the Lord is centered upon a person.

In other words, the salvation of the Lord is in the Savior Himself. It's in Christ Himself. Because Christ Himself is the way, He is the salvation of the Lord.

Therefore you find in this part of the book of Isaiah, there are many prophecies concerning this Savior, this salvation. Of the Lord. Concerning our Lord Jesus.

In verse, in chapter 42, we find that our Lord Jesus is here called the servant of the Lord. Now of course, in chapter 7 and chapter 9, we find that He is prophesied as the Son coming to be the Messiah. He is the Son of God.

And yet, He took upon Himself the form of a servant. So this reminds us very especially of Philippians chapter 2. How He, who is the Son, being equal with God. And that is not something to be grasped at.

And yet, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a born slave. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, when He became a man on this earth, He came as a servant of the Lord. He is the servant of the Lord.

He came to serve God, His Father. He came to serve God's purpose in all His ways, and in all His life. So brothers and sisters, here you'll find in this chapter, our Lord Jesus is prophesied, is described as the servant of God.

Sometimes in studying Isaiah, you may find a kind of confusion. And that is, in this term, my servant, you'll find sometimes it is referred to the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. And sometimes it is referred to Israel, that nation that was chosen by God.

Sometimes you'll find it is difficult to separate these two. You have to read very carefully the context, in order to know whether that term, my servant, is referred to Christ, or my servant is referred to Israel. God raised up the nation of Israel as a corporate servant of His.

God's purpose in choosing Israel is more than just for the sake of Israel. It is for the sake of the whole world. That God may teach the nations through His servant Israel.

But Israel was not faithful to God. Not only she couldn't teach the nation, but you'll find she adopted all the customs and the idolatry of the nations. And because of that, God raised up a servant, a true servant, in the person of Jesus Christ.

And through that servant, God is able to accomplish what He has meant for Israel to do. And because of His work, eventually, the nation of Israel will again be restored into the position of God's servant. Because you'll find, in the millennium time, the nation of Israel shall teach all the nations on this earth.

Now, brothers and sisters, when you apply this to us today, we know that our Lord Jesus is the servant of God. He is the model, the servant of God. And through Him, salvation is fully accomplished.

But we who are redeemed of the Lord, the church, is also God's servant. Corporately. Not only it is true that individually we are all God's servants.

We are not only God's children, saved by grace, but we are also God's servants. We are saved to serve God and His purpose. And corporately, of course, the church is the corporate servant of God.

God has a definite work for the church to do. But the church will never be able to fulfill her mission, unless she is fully joined to the head. Christ is the head.

And the church is His body. And together, they are the servant of the Lord. Christ is the servant of the Lord.

And the church, in union with Christ, becomes also God's servant. Christ is not only our model, our example, but He is the very life and the very power of our service. So in one sense, you'll find this term is applied not only to Christ, but also to His church.

And it is almost inseparable. In seeing Christ as the servant of the Lord, we may learn something of the meaning of servanthood. What is meant by being God's servant or servants? What is meant by servanthood? Because we can see this fully expressed and realized in the person of our Lord Jesus.

So this morning, we would like to spend a little time meditating together on our Lord Jesus as the servant of God. Behold my servant, whom I uphold. Mine elect, in whom my soul delighted.

Behold. Whenever you find in the Bible the word behold, it is used to arrest our attention. You know, oftentimes our attention is rather divided.

It is very difficult for us to concentrate. Because we have too much interest, too many interests. But here you'll find the Spirit of God is calling us to concentrate our attention, to behold, that is to see, to look at one person, that all the other people will just disappear from your view.

Behold my servant. God wants us to forget everybody else, even forgetting ourselves. And God wants us to see His servant in the person of our Lord Jesus.

Behold my servant. What a servant He is. Our Lord Jesus is servant to nobody else.

His whole life is occupied with one thing, and that is His Father's business. He is the true and faithful servant of God. And because He is sent by God as God's servant, God backs Him up all the way.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold. Dear brothers and sisters, if we are true servants of God, if truly we serve God with our whole hearts, if we are sent, the Lord Jesus said, you have not chosen me, I have chosen you, that you may go forth and bear fruit. We are chosen by our Lord Jesus to be His servants, individually and corporately, to bear fruit for Him.

And because of that, He will uphold us. No master will send out servant without backing Him up all the way. Suppose you send out someone as your servant, someone whom you sent, and who faithfully serves your purpose, and yet when it comes to time of trouble and difficulty, you back out and said, you have nothing to do with it.

Now, what kind of master you are? Dear brothers and sisters, if we are faithful to the Lord as His servants, we are confident that He will uphold us all the way. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will never say, I have nothing to do with that.

