

SERVING: SERMON (2)

Holy Habits: Serving

ANOTHER VIEW OF SERVANTHOOD BASED ON ISAIAH 42 VERSES 1 – 5

(The first of the four Servant Songs in Isaiah)

- 1) Servanthood depends upon a relationship with God initiated by God himself:
 - a) MY servant
 - b) I uphold
 - c) MY chosen one in whom I delight

- 2) This in turn requires a response of acceptance and obedience by the servant – a realisation that this is his place and role in God’s plan.

- 3) The Servant is equipped for his/her ministry by God himself:
 - a) MY Spirit upon him
 - b) A whole series of promises made by God beginning with the words “he will”.

- 4) God makes clear the purpose for this call and ministry: to bring justice to the nations – (my feeling is that this means basically a right relationship with God and therefore right relationships with others etc.)

- 5) This servant ministry is aimed at those who do not belong to God’s people, the gentiles, the “don’t knows” who have no knowledge of the one true God. (“The islands” in verse 4 means simply “distant places.”)

- 6) This is an unobtrusive, inconspicuous ministry; there is no great demonstration, no boasting, it goes on almost unnoticed.

- 7) This ministry is marked by gentleness and consideration for others.

- 8) this is a ministry based entirely on faithfulness – a deep trust in God, that he will do what he promises to, for, and through the servant.

- 9) Because of God’s choosing, equipping, and supporting, the servant will not falter or become discouraged when the exercise of this ministry becomes difficult, or even seems pointless.

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10) The work of the servant will also be successful because it is a human working in close and faithful obedience to God, equipped by God and confident in God's guiding presence (see verses 5 – 7

The servant ministry can seem counter-intuitive – it goes against our natural responses.

We may think first of resources, power, authority, influence and status needed to before we can change people's lives.

We may think on a collective basis first – we need to change society before we can change individual lives, when probably the reverse is what is actually needed

We may require a guaranteed positive response before we start, almost as if we expect failure – “I can't change anyone else's life (but God can!)

The true servant's life is based upon faith – fullness leading to humble obedience.

The servant is supported by the knowledge that:

This relationship is the result of God's initiative.

The servant is equipped by God to fulfil this ministry.

God has designed both the plan and the method.

The knowledge that he/she is called and chosen by God.

*Sermon outline created by Rev Donald Finnan and provided by David Howell
August 2018*