



Sermon Discussion Questions  
December 3, 2023,

*Advent - The Servant is Coming*

## **A JUST AND GENTLE SERVANT**

Isaiah 42:1-9



### **1. Opening Discussion Questions**

- a. Have you ever been promised something but had to wait so long for the promise to be fulfilled that you actually doubted that it would happen. If so, describe the circumstances and how you felt as you waited. How did the delay affect the way you thought of the person who had made the promise? If no one has had such an experience, describe a time when you made a promise (possibly to your children) that you honestly knew you would never be able or willing to fulfill.
- b. What image do you have in your mind when you hear the word “servant”? Is the image more influenced by America’s history of slavery or by Downton Abbey? What makes the major distinction between the two situations? How do you think that difference would influence the way you performed if you were a servant?

### **2. Sermon Outline/Key Points**

- a. God Promised a Unique Servant Was Coming
  - i. The Servant is God's delight.
  - ii. The Servant has God's power.
  - iii. The Servant is God's promise.
- b. The Servant's Character Is Gentle
  - i. The essential nature of the Servant is gentleness.
  - ii. Truly embrace the gentleness of Jesus for yourself
- c. The Servant's Work Is Justice Throughout the World
  - i. Addresses the work of God's Kingdom
  - ii. We anticipate the completion of this when Jesus returns.

### **3. Study/Discussion Points:**

- a. *Sunday Afternoon* – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to prayerfully ponder these questions:
  - i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
  - ii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
  - iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
  - iv. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?

- v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. ***Monday*** – *God Promised a Unique Servant Was Coming Who Would Be His Delight*

- i. This week’s focal passage, Isaiah 42:1-9, is the first of four passages (often called the Servant Songs) in Isaiah that introduce and predict (prophesy) the coming King, describing His nature and the irresistible advance of His Kingdom – seven centuries before His birth. Read the focal passage several times thinking about the meaning of each phrase and letting God’s revelation penetrate deeply into your heart and mind.
  1. Based on these nine verses how would you describe the “servant” that God is sending?
  2. If you were to pick a single theme of idea presented in these nine verses, what would it be?
  3. What is the fundamental difference between verses 1-4 and 5-9?
- ii. The first phrase of Isaiah 42:1 tells us four things about the individual being described in the focal passage. What are they? Read the following passages to see how the New Testament confirms the identity of the individual.
  1. Servant: Matthew 20:28, John 13:13-16, Acts 3:26 & 4:27, and Philippians 2:7
  2. Uphold (“strengthen” in the CSB): Matthew 4:11 & 26:53 and Luke 22:43
  3. Chosen: Luke 9:35 & 23:35, and 1 Peter 2:4-6
  4. Delight: Matthew 3:17

c. ***Tuesday*** – *God Promised a Unique Servant Was Coming Who Would Have His Power*

- i. The second phrase of Isaiah 42:1 tells us the source of Jesus’ power. Compare the phrase with Matthew 3:16-17 and John 3:34. Considering all three passages, what can we confidently say about Jesus?
- ii. Read Psalm 33:6, 40:7, 104:30 and 139:7 (“breath” is often used as a synonym for “Spirit”). What do these descriptions of God’s Spirit at work suggest about Jesus?
- iii. In these verses we have a beautiful picture of the Trinity at work. How do you see them describing the role and actions of
  1. God the Father?

2. God the Son?
3. God the Holy Spirit?

d. **Wednesday** – *God Promised a Unique Servant Was Coming; It Was His Commitment*

- i. How does the center verse (verse 5) of this focal passage lend credence to the verses before and after it?
  1. What six things are we told that God has done?
  2. As opposed to the “Spirit” that God puts on His Chosen in verse 1 what do you think “spirit” means in verse 5.
  3. Compare verse 5 with John’s Prolog (John 1:1-14).
    - a. What similarities and/or differences do you see?
    - b. How would you describe the difference between the “life” mentioned in Isaiah 42:5 and that in John 1:4 & 9?
- ii. Read verse 6& 7 carefully. Who do you think the Lord is talking about (to) in these verses? Does the fact that the Hebrew word for “you” used four times in verse 5 is singular support your view?
- iii. Verse 6 tells us that the Servant will be given as a “covenant for the people”.
  1. What does a “covenant” mean to you?
  2. How does this passage relate to Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:8-12 and 10:16-17?
  3. How was this covenant ratified (see Matthew 26:27-28 & Luke 22:20)?
- iv. What characteristics (attributes) of God do you see put forth in verses 8 & 9?

e. **Thursday** – *The Essential Nature of the Servant Is Gentleness*

- i. In Isaiah 42:2-3 we have a beautiful picture of the “Gentle” nature of the Messiah.
  1. How do you understand His gentle nature from these two verses?
  2. Based on what you know about His life from the four Gospels what events would you point to that describe His “gentleness”?
  3. How did this nature differ from what the Jewish people expected from a Messiah while they lived under Roman rule?
- ii. Jesus claimed that He was gentle and humble in Matthew 11:29.
  1. What do you think is the relationship between gentleness and humility?
  2. Why are both important and what do you think is the result if one of the two is missing?
- iii. Read Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:5. How did Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem demonstrate His gentleness.

f. **Friday** – *As Christians We Must Truly Embrace the Gentleness of Jesus*

- i. Read John 13:15, Philippians 2:5, 1 Peter 2:21, and 1 John 2:6. How do these verses command us to be gentle?
  - ii. Read Galatians 5:22-25 about the Fruit of the Spirit.
    - 1. Which of the “Fruit (singular)” seems to get the most emphasis in American churches? The least?
    - 2. In your view is it possible to really excel in one of the fruit (singular) and ignore others?
    - 3. What do you think would happen if instead of a “Love Our Neighbors” (LON) weekend the church had a “Be Gentle to Our Neighbors” weekend?
  - iii. Finally, read these verses from Paul and contemplate/discuss these verses: Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 4:5, Colossians 3:12, 1 Timothy 3:3 & 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:25 and Titus 3:2. In your judgement do you think Paul would commend us for the way we live the Christian life?
- g. Saturday – The Servant’s Work is to Bring Justice Throughout the World*
- i. According to Isaiah 42:1, 3 & 4 what is the goal of Jesus’s mission?
  - ii. How would you define “justice”? How is human justice different from God’s justice?
    - 1. Read Amos 5:21-24 Micah 6:8, Isaiah 1:16-17, and Jeremiah 22:1-5.
    - 2. How do these verses compare with the American view of justice?
  - iii. Read Matthew 23:23-24. How do you think Jesus’ words to the Pharisees should be applied to us today?

#### 4. Application:

- a. Seeking Justice in our world today is an overwhelming task. With so much injustice and extreme need it is hard to know where to start. But with many reputable agencies dedicated to addressing extreme poverty, world hunger, lack of safe drinking water, preventable disease, and human exploitation there are plenty of opportunities. You need only do a quick search on the web. And while most, if not all, need financial support, there are a great many that need volunteers as well.
- b. If you are interested in reading about one person’s recognition of and response to injustice, you might want to read “The Hole in the Gospel” by Richard Sterns.

#### 5. Prayer Points:

- a. **A**doration – 1 Peter 4:16
- b. **C**onfession – James 5:16
- c. **T**hanksgiving – 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- d. **S**upplications – James 4:2-3