Sometimes He cannot uphold us. Why? Because we have acted on our own. We are not true servant in the spirit of a true servant.

A true servant never does anything out of himself. A true servant only does the will of his master. A true servant never seeks anything for himself.

But brothers and sisters, sometimes we do. And when we do that, we cannot blame our master if he does not back us up. But one thing we are sure, if we are faithful in serving the Lord as His true servants, we know He will uphold us in fire and in water.

He will never leave us. He will never say, I have nothing to do with it. Behold my servant whom I uphold.

And this we find throughout the life of our Lord Jesus. How the Father upholds Him all the way. Mine elect in whom my soul delighted.

Our Lord Jesus is elected, is chosen by God the Father. And because God has chosen Him, how does He respond to God's election? He responds to God's election with a full committal of Himself. You know brothers and sisters, God has chosen us.

You are elected of God. And yet, how do we respond to God's election? Yesterday, one brother talked to me about this matter of election. Now I have to say, election is a mystery.

We may try to explain it to a certain degree, but after all, election is God's prerogative. We do not know too much about it. We are told that we are elected in order that our faith may be strengthened.

But as to the mystery of election, we are utterly at a loss. That's true. But dear brothers and sisters, it is not a matter of what is the mystery of election.

It is a matter of having been elected, how do we respond to God's election? You are elected of God, but how do you respond to His election? Do you cooperate fully with His election? Do you allow Him to work thoroughly in your life? Do you commit yourself completely to Him, to make your election sure, as we find in 1 Peter? How do we respond to His election? Look at our Lord Jesus, because He was elected of the Father, He responded with a full committal. There was no reservation. There was no drawback.

It was a full and complete surrender to the Father's will. And because of that, the Father said, In whom I have found my delight. You remember this happened during the time when our Lord Jesus went into the water to be baptized.

He had no need to be baptized, because there was no reason for Him to repent. There was nothing for Him to repent. We all need to repent often, all the time.

But there is nothing for our Lord Jesus to repent. And yet He was willing to go into the water to receive the baptism of John, which is the baptism of repentance. Why? Because He did that, in obedience to the Father, offering Himself as a substitute for the sins of this world.

So when He came out of the water, you remember, the heaven opened. And there was a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom is my delight. Why? Because there was a full committal to the Father.

A response to that election. Dear brothers and sisters, God has chosen us to serve Him. But how do we respond to that election? Do we present our bodies a living sacrifice, which is wholly accepted to Him, and this is our reasonable service? If so, then our Lord can also say, My good and faithful servant, in whom is my satisfaction.

The Lord Jesus is sent by the Father to be the servant of God. But how does He fulfill His mission? How was He equipped? In the second verse, the first verse too, second part of the first verse. I will put my spirit upon Him.

He shall bring forth judgment to the nations. Being sent as a servant, the one indispensable equipment that one must have is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And this again we remember.

When our Lord Jesus, after He was baptized, as He came out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended as a dove upon Him. And we are told that not only descending as a dove upon Him, but actually abiding in Him. Throughout the work of a servant, as a servant of God, our Lord Jesus does everything in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He never does anything on His own. He never does anything by Himself. Whenever He does anything, you'll find He does it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, in another place, in Isaiah chapter 61, you'll find how that servant is anointed of the Lord. He said, the Spirit of God is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the glad tidings to the poor, to release those that were imprisoned, to open the eyes of the blind, to proclaim the glad tidings, the jubilee of the Lord.

And all are done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, brothers and sisters, the one indispensable equipment that we must have to serve the Lord is the Holy Spirit. We must not only have the Holy Spirit, which we do.

When we believe in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes, quicken our spirit, make it a new spirit, and then He dwells in our new spirit, so the Holy Spirit and our spirit bear witness together that we are children of God. Thank God we have the Holy Spirit. But the point is, are we filled with the Holy Spirit? That is to say, are we ruled by the Holy Spirit? Do we give ourselves so fully to the Lord that the Holy Spirit has full control over our life? Are we anointed by the Holy Spirit? You know, in the Old Testament time, the priest, the king, the prophet, before they can function as priest, as king, as prophet, they must be anointed with oil.

And even the tabernacle, with all the utensils in the tabernacle, before they are used, they must be first anointed with oil. And the meaning is, through the anointing of the oil, everything is quickened into its spiritual reality. How can we serve God if we are not equipped with the Holy Spirit? How can we serve God if we are not quickened by the Holy Spirit? How can we serve God if we are not anointed by the Holy Spirit? How can we serve God if our lives are not under the rule of the Holy Spirit? If we are not led by the Holy Spirit, it is in the power of the Holy Spirit and in His wisdom that we are able to serve God.

