

Lesson 18 Lecture  
Isaiah 42:1-43:28

Welcome! Happy Valentine's Day – it is only appropriate that on this day that is marked to *celebrate* love that we get to these two chapters of Isaiah that offer clear evidence of God's love for us. I hope this Scripture reached out and grabbed your heart as much as it did mine. We've persevered through the first part of Isaiah, and our diligence is abundantly awarded in today's lesson. We get some great insights into the character of God and some tremendous foreshadowing of Jesus' first earthly ministry. Before I get started, I would like all of you to close your eyes for a moment, take a deep breath, and ask the Holy Spirit to open your hearts and minds to receive the fullness of what He intends to reveal to each of you in these Scriptures. Go ahead. The Bible tells us where two or more are gathered in His name, He is with us. Jesus is with us right now – He wants to speak to each of you in a personal way.

Have any of you ever asked yourself what is God's will for your life? I would hope most sincere Christians have pondered this critical question at least once or twice. Today's lesson offers 31 examples of what His will is for each of us. Did you see that? Now what I mean by "will" is throughout these two chapters, God tells us 31 times what He "will" do for those whom He calls His own. This is a tremendous revelation of crucial components of His character that I have prayed that each of you will understand better, appreciate, and trust more than ever as you meditate on these truths. I promise if you do, your relationship with God will reach new depths, widths, and heights. I'll touch on some of the wills, but I encourage you to go through these chapters and circle the word "will" and see what God will do for you. Let's begin unwrapping this incredible gift of Scripture at the beginning of Chapter 42.

There are 3 servants mentioned in Isaiah.

1. Ineffective Israel: blind and deaf – **Isaiah 42:20**: "You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing."
2. My Servant: Jesus Christ – **Isaiah 41:1**: "my chosen one in whom I delight"
3. The church: Established by Jesus Christ – **Isaiah 42:6**: "a light to the Gentiles."

In recent lessons, we learned of the folly of relying on countries and/or idols – pointing out the truth that these diversions from God had none of the power to which those that were seeking them. The people were challenged about their

foolish pursuits - Can they tell the future? Give counsel? Do anything? Then you compare it to the Servant noted in verse 42:1 – He’s God’s Servant...chosen..., filled with His Spirit...a modest ministry...afflicted but not snuffed out...faithful, not discouraged... will establish justice in which all nations will put their hope. Who is this servant? It’s Jesus. What do we learn about Him in the first four verses of Chapter 42?

Pastor Jon Courson of the Applegate Christian Fellowship offers a great topical study of these first four verses in Chapter 42 that I’d like to share with you. He notes five characteristics of this One we are to behold. First, Jesus is Appointed. Acts 4:12 tells us there is no other name under heaven whereby man must be saved. There is only One who is elected and appointed. Buddha and the rest told us what to do – much of what they said was wise. The problem is what happens if we don’t do what they tell us to do? There’s no provision for our sins and mistakes.

- Only Jesus would die for my sins. Confucius and others also told us what to do, but they didn’t give us the power to do it.
- Only Jesus would die for our sins, rise again, and by His Holy Spirit come into our lives and give us the power to do what He told us to do.
- Only Jesus was Appointed for this.

Secondly, Jesus is Anointed. At Jesus’ baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. From that point on, Jesus went about ministering miraculously and preaching persuasively. If you’re born again, when you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit is placed inside of you and resides within you.

Jesus was anointed to bring justice to the Gentiles. At the time of His ministry, Jews would travel 200 miles out of their way to avoid the places where the Gentiles lived. Yet, what did Jesus do? Anointed by the Spirit, He brought justice – or help – to all kinds of Gentiles. That is what the anointing of the Spirit does – it motivates and moves one to love. This is one of the reasons the Father gives the special title of “My Servant” – He is accurately representing the character of God to all people.

What is the fruit of the Spirit? Love. The Apostle Paul – in considering all his impressive gifts – understood their place in the priority of following Jesus in his first letter to the Corinthians. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels; though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains; though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my

body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. The proof of Jesus' anointing was His love for all – including you and me.

