

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 19 Nov 2023

Sermon Title : The Chosen Servant

Speaker : Rev Peter Koh

Text : Isaiah 42:1-9

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 42 is the first of the four Songs of the Servant that are recounted in the Book of Isaiah. The four Songs of the Servant are as follows:

- The servant as the chosen one – Isaiah 42:1-9
- Universal mission of the servant – Isaiah 49:1-13
- The servant who listens and obeys God’s Word, even in the face of opposition and suffering – Isaiah 50
- Suffering and atoning work of the servant – Isaiah 53

1. **The Chosen Servant** (Isaiah 41:1-4)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in 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, and a 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.

- Isaiah started off the passage by exhorting the people to pay attention to a worthy individual, someone whom he had confidence in. God did not send an ordinary servant but sent someone who was worthy of worship and more than able to accomplish His mission.
- God’s Servant would not grow weary or give up easily. This word was given to a nation in exile in Babylon who had lost their kingdom and their temple of worship. This word of promise regarding the Servant was given to the people to give them the hope of deliverance and justice. We know that this chosen Servant was none other than Jesus, as cited by Matthew who quoted Isaiah 42 in Matthew 12:18 -

This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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Jesus demonstrated all the values described in Isaiah 42:1-9. He was gentle in the way He ministered to the down and out. He restored the woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8:43-48) who was defiled and unclean, back to the community. He made her clean so that she would be restored to the community. He is the chosen Servant whom we worship today, and is able to deliver us from the chaotic world we live in. This challenges the mindset we may have of God that He is a harsh and judgmental God. Instead, we see the image of a gentle and loving God, who gave up His glory to come as a Servant King and as a humble babe to minister to us and to turn the world upside down.

2. The Charge of The Servant

- Serve and restore justice – to the nations.
- Gently ministering to the wounded and broken – as He would not even quench a “smoldering wick” that was so fragile and weak.
- Restoring those who are weary – His mission was to heal and restore the broken hearted and those in bondage. Hence, we must change our mindset to recognize that God is good and gentle, who died for us while we were yet sinners. He is not a harsh God. He is better than Santa Claus who demands that we are good, in order to be deserving of a present. This is a God who, while we were yet sinners, He died for us.
- Message of hope – Jesus is a wonderful Savior who brings us life and gives us hope. He came as a servant and continues to serve us after He resurrected by interceding for us while He is seated at the right hand of God so that we can experience His protection and love. He cares for us and sends help to us to comfort and support us. He works in our life to mould and shape us. Jesus does not grow faint nor weary.

The charge of The Servant was to continue to serve us even though He does not need to, as He desires to see restoration in our lives. This charge of The Servant was given by our credible God.

3. The Covenant Servant (Isaiah 42:5-9)

*Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: “I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a **covenant** for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”*

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- Jesus is the blood covenant (Hebrews 10:19-20) that fulfilled the conditions to love us unconditionally.

In Isaiah 42:5, God's credential is established as a worthy God who gave Jesus to us as a covenantal Servant. It's important to understand the concept of covenant. In order to do so we need to compare it to the concept of contract. A contract is an agreement made between 2 parties over a product or service, or a payment of services, which does not involve a relationship. A covenant is essentially about a relationship that God wants to have with us. In order for a righteous God to have a relationship with unrighteous people, Jesus became a blood covenant for us who are sinners. We see this in Hebrews 10:19-20.

- The only way that a righteous God and unrighteous people can come together.

In the temple, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year. The High Priest would have bells hanging at the end of his clothing and a rope tied to the end of his ankles. He would enter with fear and trembling because if he even had a speck of sin, he would be struck down by a Holy God. All this has been done away because Jesus died for our sins and broke the barrier (thick curtain), giving us the access into God's presence. The covenant is about opening the way for us to enjoy a covenantal relationship with God. Jesus is the blood covenant that fulfilled the conditions for God to love us unconditionally. God's promise to us is that He will meet our needs even though we may not meet His, because He desires to have a relationship with us. The only way that a righteous God and unrighteous people can come together is through God's covenant. It is His desire to give us His covenant blessing.

Our Response

- Let us "imitate" Him – follow His example.
- Let us align our mission with His charge – not focus on ourselves but remember that everything and everyone in our lives is a precious gift from God. Let us give thanks and cherish the relationships we have and hence let us maximize our life and serve God, because as we serve God and give, we will grow and receive even more.
- Let us not just live a covenant blessed life but also a covenant-based life. To know why and understand how the blessing works (that we have access to God) and understand God's heart and character so that our life shines for Him in our service to Him and others.

CONCLUSION

As God relates to us in a covenant relationship, let us imitate Him and follow His example, align our mission with His charge and not just seek to live a covenant blessed life but also learn to live a covenant-based life for His service, purpose and glory.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Isaiah 42:1-9 slowly.
 - a. How do these verses speak to you personally?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 3a. Share how the characteristics of The Chosen Servant in Isaiah 42:1-4 challenge or compare with your image of God?
- 3b. How does knowing that God has given you a covenant blessed life encourage you to maintain hope and trust in God's plans amidst uncertainty?
- 3c.
 - (i) Why do you think it's important to live a covenant-based life?
 - (ii) Are you living a covenant-based life?

- 4a. What steps can you take to live a covenant-based life and serve God and others during this Christmas season?
- 4b. What are some challenges you may face in doing so and how can you overcome them?
- 4c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 4b in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share an experience where you have experienced God's covenantal blessings.

OR

Give thanks to Jesus, The Chosen Servant, whose blood shed has made it possible for us to be in a covenantal relationship with God.

6. With a prayer partner, pray for the action steps/changes you have committed to in Questions 3 and 4 above, surrendering your fears and challenges to God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you as an individual and a group to commit and keep each other accountable in this journey of living a covenant-based life.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Good Good Father – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBmwwwiHrOk>
2. The Servant King – Graham Kendrick <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4FtZ9XzZag>
3. Jesus It Is You – JPCC Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Z4rn790eew>

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