

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

12.14.2025 | The Servant King | Isaiah 42:1-4 | Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, I wanna invite you to turn with me to Isaiah chapter 42. If you wanna use the Bible in the pew or the chair in front of you, I can tell you that in that Bible, it's on page 602. Isaiah 42 is where we're going to be this morning, is we're gonna look at the first four verses of that chapter. We're in an Advent series called The Promised One. Pastor Clark spoke to it some earlier in the service, but what we're doing in the series is we're looking at the promises given in the Old Testament about one who had come, a Messiah, a Savior who had come, and we're seeing how Jesus fulfilled those promises in his first coming, but also how we still await his ultimate fulfillment of these promises in Jesus' second Advent. The season of Advent is for looking back and remembering that Jesus has come, but it's also for looking forward and anticipating the fact that he is going to return.

So a couple of weeks ago as we began the series, we looked at Genesis 3 just to see why do we even need a Promised One? We saw how sin entered into God's creation and fractured everything, including our relationship with God, but God quickly promised one who had come to crush the head of the serpent, who would defeat the enemy, restore us back to God, and we continue to consider that last week as we looked into Psalm 8, a Psalm that speaks about how God created us as people unique in creation, created us in his image, and that Jesus had to be made like us in every way. Jesus had to be made a little bit lower than the angels, like us in every way that he might save us and might restore us to the place that God created us to be, and this morning we're gonna look a little bit more about how Jesus does this. What does it mean for Jesus to come and to save us and to restore us? And particularly as we see this promise given through the prophet Isaiah, we see that Jesus is a servant and a king. Jesus himself said that he came not to be served, but to serve.

At the same time, he is the one who comes to establish his kingdom, to rule as king. It's precisely as a servant king that Jesus comes to save us and to restore us. Here from the prophet Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 42, verses one through four. God speaks through Isaiah and says, "Behold, my servant, "whom I uphold, my chosen, and whom my soul delights, "I have put my spirit upon him. "He will bring forth justice to the nations. "He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice "or make it heard in the street. "A bruised reed he will not break, "the faintly burning wick he will not quench. "He will faithfully bring forth justice. "He will not grow faint or be discouraged "till he has established justice in the earth "and the coastlands wait for his law."

Jonathan Edwards was a pastor theologian from the 1700s. He preached a sermon and then published it into like a short book called The Excellency of Christ. And he spoke about the excellency of Christ. He began the sermon in this way. He said, "Imagine a great person that you know "or you can think of, someone who is intellectual, "someone who is successful, someone who is wealthy, "someone who is powerful." He says, "Imagine that you see that successful great person "taking advice from their driver. "Or imagine you see that great person "bringing a meal to a neighbor who is sick. "Or imagine you see that great person "going and caring for someone who has no real power "in and of themselves to do anything, "no importance in this world." He says, "When you see a great person "doing something like that, what do you feel within you?" He said, "For most of us, what we probably feel "is that that great person actually has become "more great in our eyes because they're not always acting "as if they are great." He says, "When we see someone who is majestic, "we actually see them as even more majestic "when they don't always act like they're majestic."

He says, "This feeling that we get "of seeing great people do things "that aren't always seemingly so great "is actually just a dim echo "of what we have infinitely in Jesus." He said, "In Jesus," he used this phrase, "there is this admirable conjunction "of diverse attributes, diverse excellencies." He says, "In Jesus, there's this admirable conjunction "of diverse excellencies." That in Jesus, these great things all come together in one person. That Jesus is far greater than the kings, the rulers, the rich, the smart in our world. That all those people that we see as great in our world are like worms in the dust compared to Jesus, Jonathan Edwards said. But yet, as great as he is, Jesus came down to us. And he not only befriended the high and the mighty and the powerful, but he came to the one whom the world forgets. He befriended the lowly and the outcast. Not only did he become like us and befriend us, but he even gave his life for us. What you see here is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies. One who is far greater than you could ever imagine, but one who is more gracious than you could ever believe.