Next, the Servant Jesus is Approachable. If I did even one of the miracles Jesus did, I would likely want everyone to see it. That's not how Jesus rolls. Psalm 34:2 reminds us to make our boast in the Lord. Every time Jesus performed a miracle, the people who saw it glorified not Him but His Father. Have you ever encountered somebody famous? How approachable was he/she? Did the extent of his/her approachability have an impact on your opinion of him/her?

Jesus was born in a manger – anyone can come into a barn. Hebrews 4:16 tells us we can come boldly to the throne of grace – we can do this because our Savior is an approachable Savior.

Jesus is also Affirming. We see the patience of Him in the picture offered in verse 3 – He sees a bruised reed – but He will not break it. Are you bruised? Are you feeling down because of a failure or two? Do you have a feeling that God is upset with you and wants to stomp on you?

What does this text tell us? He doesn't want to finish off that bruised reed. That's God's longsuffering patience with us. Flax doesn't ignite very well – mostly it smolders. Is that you? Are you not burning very brightly for the Lord right now? Do you think God is going to pour water on you because you're just smoldering? No – that's not our God, He pours out something else on us in Titus 3:4-7, "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit on our smoldering and gives it a fire – the Spirit ignites us – encourages us – to receive the forgiveness we have by the blood of Jesus and look to the promises of His leading us.

Finally, Jesus is Able. Do you get discouraged with your relationship with Jesus? Or maybe you're discouraged with the life you're attempting to lead as a follower of His? Well, if you are discouraged – what does this Scripture say? God isn't discouraged with any of you. Why? **Philippians 1:6**: being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; What are the key words in this verse? "*Will complete it*" What does that tell us? He's NOT DONE WITH US!! He is going to complete the good work in each of us before He brings us home. We need to stop putting so much pressure on ourselves to be Super Christian and just be at rest that when we behold God's

Servant – when we behold Jesus Christ, we can know that He is Appointed, Anointed, Approachable, Affirming, and Able to be everything we need Him to be.

At the beginning of verse 6, the Father proclaims He has called the Son in righteousness. Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, has been given a calling. We all probably have an idea of what that calling is, but what is fascinating and, hopefully, reassuring to us as we consider *our* personal callings is to see the Father lay out ***HIS*** role in His Son's calling. Let's break down the Father's role and objective of this calling. Notably, the ***FIRST*** thing the Father tells Jesus what He will do for Him in preparing for His ministry is hold His hand. What image does that put in your mind? For me, it's a picture of a loving parent guiding his/her child across a street or anywhere else – it's a symbol of protection.

Secondly, the Father promises He will keep Him. What does that mean? Well, not only will the Father hold His Son's hand, but also, He won't let it go. Do you need to hear that? Are you at a point in your walk with God where you need to be reminded the Father is holding your hand and won't let it go? Whether it's the severity of your circumstances or if it's just difficult trying to envision the Creator of the universe literally holding your hand like a loving Father holds His Son's, it's true – it's a real promise to each of us. We need to remember that the Father loves us – those who call on His Son's name – just as He loves Jesus.

In His prayer to His Father in Chapter 17 verse 26 of John's gospel, Jesus is praying for the future members of His church, "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." Do you hear this? Do you believe this? "That the love with which You (the Father) loved Me (the Son) may be in them." Who is "them"? Us!!!!

So, the Father promises to hold Jesus' hand and not let it go. Now, He begins to spell out the objectives of His calling beginning with Jesus will be as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles. This is radical stuff – everything the Jew understood about God was that He was there solely for them – the Nation of Israel. The idea of God – the Messiah - blessing the Gentiles was blasphemous. This is one reason the Jews today do not spend a lot of time in Isaiah – verses like this one are virtually impossible for them to reconcile with their notion of God. If you think this is troublesome, wait until we get to Isaiah 52 and 53.