If you want to do any other service, you may be prepared for that kind of service by education, by training, or by other means. But in serving God, the one indispensable equipment is not education. It is the Holy Spirit.

Now, of course, it doesn't mean that education, or training, or other things do not help. They may be useful, or they may not be. But the one thing that is indispensable is the Holy Spirit.

So, dear brothers and sisters, as we are chosen of God to be His servants, how we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. How we need to yield our life to the Lord, that the Holy Spirit may have full control of us. And with that equipment, we will be able to serve God's purpose.

And what is it that our Lord Jesus is sent for? He shall bring full judgment to the nations. You know, when we read the word judgment, oftentimes, you know, our reaction will be, well, He is coming to judge the world. Yes, He does.

He is coming to judge the world. But the word judgment here in the original, in the Hebrew language, is a word which means absolute, and therefore, divine right. So, it can be translated as He shall bring out the right among the nations.

What is it that our Lord Jesus is sent for into this world? He is not sent into this world just to judge this world. One day, He will judge this world. But even when He was in this world two thousand years ago, He said, I do not come to judge the world.

I come to save the world. One day, He will judge the world. But what is it that He is sent for? He is to bring out the right of God to the nations.

God has a divine right. God has an authority. He has a divine right over the nations, over the whole world.

But this divine right of God is being neglected, is being opposed. This is the end of side one. Stop the machine at this point and turn the cassette over.

And the coming of Christ is to bring that right out upon the nations. In other words, His work is to bring in the kingdom of God. As you read on in this chapter, it is true.

He is to open the eyes of the blind. He is to open the gates of the prison. That is true.

This is the negative side. On the negative side, His work is to open the blind eyes. To open the gates of the prison.

We are all imprisoned by sin and He opened the gates and set us free. That is true. But brothers and sisters, this is only the negative part of His work.

There is a positive meaning to His work and the positive meaning is He is to bring the rule of God over our lives. He is to bring in the kingdom of God. The right of God among the nations.

And this is His supreme work. That's the reason why as you read the gospel and when you come to the book of Acts, you'll find the kingdom of God is so prominent. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? The gospel of Jesus Christ is more than just saving people out of hell.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the kingdom of God. Christ comes to bring in God's kingdom among man. To establish His kingdom in the midst of man.

What is the kingdom of God? The right of God. The rule of God as the law of our life. And that is the law of the kingdom.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank God we are saved. Thank God He has opened our blind eyes. Thank God He has opened the prison gate and set us free.

But does it mean because you're set free, therefore you are free? You're free to do anything you like at all. You will go to heaven. Does it mean licentiousness? You'll find we are set free that we may be bondmen to righteousness and to holiness.

We are set free that we may come under the rule of God. That the right of God may be upon us. That we may become His kingdom.

That our lives may be given by His rule. And as He begins to manifest His kingdom among His own redeemed people, one day His kingdom shall appear publicly in this world. How important it is for us today to be put under the rule of Christ.

And this is God's divine. He has that right over the whole creation. And He will have that right realized.

But how does He do the work? Does He try to force His way through? Does He try to accomplish His work by force? By argument? By raising His voice? By being noisy? Not at all. Verse 2. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. In accomplishing this tremendous work of bringing the kingdom of God to this world, He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

In other words, He does His work quietly. But persistently. You know, this is quoted by Matthew.

Our Lord Jesus healed many people. But He told them not to broadcast these miracles. Why? He does not seek His own glory.

He only seeks the glory of the Father. He only seeks to see that the Father's will is done. He does not want to draw people to Himself.

He does not seek for fame or popularity. He does not want to be made known. He does not lift up His voice.

He just works quietly to accomplish the Father's. Do we need to be argumentative? Do we need to be noisy? Do we need to use force? The Spirit of God, when He is working, you'll find it is quiet, it is persistent, and it shall be done. How does He do the work? A bruised reed shall He not break, a smoking flex shall He not quench.

He shall bring forth judgment according to Him. Oh, how gentle He is. When we see a broken reed, our natural temptation will be to break it.

What's the use of a broken reed? Break it. Finish it. When we see a smoking flex, our natural reaction will be, blow it out.

What's the use of a smoking flex? It gives much annoyance. It does not serve any purpose. So why not just finish with it? Now, that is the human reaction.

A broken reed represents what appears outwardly. A smoking flex represents what is inwardly. How true it is.

We are all broken reeds. We are oppressed by sin, bruised and broken. Inwardly, we are smoking flex.

Our life is going out. There is not much life in us. And yet, our Lord Jesus, He will not break a bruised reed.

He will not blow out a smoking flex. Instead, He will restore that bruised reed. And He will restore that flex, smoking flex.

This is the work of our Lord Jesus. How gentle, how kind, how patient He is. Verse 4. He shall not faint, nor be in haste, till He has set justice in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law.

