

Isaiah: A Prophet for Our Time
The Servant of God
Isaiah 49:1-26

Often, when we talk about leadership, we talk about styles, techniques, management or visionary skills, decision-making abilities, people skills, and so on. We incorrectly use words like leader, manager, politician, and visionary interchangeably. Leadership in the 1980s and 1990s especially in leadership conversations among Christians always included words like character and service. Those words have all but disappeared, replaced instead with words that reflect only pragmatism and efficiency.

1. God has prepared and revealed the Servant.

2. God reminds us that He has not forgotten us.

3. God intends to gather His children together.

Although Jesus fulfills the roles and experiences of this Servant, we know that that the complete and final fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy awaits a day in the future when God will transform nature along with the hearts of people from the four corners of the earth. IN the meantime, Jesus' servant ministry has been entrusted to His church, so that we might follow His example and proclaim the good news that God will bring salvation to all who will listen and respond by faith.

Reflection

What is the significance of the Servant's words being a sharp sword (Isaiah 49:2)? How would you relate this imagery to Hebrews 4:12 and Revelation 19:15? How do you understand the Servant's discouragement in verse 4, and how is that discouragement reconciled by the end of the verse? According to verse 4, from where does the Servant's reward come? (Hint: While Jesus might be discouraged because of our failure to listen and respond, His satisfaction ultimately comes because He does the will and work of God.) What does that mean for us? How is verse 6 a foundational verse for missions? How is "not enough" for Jesus merely to be the Savior of Israel? How is Jesus also the "light of the Gentiles?" What verses in the gospels reflect that idea that Jesus is the light of the world and what implications do these verses have on those who claim to be followers of Jesus?