So, what was this covenant the Father was talking about? Jesus would tell us in Matthew 26:28, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. The covenant is the Divinely originated, ordained, and

executed act of forgiveness of sins for the world – including the Gentiles – and it would require His Son’s blood to be shed.

After the forgiveness of sins, the next step of Jesus’ calling would be to open the eyes of the blind. Jesus indeed did heal several blind people, but I propose the blindness the Father was speaking to was not just a physical blindness but also a spiritual blindness. In Jesus’ awesome dressing down of the Scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew 23, He’s telling them that their outside appearance of holiness and righteousness as evidenced by their fancy robes and adornment is not legitimate. In verse 26 he presents the image of a cup and a dish must first be cleansed from the inside before it can be considered clean from the outside. That is where Jesus’ progressive calling is taking Him – to first deal with the inside of our cups – our sin – and clean them up with His blood, so that we can then begin to see things through His righteousness that is imputed to us. The spiritual veil is lifted when we have forgiveness of sins.

Let’s summarize where we are in the progressive steps of Jesus’ ministry. It *begins* with the Father’s promise to be with Him every step of the way – holding His hand and never letting it go. Then we see what it means to be the Messiah – to shed His blood as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. Next, He is to remove the blindness from our eyes – to see things as they really are. If you were blind, and you miraculously received your sight, what would you do? You probably would want to go out and see things – it would be like a new freedom.

Appropriately, the final component of Jesus’ ministry is to take us out of the prison of unforgiven sins and spiritual darkness into the light – His Light. Notably, Jesus announced just this at the beginning of His ministry when He stood up in the temple and announced in Luke 4:18, “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to *the* captives And recovery of sight to *the* blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;” May we all thank God the Father for the plan of salvation, God the Son for executing the plan of salvation, and God the Spirit for applying the truth and the power to live in this salvation.

So, we’ve seen Jesus as the Servant of the Lord who is Appointed, Anointed, Approachable, Affirming, and Able. We’ve seen the wonderful works of the Father and the Son in the establishment and execution of His saving ministry. Another character trait we see revealed in today’s lesson is He is our Defender. Anybody in here in need of a Defender? I mentioned at the beginning of this lesson about the Lord’s will. Well, we see here in verses 13 and 15 of Chapter 42- 6 times what the

Lord ***will do*** for us as our Defender, “The Lord *will* march out like a champion, like a warrior he *will* stir up his zeal; with a shout he *will* raise the battle cry and *will* triumph over his enemies. I *will* lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I *will* turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. I don’t know about you, but I’m more than ready to see Jesus march out like a champion and a warrior in all His glorious zeal and kick some devil butt. How about you?”

Until He comes back, though, we’re going to have to deal with the trials of life. But just as the Father promised the Son He would hold His hand through His ministry – which contained many trials and the ultimate trial, so He offers wonderful promises to us as our Guide and Protector. **Isaiah 42:16**: I *will* lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I *will* guide them; I *will* turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I *will* do; I *will not* forsake them. These are great promises, and ones we MUST learn to trust because trials ARE going to happen.

Notice the not “ifs” but “whens” in verse 2 of Chapter 43, “*When* you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and *when* you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. *When* you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” When the waters of fear are rising, they won’t sweep over us – Jesus is our life preserver. When the heat is on in our lives, we won’t be burned alive. If you’re in a trial right now, and you’re not sensing His guidance and protection, I understand this. All I can let you know as I look in the rear view of the last several years of our ordeal, I can now see His oversight throughout all of it. He has been our guide, and He has not forsaken us. Hang in there friends. God isn’t going to let you go – He is going to make sure you pass through the waters and the fire.

For those of us who have gone through trials and adversity or for those of us who are going through them now, there will come a time of deliverance. When the deliverance finally comes, one of the challenges we experience is what we do with the spiritual, emotional, and mental wounds and scars that can become balls and chains of bitterness and unforgiveness. Once again, we need to remember that God is in control, and He has either initiated or allowed these difficult times in our lives for a purpose. And since He is a God who is good and is love, the purpose of these experiences is intended for our best interests – even if they’re painful – they have an eternal benefit.

