

World, This Is Jesus!

¹ **“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.**

⁴ **In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
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.**

Have you ever experienced dejavu? It is a French word that means, “already seen.” It is that strange feeling that you have lived through this before. We experienced something like dejavu in our gospel reading. In it John baptized Jesus and the Spirit descended on him and the Father spoke from heaven declaring to be his Son with whom he is well pleased. Dejavu. We heard that before. It is found in our Old Testament reading from Isaiah some 700 years before Jesus. Oh, the words are a little different, and Isaiah goes into more detail, but it is the exact same thing.

Friends, the last time we saw Jesus, he was a baby laying in a manger. It is time now for God to introduce Jesus to the world and explain who he is and why he came. So, members of St. Paul’s, in fact all the world, here is Jesus.

I. Listen to what the father says about Jesus.

Fathers are proud of their sons. Mothers are, too, but it seems dads are more prone to this. I know. I have been there. I have seen one of my sons make the tying basket or score the go-ahead goal or hit that clutch hit. Fans in the stands say it was an awesome play, and I, like any father, had this real urge to turn and say, “That’s my boy.”

That is what God the Father is doing in our text for today. **Here is my servant.** Literally it says, “Look here, look at him, this is MY son.” God did the same thing at his baptism when he said with some pride, **This is my son.** God is introducing his son to the world. Note, though, that he may have called him “son” at his baptism, but here in Isaiah, he calls him his “servant.” That’s a bit odd. I mean fathers often like to point out what their sons achieved. “Here is my son. He is a starter on the team” or “he just got a promotion.” But God introduces him here as a servant. But that is key. Jesus himself tells the world that he did not come to be served, but to serve the entire world by giving his life as a ransom to save them. Folks, the number one thing the world needs to hear is that Jesus has come to serve and save them.

¹ **“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.** Next, God the Father tells us how much Jesus makes him happy. At his baptism, God said the same thing at his baptism. Could God say the same of us? Looks like they caught a suspect in the Idaho college student murders. I can’t imagine how the suspect’s family feels. They must feel awful that flesh and blood could do such a thing. How do you think God feels when we, his children, selfishly lie or gossip or hate or are filled with greed. Do you think God puffs up with pride when we ignore him, prefer to spend time with anything besides him, or do the opposite of what he says? No.

But Jesus brings no shame to his Father. Right after his baptism, God the Spirit led him out into the desert to starve for forty days and be tempted relentlessly by the devil. And you know how it went. He was tempted in every way like us only without sin. But he didn't do this to rub our faces in it. He did this in place of us. Heaven is for holy people without sin. Jesus' holiness is now deposited into our heavenly retirement account to meet that requirement. Because God said that Jesus pleases him so much, he now can say the same of us who believe in him as his redeemed brothers and sisters.

And only Jesus is the only who can do that. God designated him as our Savior by giving him his Holy Spirit. He did, at his Baptism. John saw. We saw it. He is Jesus the chosen one, the Christ. And what will this one man do? He will bring justice. Justice. We all want justice. Or do we? I cannot hope that God will be lenient with me on Judgment Day, I cannot hope I would get out of hell early for good behavior. I cannot fool myself into thinking I can make up for my sins with a better life. We should fear justice. But Jesus has come with justice we need to hear. This word means both justice and judgment or verdict. He died on the cross as a criminal, but not for his crimes. He died as criminal for our crimes or sins. The verdict is clear. Jesus was made guilty, but the sinner is now not guilty. Jesus came to bring that verdict to the world.

And look at how he does this. 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.** I remember a commercial by Amazon where they bragged about donating millions of meals during COVID. Subaru also had a commercial on how they donated a ton of money for some other cause. All of that is fine. But why did they have to tell us about it? You do not find Jesus bragging in the streets or raising his voice above others. He came as a humble servant who would go to the cross without a raised voice.

Jesus came to be our humble, gentle servant, and he treats us in the same way. A bruised reed is broken. Throw it away. A smoldering wick should be thrown out or replaced. Jesus carefully handles the bruised reed. He will carefully coax the wick to burn again. He treats us as the wounded people we are with the hopes of nursing us back.

That is a tall order for Jesus. Can he do it? Yes. **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.** He is faithful. He is loyal. You can count on him. He will not be discouraged. Even when he prayed to the Father in Gethesemane asking if there was another way, he got up, said **Not my will but yours be done**, and with determination drank the bitter cup of death and hell for us.

This is the teaching or the good news we all need to hear. Even people in far away corners of the world will rejoice when they hear about Jesus. They will because now they have hope. Now they have justice dispensed by God who forgives their sins. No wonder the Father is well pleased with him. I hope you are, too.

II. Listen to what the Father says to Jesus.

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:** Why is God waving his credentials here? So we can trust him. He is the Lord, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. God knows what he is doing. He gives life and breath. He provides for all that has life and breath. Ask the birds who are gathering at your feeder even during winter and they will tell you what a good job he is doing. This is your Lord speaking. You can trust him.

The Father now speaks words to his son. **"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.** God has made a promise, to crush the devil's head. He now is asking Jesus to keep his promise. God will help him. Like a parent leading a child by the hand, God will lead Jesus every step of the way. He will keep him, or better, guard him. After his temptations in the wilderness and forty days without food, God sent his angels to attend to Jesus. He did the same in Gethsemane. Like parents who will do anything to help their children, God the Father doesn't send Jesus out there and wish him good luck. He supported him every step of the way.

And look at the honor this will bring Jesus. He will be a new covenant with the Israelites, one based on forgiveness and not the law, one based on God's mercy and not broken by their failures. But not just for them. He will be a light for the rest of the world. The world needs to hear about Jesus. The news about him would like the blind seeing, and the prisoners released from prison. Jesus healed many blind people, but not all. And he doesn't heal all blind people today. So what does this mean? That they see with faith. I know a number of blind people who will leave this world blind, but they believe in Jesus and see clearly. They see Jesus as God's Son, their Savior. They see heaven wide open. They and all sinners who see and believe will run like prisoners released from the dungeon. They will, not only now as we see and believe we are saved, but we will leap out of the darkness of the grave in the resurrection.

I rely on experts for a lot of things. I rely on the mechanic to fix my cars. I rely on the financier for advice on money. I rely on the dentist to fix my teeth. There is one person who can help us spiritually, one person who make things right between sinners like us and God in heaven, only one person who can bring a not guilty verdict to us. Here he is. He is God's Servant Son. He is Jesus. He is the one. Amen.