



**50 YEARS**  
TRINITY LUTHERAN  
CHURCH & SCHOOL  
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# The Servant of the Lord

Isaiah's Servant Song: 42:1-9

Isaiah 42:1-9   Philippians 2:1-11   Matt 12:9-21

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The books at the end of the Old Testament are collectively called the **Prophets**. They include books like Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Amos, and Malachi<sup>1</sup>. Essentially the message of the Prophets is threefold:

1. first, they are *words of warning* to the rebellious Israelites calling them to repent.
2. Second, they are *words of judgment* for the godless nations that surround Israel – also calling them to repent.
3. And finally, the Prophets speak *words of hope, comfort, and salvation* in the coming Messiah.

Of all the Prophets, none is greater than **Isaiah**. Isaiah is considered the first among equals; the greatest of the Prophets<sup>2</sup>. He lived 700 years before Jesus was born; and he was sent to the southern Kingdom of Judah. Isaiah foretold so much about Jesus' life that his book is frequently called the "**Fifth Gospel**"<sup>3</sup> -- as in (1) Matthew, (2) Mark, (3) Luke, (4) John, and (5) Isaiah!

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<sup>1</sup> The Old Testament Prophetical Books are usually divided like this: The **Major Prophets** are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; and the **Minor Prophets** are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The terms "Major" and "Minor" are not used because one is greater than another, but because of the length of the book. For instance Jeremiah has 52 chapters – a "major" prophet; and Haggai has only two chapters – a "minor" prophet.

<sup>2</sup> The name Isaiah means "Yahweh is salvation." He wrote from 740BC to 680BC. He was a Prophet when the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed and exiled by the Assyrian empire. However, his ministry was to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, particularly Jerusalem. He was a contemporary of the Prophets Hosea and Micah. He is the most quoted Prophet in the New Testament – at least 62 times! Jewish tradition says that Isaiah was martyred by being "sawn in two" and is referred to in Hebrews 11:37.

<sup>3</sup> "... throughout the book [of Isaiah], we continually see glimpses, allusions, and echoes of a future Messiah. In fact, Isaiah's words are quoted more times in the New Testament than any other Old Testament book. Because of the number of Messianic references found in the book, Isaiah has been referred to as a fifth gospel. If we didn't have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we would know a lot about Jesus just from the breadth of detail given in the book of Isaiah!" "Isaiah As The Fifth Gospel" by Melissa Spoelstra, <https://women.lifeway.com/2022/09/07/isaiah-as-the-fifth-gospel/>

Today we begin the **Advent season**, it's a time when we eagerly anticipate the birth of Christ in Bethlehem and prepare for Christmas season. In our preparation, we will use the "**Fifth Gospel**" of **Isaiah** to guide us in our preparation to celebrate the birth of the Savior.

In Isaiah, there are four chapters that are referred to as the **Servant Songs**<sup>4</sup>. These are 4 chapters that virtually outline the mission and ministry of Jesus, they are quoted frequently in the New Testament, and they teach us why the Son of God was born in Bethlehem. Here is part of the first "Servant Song":

BEHOLD! **My Servant**, whom I uphold, My Chosen One in whom I delight; I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will bring righteousness to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

**Jesus is this Servant**, the Chosen One who brings righteousness to the nations<sup>5</sup>. In Jesus' Baptism, the Father spoke words similar to this when He said, "**This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.**" Also at Jesus' Baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove – as one "**anointed**" (= Messiah) by the Spirit. And Jesus was baptized to "**fulfill all righteousness.**"

**Jesus is the Servant of the Lord**, Chosen by the Father, Given the Spirit, who brings righteousness to the nations. Righteousness is a legal term that means **Not Guilty**<sup>6</sup>. Jesus has earned that legal verdict for you through His own life and death. That's why He was born in Bethlehem<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> There are four "**Servant Songs**" of Isaiah that describe the obedience, suffering, and exaltation of the Servant of the Lord, the Messiah. These "songs" teach us of the Messiah and show Him to be God's righteous, Spirit-filled Servant who suffers for the sins of the world. The Servant Songs are found in Isaiah 42:1–9; Isaiah 49:1–13; Isaiah 50:4–11; and Isaiah 52:13–53:12.

<sup>5</sup> Our Gospel lesson for today was chosen because it identifies Jesus as this "**Servant**" in Matthew 12:17–21. One way to speak of Isaiah 42 (and the other Servant chapters) is that they are "Messianic" – they are teaching is about the Messiah whom God promised to send ("Messiah" (Hebrew) = "Christ" (Greek) → Jesus.)