This is what we see, I think, in this passage. And I think this is what should draw us to Jesus, as we were just singing a song about coming to Jesus. Jesus invites us to come to him. What would bring us to come to somebody and to trust in someone? I think it is seeing this greatness on display. The fact that he is so far above, so much greater than anybody we can imagine, but also so much more gracious than we could ever believe. This admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies is what draws us to Jesus. It is what leads us to trust in him, is what leads us to worship him. And just to be honest with you this morning, that's my hope for us. My hope is that as we look to Jesus and we see these diverse excellencies together in one person, it'd be my hope that we would be drawn to trust in him and worship him together.

What we see in this passage is a few different ways that this plays out, but in general, what we see is that this is a servant king. This is the title of the sermon this morning, and before we kind of look at some of the ways that this servant king is described, first to see these diverse excellencies together in one person in just this idea of a servant king. Look at verse one of Isaiah 42. And what Isaiah says about this one who is going to come. He says, "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, "my chosen and whom my soul delights, "I have put my spirit upon him. "He will bring forth justice to the nations." Think about just the description of this promised one here in one verse, that God describes him as his servant. Now just a moment, we'll talk a little bit more about why that title is specifically used in Isaiah and what it means. Let me just think about what God is saying. There's gonna be one who comes to serve me. There's gonna be one who comes in the form of a servant, one who is lowly, who is beneath, whose whole job is not to have things for himself, but to serve others and to serve the Lord.

But yeah, look at what the servant does. The servant is anointed by God to bring forth justice to the nations. The idea of bringing forth justice is one who is a ruler or an authority. This one is not just gonna be a ruler over the nation of Israel, he is going to be a ruler or an authority over the nations. One who is both a servant and a king. Isn't this the conjunction of diverse excellencies that we just consider at Christmas? And Pastor Clark was just mentioning earlier in our service the way that we see Jesus coming as a baby, one who is born into this world, the same one who created this world. These diverse excellencies of one who is over all and yet makes himself a servant to all. Let me just see this in a well-known prophecy from Isaiah in Isaiah chapter nine verse six, verses that are often read this time of year. When Isaiah says, "For to us, a child is born. "To us, the son is given. "And the government shall be upon his shoulder "and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

You notice that this baby that is going to be born is also known as Everlasting Father. That's a conjunction of divine, diverse excellencies. That there's going to be a baby born in a manger and yet who is going to be the Prince of Peace, the ruler over all. We see this servant who is also a king, one who has authority and power but yet uses his position to serve others. We see this marked out in a few ways in these verses in Isaiah. What I think we have in Isaiah is really a description of the servant king in just a few verses. In fact, what this prophecy and this promise says is, here is what the servant king is going to do and here is what he is not going to do. And in saying these things, what he is saying is, here is what the servant king will be marked by.

Let's just, what I want us to consider this morning as we look at this promise from Isaiah 42, three attributes of the servant king. Three ways that Isaiah says you will be able to know and trust the servant king because he will be marked by first, faithful character. So there's going to be this one who is a servant, who is going to rule as a king and this servant king is going to be marked by faithful character. Mentioned earlier that this idea of this promised one being a servant is a general idea. It is the idea that this one is going to come is going to serve the Lord and be a servant to many. There's also a specific title used in the book of Isaiah. You said in the book of Isaiah, you'll see this title of servant used throughout the book and sometimes when the title servant is used, it is used in reference to the people of Israel. The people of Israel were God's chosen people of the Old Testament. God had decided to put his favor upon these people, he had brought them out of Egypt, he had brought them into a promised land so that they would be his people, he would be their God and their call was to serve him. So he refers to Israel as the servant of the Lord and throughout the book of Isaiah, what is being noted is that the people of Israel did not faithfully serve the Lord. That when they are talked about as the servant of the Lord, it is highlighting the fact that they are like us as we saw in Genesis chapter three.

Each one of us pursuing our way instead of God's way. Each one of us not faithfully serving the Lord. It was true of the people of Israel. So so often when you read Isaiah, you hear about the servant not doing what they should do to serve the Lord. In fact, just a few verses later in Isaiah 42, this is what we read about the servant in verse 19. Isaiah says, "Who

is blind," or the Lord says through Isaiah, "Who is blind but my servant? "Or deaf as my messenger whom I send? "Who is blind as my dedicated one? "Or blind as the servant of the Lord?" God says, "These people are supposed to be serving me, "but they don't look to me and they don't listen to me." But yet in Isaiah, the use of the word servant begins to be used in a different way. It's not always just about the people of Israel and the ways that they have failed. It begins to be used about a particular individual, one who will not fail but will be faithful. We hear of the servant in various passages, including Isaiah chapter 53, speaks about the servant who will come and will suffer on behalf of the people. But here in Isaiah 42, we begin to hear about the servant who is going to come, the one who is going to be king. And listen to how God describes the servant.