In spite of all discouragements and disappointments, He shall not faint. He is sustained by the Father. And He is never in haste.

Never in haste. Now, oftentimes, you know, we faint. And we are in haste.

There is so much to do. How can we do it? Why is it not done? We get so excited. We want to do something.

We get so noisy. We get so impossible. And the more we are like that, the less it can be done.

But our Lord Jesus, you'll find He never faints, nor in haste. He just keeps on until the right of God is known throughout the earth. And then God, it shall be done.

But there is another side of that service, which I would like to mention very briefly. And that is from verse 19 through verse 21. Now, most commentators commenting on this section, think that the servant here is referred to Israel, not to Christ.

Unfortunately, I do not agree with them. I may be wrong. But to me, as I read this, I feel this section is still referring to Christ.

Why? Because in verse 21, Jehovah has delighted him for his righteousness sake. He has magnified the Lord and make it honorable. Now, Israel hasn't done that.

Hasn't done that. But what goes before is so strange, that it seems impossible to be applied to Christ. And that's the reason why it's always applied to Israel.

Who is blind but my servant? Of course, Israel is blind. Who is deaf as my servant whom I serve? Israel is deaf. That's true.

Who is blind as he in whom I have trusted? And blind as Jehovah's servant seeing many things, and thou observe it not. With open ears he hear it not. Now, we will say certainly this is a perfect description of Israel.

And it's a perfect description of us too. But dear brothers and sisters, because of verse 21, I cannot accept that. I feel it still refers to Christ.

Now, is Christ blind? Is Christ deaf? Surely, he has his eyes wide open to the Father. He has his ear pierced towards the Father. Every morning the Father will speak to him.

No doubt about that. He has the keenest eyesight. He has the clearest hearing.

No doubt about that. But is it not also true that as God's perfect servant, he is totally blind and deaf to what the world may say, or what he may see in the world. You know, if you are God's servant, you no doubt will hear a lot from the world.

You no doubt will see a lot of the world. And what you hear and see will really make you think. How many God's servants are discouraged to despair because of what people say about them, about their work, because of what they have seen in this world? Oh, brothers and sisters, if you see too much and if you hear too much, you're finished.

You cannot go on serving faithfully the Lord. If you want to serve the Lord faithfully, you have to be blind and deaf as our Lord was. Not blind and deaf to God, but blind and deaf to the world.

You see as if you haven't seen. You hear as if you haven't heard. And because of that, you can go on with the Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters, that is another aspect of the servant of, as God's servants, how we need to be blind, deaf to what the world may say, or may appear to be. We only see the Lord. We only hear the Lord.

I remember a story. Once in a railway station, now not like in this country. In this country, you don't do that.

But in China and in the East, that's what they did. You know, in a railway station, as the people come out of the station, an inspector will stand at the gate and he will ask for your ticket. You have to give him your ticket as you come out.

And it was a very cold day. And people were just streaming out of the train. And this conductor, this inspector was there standing there and asked for ticket.

And you know, some people put their ticket in their pockets, or even in their inner pocket, or even in their bed. And it was so cold, people had to take off their gloves and try to search for it. So everybody was doing that and gave him an evil look.

And some people said, Do you think I would take the train without a ticket? Don't you trust me for that? But no matter what people say, he just take it. Take it. You know? And as he was doing that, people cursed him.

It was so cold and you have to demand for that ticket? And one passing by saw the whole thing. So when he came to him, he said, It must be a real trial to you. Oh, he said no.

And he turned his eyes and up there in the house, there was the station master looking down with a smiling face. He said, That's it? That's it? In other words, he was just seeing. He just saw the station master.

That's all. He smiled. He didn't care what people said.

He didn't care what he saw. Blind and dead. Dear brothers and sisters, as God's servants, that is the attitude we have to have towards the world.

Not that we are so proud as not listening to any constructive criticism. We should be humble enough. If there's something wrong, we should confess and change.

But so far as God's purpose is concerned, we have to be looking to the Lord and to Him alone. So dear brothers and sisters, this is the servant fully manifesting in the life of our Lord Jesus. And having His life in us, being in union with Him, God calls us to be His servants and His corporate servant.

So may the Lord help us. Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee for Thy servant, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is so perfect.

Oh, how we praise and thank Thee that through Him Thou art able to obtain Thy full purpose. How we praise and thank Thee Thou hast called us to be joined with Him in this servanthood. By His life in us, we

may be able to serve Thy purpose.

What a privilege it is. We pray that we may not only take our Lord Jesus as our example, but we may, by His life and spirit in us, fulfill the work that Thou hast entrusted to Thy church. That Thy kingdom may come.

In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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