

Sunday 28th December 2025

Isaiah 42 v 1 – 9

Read: Isaiah 42 v 1-9 NIV Please turn to this in your Bibles or use a pew Bible to follow me. Can I just say that when we listen to a sermon following in the text can help us to test what is being said and can help us to maybe consider where we must go and read again....

Introduction

At Fuel over the last term we have been looking at the Fruit of the Spirit: What evidence in our lives of the fruit that makes us known as Christians. We looked at Galatians 5 v 22-23 for a list of these attributes: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Self Control.

Today I want us to look a bit more at what we are called to live out in our lives by looking at an Old Testament Prophecy about Jesus and those he has called.

So I am going to go through this passage in Isaiah and see firstly what it says about Jesus, What it says about us and What it says about what now....

V 1 – 4: Jesus' Calling and Mission

In this passage we see an outline of Jesus mission and calling.

It tells us that God delights in Him, He puts His Spirit on Him in order to fulfil His mission:

His job is to bring Justice to the Nations:

But to do this he will not be noisy, crying out or shouting to me this speaks of not using words to bring justice, but actions.

His actions will include encouragement of the weak, He won't take advantage of those who are suffering in order to stamp out opposition or crush people in his way.

However, He will be faithful in bringing justice and won't stop until he establishes justice on the earth, in his teaching the islands will put their hope.

We know that Jesus came to the earth as a human to stand in our place and to take on himself the punishment that we should receive but if we believe in Him he can wash away our sins and give us New Life in Him. As we approach Easter we perhaps will reflect on this more but this passage speaks more about his life.

His teaching is important for those who believe and He does not come aggressively or with violence. He is faithful, so he does not turn back from the task or forget his main purpose, but in following through he demonstrates another way to live as outlined in His teaching.

Isaiah 61 v 1-2 outlines the signs and wonders that accompany the coming of the Messiah which Jesus reads in the Synagogue in Luke 4 v 18-19 before announcing that these are fulfilled today in their hearing.

This helps us to understand that Jesus is the anointed one of God as He fulfills this prophecy. If we look at Isaiah 61 it says much more....

V 3 of Isaiah 61 says this:

“and to provide for those who grieve in Zion-

To bestow on them a crown of beauty

instead of ashes

The oil of joy

Instead of mourning

And a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness a planting for the Lord

For the display of His splendour,”

When Jesus brings Justice to the Nations (Is 42) as part of His mission it suggests that He will replace the consequences of sin and the effects of sin with his joy, praise and righteousness (Is 61). It says here that we will display God’s splendour. I’ve been thinking about how we can display God’s splendour.

Especially in an image conscious world where much is made of physical appearance. And in reading our first passage I found an answer to my pondering.

V5 – 8 OUR calling and mission

The Almighty God described in v 5 to remind us of our position in him: We are given breath and life on earth and we do all by God’s creative hand and his Almighty amazing Power.

Have you ever felt unworthy of God at work in your life? Look at what He says in v 6

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness (because of the saving work of Jesus on the cross). **I WILL TAKE HOLD OF YOUR HAND**

I will keep you

I will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

To open eyes that are blind,

To free captives from prison

And to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

This is then to do as Jesus did in His calling and anointing as he demonstrated and showed us in his teaching. All empowered and through the working of His Holy Spirit in our lives. This might seem a jump from this passage but that where we use Bible literacy to jump into the New Testament and look at how Paul says we live out our lives since we have been given new life in Jesus:

Colossians 3 v 12 – 17 (one example of many)

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, cloth yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts, And whatever you do, whether in word or deed do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

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

SO what does that MEAN?

How do we bring Glory to God? I think that as long as we praise God for what he does through us we bring Glory to Him. If we cause people to look at God as the author of our good deeds instead of the fact we are just a nice person or a good person, we bring glory to God. It can be easy to rejoice when we have success at something we have done for God that may have been a big thing for us to achieve. We can also feel proud we have made it through. And that is not in itself wrong but what God asks of us is to give him the honour for enabling us to achieve.

We have to be careful also not to have a false humility which doesn’t accept gratitude from someone for a job well done. We can become a bit sanctimonious about that we didn’t really do this but God did it all. Don’t forget we did have to allow God to use us, We had to be obedient to what he has asked us to do. Our motivation could have come from seeing something that needed to be done and asking God for a solution which we then put into action. So we are in a kind of partnership with God but we do need to give him praise and honour for what He does to enable our achievements as He is after all the Very Senior Partner!

V9 What now - The Future is a different Place

V9” See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare...”

It’s very easy to look at what Jesus did and what we are asked to do and think that we just have to keep on doing the same things. That is not necessarily wrong. But sometimes we can get a bit stuck in our ways thinking that God can only act in a certain way to do a certain thing.

Because it worked in the past does not mean it will work that way in the future. God was issuing a warning here to the Jews that Jesus was going to do something radical with faith that they were not expecting and that they wouldn’t necessarily welcome.

But also because it was done that way in the past it is not necessarily wrong. There is a reason we have sayings like “don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater”, sometimes we have to change a bit of what we do not the whole lot.

We need to be careful not to be attached to ways of doing things that are not necessarily what God wants us to do now. We need to have a faith that listens to God and puts into practice what He calls us to do – even if it seems a bit odd. We don’t know everything but He does and I would rather trust Him than me when forward planning.

We are on the Threshold of a New Year. This is a time when we can look back over the past year and see how God has worked in our lives. Plans we may have had that didn’t happen or were changed but which had a purpose we maybe hadn’t understood or maybe we still don’t understand.

Now is the time to think about how we want to enable God to use us in the coming year. Do we want the kind of faith where God takes us by the hand and uses us to do amazing things, to bring others to know and grow in their faith. Or is He asking us to GO somewhere we hadn’t thought of or intended to go?

Is God saying to you that there is going to be a radical change in direction for your life? Or is he telling you to keep going good and faithful servant.

Note the end of v 9:

Before they spring into being I announce them to you”

Before they spring into being I announce them to you: When God does a new thing it is not always a sudden last minute thing that freaks you out.

When God leads you He often speaks to you over a period of time, through your prayer life, through Bible passages that you are reading and through words of others. If it is a big thing you often need an accountable friend you can run things past. This not only helps you to feel confident you have heard God right but also can give you support from someone who will pray for you over the leading.