He says in verse one, "Behold my servant "whom I uphold my chosen, in whom my soul delights, "I have put my spirit upon him." God is indicating that there is going to be a servant who is going to come who will not fail as Israel and we have failed but will be faithful in every way. This will be one who faithfully serves the Lord. This will be one who does not live in a Genesis three way of choosing their own path rather than God's path but this will be one who lives in a Genesis one and two kind of way, who communes perfectly with God, who faithfully does the will of God. God was promising hundreds of years before Jesus came that there was going to be one who would faithfully serve his will. In fact, he wanted you to know that this was Jesus so much that he specifically fulfilled this promise given through Isaiah. Do you notice how the servant is described? He says it's gonna be one in whom the soul of God delights him and it's gonna be one upon the, whom the spirit of God rests upon.

I don't know if that sounds familiar at all to you but think about Jesus' life. And as Jesus begins his ministry and he goes into the Jordan River and is baptized by John the Baptist, this is the account we have of Jesus' baptism. Matthew chapter three, verse 16 it says, and when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to him and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. And behold, a voice from heaven said, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. You ever wondered why did those things have to happen at Jesus' baptism? Why right then did God speak and identify Jesus as his son in whom he delights or his soul is pleased? Why does the spirit take such a physical presence so that John and witnesses could see the spirit coming to rest upon Jesus? Is it not because God wants you to see that Jesus is the faithful servant? Jesus is the one who is marked by faithful character. He is the one who perfectly does the will of God. He is the one who perfectly accomplishes the plan of redemption. God wanted you to see this that you might trust in Jesus. He alone is worthy of your trust. He alone is the one who is faithful in character.

To be honest, we are like Israel. We are so often unfaithful in our character. So often we do not choose God's way. We stray from his commands, but Jesus alone perfectly, faithfully accomplished the will of God. So trust in him. So often you're gonna be tempted to trust in your own goodness or your own abilities. To think that you have a righteousness in and of yourself. So often you are gonna be tempted to trust in the things that this world has to offer. That seems so worthy of your trust. Seems so like a sure foundation for you to build your life upon. The Bible is saying is there is only one who is worthy of your trust. There's only one who is perfectly faithful in his character. Only one who has perfectly accomplished the plan of God. That is Jesus Christ, the promised one. He is someone that you can trust because he is so faithful, but also, you can trust him because he is trustworthy.

Not just in the sense that he will or has done the right thing, but also that he will take care of you when you place your trust in him. This is the second thing that the servant king is marked by. He's not just marked by this faithful character who always does the right thing, perfectly carries out the will of God, but the servant king is also marked by gentle compassion. The servant king is one who is marked by a gentle compassion. You think about this idea of one who is going to bring forth justice to the nations, one who is going to be a ruler and authority over the world. And you have to think, wow, that person must be really strong, that person must be really powerful. If you were to think that about Jesus, you would be right. Jesus actually is all powerful. Jesus says all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him. He had accomplished his plan of redemption and conquered sin and death. He is all powerful. He has all authority. He can carry out his mission, but so often in our world, when we think about power and authority, we think about people who like to flex their power.

We think about people who like to show off their strength, brag about how much influence or wealth or power they have, but Jesus seems to be just the opposite. Look at verse two. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard

in the street. Think about this, the one who had been promised hundreds of years before, who people had been waiting upon would not be very vocal in his arrival. Why was Jesus born into a manger in Bethlehem? Why was the announcement of his birth given to lowly shepherds? Was it not to mark his humility? Why did he grow up in Nazareth and not Jerusalem? Wait, don't you remember people said, does anything good come out of Nazareth? Jesus comes from such humble beginnings, he lives such a life to show that he is the one who is different than every other person who has power and authority. That though he is the promised one, though he is the one who is going to bring justice, he's not one who is going to be loud or vocal, arrogant, he's coming in a humble way. Jesus is not openly campaigning, hoping to be elected as king. Jesus isn't on social media trying to build his brand, hoping that he will become influential. The fact is, he is already king. He's already influential.