<sup>6</sup> Re-read the First Servant Song in Isaiah 42:1–7 and note that righteousness is the theme. Four times the idea is referenced (42:1,3,4, 6) — unfortunately translated "justice." Righteousness is a legal term that means "Not Guilty" — it is one of the most important ways that salvation is taught to us in Scripture. **IT'S VERY IMPORTANT!**

<sup>7</sup> The following paragraphs are explaining the doctrine of the "Perfect Obedience of Christ." Because of Jesus' perfect obedience in life AND death, you are declared "righteous" (= not guilty) in God's eyes. It's an objective reality that comes to you through faith in Christ alone! Righteousness is a gift that was earned by Jesus and freely given to you through the Word and Sacraments. This is an invaluable doctrine to thoroughly understand and believe. This is exactly why the Son of God was born in Bethlehem and is the Savior of the world!

The Son of God came into the world, took on flesh, was a true human man, and lived a **perfect life** for us and in our place. He always and fully – in thought, word, and deed – obeyed the 10 Commandments.

We could never have lived a perfect life. Our sin totally and thoroughly corrupts us; in fact the Bible says we are **dead in sin** (Eph 2:1). Whereas we continually sin in thought, word, and deed, Jesus **never** sinned in thought, word, or deed. Jesus' **perfect obedience** to God is credited to you through faith. In God's courtroom, it's as if you *have never sinned*, like Jesus; so God the Judge declares you **Not Guilty** in His eyes! In other words, you are **righteous** because of Jesus! You are covered over with Jesus' "Robe of Righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10)

In reality though, you have sinned. So part of Jesus' work as Savior was to take all of your sin and guilt, and the condemnation and punishment that it deserves, **upon Himself**. The One born in Bethlehem will suffer and die in Jerusalem *for you and your salvation*. In God's courtroom, your sin has been accounted for; its been paid for by Jesus. He suffered and died for you. So God the Judge declares you **Not Guilty** in His eyes! In other words, you are **righteous** because of Jesus!

Because of Jesus, **you are righteous before God**; it is by faith in the Son of God, born in Bethlehem, who lived a perfect life for us; and died a sacrificial death for us. Your **righteousness** comes from Christ; it is a gift of faith; it is never something that you yourself have earned, merited, or achieved.

**As Advent begins today**, the first thing to do is to repent and believe this good news. Turn from your sin -- and trust in the righteousness of Christ. Renounce any self righteousness you may cling to; turn away from any merit or goodness you think God will accept from you. Trust only in His Son Jesus, the Servant and Chosen One who brings righteousness to the nations! Advent is a call repentance; it's a time to repent and to believe the gospel!

Isaiah also teaches us that this **Servant, Jesus, the Chosen Messiah**, is gentle and kind with you, and He will forgive your sins.

A bruised reed ~~He~~ will not break, and a smoldering wick ~~He~~ will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness He will bring forth righteousness. Isaiah 42:3

Sin does a lot of damage in our lives: and it makes you vulnerable. Sometimes it's your own sin; and other times it's someone else's sin that has affected you. In either case, the Lord Jesus is gentle and kind to you; He is tender and compassionate because of His great love for you. He will never cast you away; nor will He forsake you. In fact it's quite the opposite, He draws you near and strengthens you with His words of love, forgiveness, and righteousness.

He makes wrongs right; He brings healing from pain; He gives wisdom to the faithful. Even when you're feeling like a bruised reed, He will never break you. Even when you feel like a smoldering wick, He will never snuff you out. In Christ you are loved by God; by His Spirit you patiently endure; in His Word you find strength and comfort. Remember this promise of Jesus?

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weak and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

In Christ, there is rest, and peace, and strength. The Servant of the Lord who makes you righteous in God's eyes is gentle and kind, patient and loving with you! This is the God you worship! This is the God who is with you every moment of every day! This is the God you will spend eternity with! You are well pleasing in His sight, He loves you, and He gives rest to your soul and peace to your life.

**The Faithful Servant of the Lord**, foretold in Isaiah, revealed as Jesus in the New Testament, has declared you righteous in God's eyes! He is forever gentle, kind, and loving to you! That **Faithful Servant** was born in Bethlehem -- that **Faithful Servant** is what Christmas is all about!

Amen!

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God the Holy Spirit,  
we thank you for inspiring the prophet  
Isaiah, and for including his book in our  
Bibles.

Grant us faith to trust in the Servant of the  
Lord and His righteousness.

Deepen our faith in the person and work of  
the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for your love and care in our  
lives, as we live in this sinful and broken  
world.

We ask for your strength, peace, and  
wisdom as we live as Your people,  
and trust in Your promises.

In Jesus, the Servant of the Lord's Name,  
Amen!

## Isaiah 42:1-9

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.

3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

4 he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”

5 This is what God the Lord says— the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

6 “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

7 to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

8 “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.

9 See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.”

## Philippians 2:1-11

<sup>2</sup> Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,<sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

## **Matthew 12:9-21**

9 Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, 10 and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

11 He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” 13 Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. 15 Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. 16 He warned them not to tell others about him. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

18 “Here is my servant whom I have chosen,  
the one I love, in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

19 He will not quarrel or cry out;  
no one will hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,  
till he has brought justice through to victory.

21 In his name the nations will put their hope.