So, Isaiah exhorts us to move on in Isaiah 43:18-19, “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not

perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” God is telling us He’s doing a new thing in our lives – He’s making a way in the wasteland portions of our walks with Him. He’s telling us in order for us to move ahead with Him, that we need to let go of the wounds and scars from the trials that hold us back from following Him on this new thing. Satan looks back and reminds us of what is wrong; Jesus looks forward and offers hope of what is good. Which way do you want to go?

Ever since I became a Christian and started to understand the Bible, it’s history, and the Nation of Israel, I’ve taken a compassionate position on the Jews. Clearly, they’ve been mistreated since their founding by Abraham, but, as we have learned through Isaiah, they have deserved what has come to them due to their disobedience to God’s law. In verses 22-24 we get to hear God call the Nation of Israel out for their offenses, “Yet you have not called on me, Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, Israel. You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings, nor honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with grain offerings nor wearied you with demands for incense. You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me, or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offenses.”

I’m sure you’ve heard the phrase, “the haves and the have nots”. Well God is listing the things that they *should have* brought to Him, but they have not. However, what they *have* brought to him is their unconfessed sin and offenses – so much so they have wearied God!!! Think on that for a moment – God Almighty of the Universe is worn down by this small nation of people’s sin. That should give you some perspective on the impact sin has on God.

So, why is it so easy for us to condemn the Nation of Israel for their lack of faith and obedience? Are we any different? It’s appropriate to remember the plank in our eyes before we point out the speck in the eyes of the Jews. Even though we’re not any different, thankfully, God isn’t either. What does God follow up this statement of exasperation from all this sin? **Isaiah 43:25**: "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." This immediate transition from calling out sin to a readiness to forgive sin is as clear an example as you’ll find in the Old Testament that God doesn’t change. He is the same grace-filled Divine lover of our souls – ready, willing, and able to cleanse us from our sin, so we can return to where we were intended to be – in a pure and holy intimate relationship with Him. That’s what He wants. Do you?

There is so much great stuff in these two chapters, I could go on for another hour. But don't worry, I won't. In fact, I'm going to wrap this up with a short summary of helping us remember Who *is* God. That may seem like a strange point to make given I'm in a room full of confessed followers of Jesus Christ. But I don't know about you, I need a regular reminder of the many ways God describes Himself in His Word. Is God difficult to understand sometimes? Absolutely. However, He doesn't make Himself a complete mystery – especially to those who take the time to get to know him.

In today's reading He reveals Himself as the following titles:

- God the LORD – 42:5
- God the Creator – 42:5
- The Redeemer – 43:1
- Your Savior – 43:3
- The Holy One of Israel – 43:3
- Your King – 43:15

Each one of these titles presents an awesome time for us to just sit and contemplate Him as each component of Him. He is the Creator – just sit and think about what that means – He is a designer and giver of life. Spend some time outside and see the plants and animals and even the bugs and contemplate the fact He created all of it.

After you've spent some time with Him as your Creator, now just focus on the fact that He's your Redeemer. He saw something in you that was so valuable to Him that He gave His only begotten Son to die to repurchase your soul, so He could spend eternity with you. Just dwell on that truth for a while and see where that takes you in your relationship with Him. After you've done this with each of these titles, now take this in – He's ALL of these at the same time. He's your Creator AND your LORD AND your Redeemer AND your Savior, and your King.

I pray that as you do this you will feel the Holy Spirit wash over you a wave of love and assurance of your position with Him. Then remember 43:13b, "No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?" I mentioned earlier that the Father never let go of the Son's hand in His ministry. Isaiah tells us here that no matter what's going on in your life, no matter how badly you've messed up things or how alone you may feel – once your LORD, Creator, Redeemer, Savior,

and King has a hold of you, He's not going to let go. If that isn't worth a Hallelujah, I don't know what is. Let's pray.