This is actually what allows him to be so humble. He doesn't have to promote himself because it's true of who he is. But not only is he just humble in and of himself in the way that he lives, but he is also kind and compassionate, gentle, as he approaches people. Notice how he's described in verse three. It says, "A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench. He will faithfully bring forth justice." You know, you think about a reed is not really a very strong plant. It's not like a mighty oak tree. A reed is a really thin plant, maybe not much stronger than a blade of grass. And he says this reed, if you imagine a bruised reed, would be one that is damaged, one that's almost broken. With just one touch, this reed could break. And it says that this servant king who is coming will not break the bruised reed. Something so fragile that with just the wrong touch would break, his strong and steady hands are able to keep it secure. Or it speaks about a wick that is about to go out, a flame that is about to be, that's just faintly burning.

You know, every year at Advent we light these candles. It's become kind of humorous how often we struggle to light the candles. Rolando Carmen, you all did great today. These candles are still lit, but sometimes we worry about the furnace running because it might blow down our candles which are already looking kind of low. You think about like a faintly burning wick, it says. A candle that's just barely lit. Just one strong breath would blow it out. Yet it says that this promised one, the servant king, is able to keep that flame going. He's actually able to grow that flame. He is able to be so gentle and compassionate with one who is about to be broken, one who is about to go out.

There's something about the heart of God that seems to be drawn to the fragile. Something about the heart of Jesus that pulls him to the broken and the hurting. In fact, if you're here today and you feel like maybe you could really relate to a bruised reed, if you've just been walking through something that you feel like, man, just the next wrong comment from someone might just break me, you're actually in a really good position for Jesus to come into your life. If you're here this morning and you feel like the flame in your life is just barely hanging on, just the next storm that comes through in your life will surely blow it out, you're actually in a really good position for Jesus to come into your life. When we feel like we're a strong reed, who can withstand anything on our own, that we will actually resist the servant king. It's actually when we feel like we've got a lot of fire within ourselves, that we can keep lit all by ourselves, that we will actually resist the servant king. But when we recognize that he alone is faithful and we are so unfaithful, when we recognize that we are so fragile and broken, it's actually when the servant king can come into our lives.

You think about it, the servant is not just a servant of God, but he is a servant of people. That can sound kind of weird to think about a king or even to think about the Lord himself serving you, but it's actually what Jesus said about himself. Jesus said, "I came not to be served, but to serve "and to give myself as a ransom for many." You see, this is the true gift of Christmas. But Jesus has come to meet those who are fragile, to care for the brokenhearted and the hurting, to restore what has been lost, to make faithful the unfaithful. But it's a gift you have to be willing to receive, recognizing that you have nothing on your own to deserve it. So many times we wanna think that we have gifts to bring this king. You ever invited somebody over for dinner, for a Christmas party and they say, "What can I bring?" You tell them, "Oh, don't worry about it, "we've got it all taken care of." No, I wanna bring something.

This is how we all feel with God and with Jesus. We always wanna bring something. We wanna feel like we've got something to contribute. But actually, the whole point of Christmas is that we had nothing to contribute. This is why Jesus had to come. This is why he is so gentle with us. If you're here this morning and you're willing to admit that you feel broken and bruised and like a wick that's just about to go out, that's actually when Jesus is able to move into your life. If you're here this morning and you feel tired and burdened, it's actually when Jesus can provide rest for you. This idea of being gentle and compassionate, it's not just something that the prophet spoke about Jesus, but it's actually

what Jesus said about himself. Matthew chapter 11, Jesus says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, "and I will give you rest. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, "for I am gentle and lowly in heart, "and you will find rest for your souls, "for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Are you tired this morning? Do you feel burdened this morning? As we just sang, "Come to Jesus." He is faithful, He accomplishes the will of God, but He is gentle and compassionate enough to deal kindly with you. You say, "Well, you don't know what I've done. "You don't know the sin in my life." There's a guy named, a Puritan named Richard Sibbs, who wrote a whole book about just this idea of a bruised reed he will not break, and he says, "There is more mercy in Christ than there is sin in us. "He is filled with mercy and grace, "and compassion towards you. "He can deal gently and kindly with you. "Will you trust in Him?" But remember, what makes Christ so excellent is that He's not just one-sided. It's this admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies that makes Him so unique and worthy of our worship. And not only is He gentle and compassionate, but He is also a King who is going to accomplish His mission, and He will do so because He has steadfast in commitment. Last thing to know about the servant King, the servant King is one who is going to be marked by steadfast commitment.

We read earlier in verse one that He is going to be one who brings justice to the nations, which is so unique but good to hear for the people of Israel, because they couldn't even get justice right in their own nation. Now here's gonna be one who comes not just to bring justice to the people of Israel, but justice to the whole world. In verse three, we saw that as He deals gently and kindly with the most fragile, the most delicate, the brokenhearted, He will do so in a faithful way, a steadfast way, to bring about justice. And then it says this in verse four, "He will not grow faint or be discouraged till He has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for His law." Isaiah says this promise one is going to be steadfast in His commitment, He will not grow faint or get discouraged, He will accomplish His mission.

Think about what that meant for Jesus. To accomplish His mission, Jesus had to not just become like us, not just be a baby who was born, a man who lives in obscurity, a servant to people, mistreated by people, but He actually had to face an excruciating death. He had to not just die physically, but experience the judgment for our sins. And yet He was steadfast in His commitment. As Jesus goes to the garden, and He considers the cup that He is about to drink, He prays, "Father, not my will, but Your will be done." He did not grow faint or get discouraged in those moments. As we come to the table this morning, as we eat of the bread, remembering His body that was broken, as we drink of the cup, His blood that was shed, these should be markers of our Savior's steadfast commitment. He was willing to lay down His life to accomplish this mission. You know, Jesus' steadfast commitment did not stop at the cross. We see Jesus' steadfast commitment when He walked out of that tomb three days later.

We see Jesus' steadfast commitment when He ascended to the throne in heaven and now reigns over all things. Bible says that right now He is reigning as King and He is putting all things, all of His enemies, under His feet. His steadfast commitment is still being seen in His reign as King, which means His steadfast commitment right now is being seen through the people of His kingdom. Right now, even this process of bringing about justice and the whole earth, I believe is happening as the people of God are used by God to carry out the will of God, to carry out the mission of God. Wherever people worship Jesus as King, wherever people begin to live as God created them to live, that is where we see justice happening. Which means that is our call as the people of God, to be people of steadfast commitment, to carry out His mission. As you come to the Savior and see His steadfast commitment, let that motivate you to be steadfast in your commitment to Him, in your walking of obedience in Him, in your carrying out His mission. Yes, you come to Him fragile, delicate, broken, but He does not leave you this way. He fortifies you, He strengthens you, He empowers you and equips you to carry out His will for you.

His steadfast commitment is seen in your life as you carry out His will, as we see His kingdom expand and people come into His kingdom and worship Him as King. We know one day this plan will be totally accomplished, that as we wait for Jesus to return, we can wait well because we know that His steadfast commitment is still sure. That one day He will return and He will make all things new and He will make all things right. And that's what it's talking about when it's talking about bringing justice to the earth. Bringing justice is not just about bringing judgment, it's not just about punishing wrongdoing, even though that is part of it, but it's really about making all things right, righting every wrong. The Bible says that when Jesus returns, He will do that totally and completely. Every injustice will be made right. Everything broken will be restored. All things will be made new.

We can be sure of this, why? Because He has steadfast in His commitment. He has done what He has promised that He would do, therefore we can know that He will do what He promised to do. So if you're here this morning, you're feeling the brokenness in your own life. You're feeling like a bruised reed or a faintly burning wick. Know that His heart is for you. His commitment is to you. Be drawn to Him, trust in Him. If you're here this morning and you're just looking around our world, and you're hearing about shootings that happen in our country or in other parts of the world, injustices that happen all around our world each and every day, and you are discouraged, remember, He does not grow faint or get discouraged. He is faithfully accomplishing His mission. He wants to do it in your life, He will do it in this world totally.

Let that draw you to Him, trust in Him. Let that strengthen you. Be steadfast in your commitment and following Him and carrying out what He has called you to do.