

# The Inside Story

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The servant's ministry is to sustain the weary with a word, bringing new life to those who are exhausted and overwhelmed, through a gift of tongue and ear, and a foundation of daily discipleship.*

**Duration:** 54:17

**Scripture:** Psalm 40:6-8, Isaiah 50:5-6, Matthew 7:28-29, Matthew 8:8

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story from his childhood on a farm. He recalls a moment when his grandfather's horse suddenly stopped, prompting his grandfather to realize that something was wrong. The speaker's grandfather then advises him to get rid of unnecessary burdens, such as his heavy coat and bags. The speaker emphasizes the spiritual lesson behind this story, highlighting the servant-like nature of Jesus Christ and his determination to become our Savior. The sermon encourages listeners to reflect on the importance of receiving the word of God and allowing it to lift the burden of sin from their lives.

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## Transcript

There is an altogether different kind of intimacy here. It's the kind of intimacy which you envisage when one person is opening his or her heart to another. And that's really what we have here.

The servant is now speaking. He's addressing us across the centuries, even as he addressed those who first received this great book from the hand of the prophet Isaiah. He is explaining how he would, in the fullness of the time, become the embodiment of the servant referred to here.

He's giving us the inside story. And so we have here an indication of the way in which, humanly speaking, the Son of God would become man, and having become man, as man, become the servant supreme and fulfill the several ministries indicated by these passages and, of course, much, much else. In the course of his earthly life and through his death upon the cross.

Now, would you like to turn with me then? You'll need your eyes on these passages tonight. You'll find it useful to keep your Bible open. Let's look, first of all, at the way in which the servant describes his calling.

Now, I would like you to note the second part of verse four here. So and so and so and so, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Or, if you have the New International Version, to know

the word that sustains the weary.

Now, of course, I hardly need to say that this is but one aspect of the servant's total ministry, but that is the one that is uppermost here. And he crystallizes it in this way. Looking ahead, as it were, across the centuries, the servant of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, foresees the work that the Father has given him to do.

And here, he describes it in terms of having the right word to sustain, to bear up, to keep from falling and disintegrating someone who is desperately in need. Something very human about this, isn't there not? Is there not? Look at this envisaged ministry. To know the word that sustains the weary.

The servant's ministry is to be addressed to those who are described here as weary. Now, that word, weariness, is in a sense quite a simple one, though it refers to weariness in its extreme, extremely felt power or pressure. We might even speak of it as exhaustion.

We might speak of it as someone who has come to wits end corner. Someone who has come to a place mentally, emotionally, spiritually, where he or she simply does not know which way to turn or what to do. And the servant here describes his ministry as having the right word to sustain.

Which means, first of all, to bring new life to the weary, to counter the influence that is going on which takes him down, to bring him up again, and then in renewing him with life and with hope, to sustain him that the weary may go back and get about his master's business, even as the servant himself is about his master's business. A word that sustains the weary. I wonder whether there is someone here tonight who is living on wits end road.

You don't always judge people by their clothes, do you? If you can be wearing a very nice suit of clothes, then your heart may be sagging and your spirit may be broken. There could very well be someone here tonight for whom this word was literally meant, and meant just now. Just think of it.

God in eternity planned that his son should become the servant for the purpose of outworking our redemption. And part of the training of the eternal son of God was that he should have the very right word to give to you, to bring you back to life and sustain you in life and send you on your way to serve the God who sent forth the servant in the first place. He turns the world upside down, rather the right side up.

The envisaged ministry, then, in simple words, in the appointed means, that I may sustain with a word, with a word, with a word. Just a word. God does so much by a mere word.

He spake and it was done. Let there be and there was. In the beginning was the word, says John, and oh my, what emerged, simply because of the fact that that word was spoken, that I may sustain with a word him that is weary.

Will you forgive me tonight for indulging in something that I don't think I normally do it unless I'm very forgetful. Sometimes we do get forgetful. Most of us have some experience in life which taught us some lesson or other.

Sometimes it's within the family circle, sometimes it's beyond. But when we come to think of certain principles, we always almost instinctively go back there. Do you have certain experiences like that? Whenever I think of sustaining the weary, my mind always goes back to one experience.

It's a simple one, but to me it was exceedingly precious and I think it's well worth repeating. I was brought up, as I've said more than once, on a farm. This afternoon, I guess I was around five or six at the time, my grandfather wanted to go to the neighboring town in a horse and buggy and he took me with him.

It was market day. Now remember, we'd come back. It was about a seven-mile journey.

We'd come out to the town about two miles and the old horse was nicely trotting along and she stopped suddenly like that, almost catapulted both of us into midair. And we couldn't see anything. Why on earth should the horse stop? But horses are sometimes more sensible than men.

My grandfather said to me, I don't know what the reason for this is, but there's something wrong somewhere. And the horse didn't move any further, just stopped. My grandfather got out of the buggy and there in the long grass that was growing by the side of the road, we turned off the main highway to a second or third class country road, there was an old man lying in the tall grass and he was fast asleep.

The old horse had seen him and stood just like that. My grandfather knelt over the old boy and shook him and said, What's the matter with you, man? And he opened his two eyes and looked up. Didn't say anything.

But it was evident that he was overcome with a heat. It was a sultry day, terribly sultry summer's day and he had a very big overcoat on and he had two big packs that he was carrying. Now, my grandfather on the farm had an unusual place that he kept for tramps.

It had been built especially for this and they would come in the evening and they would have a free meal and they would sleep overnight and they had a free breakfast and then they would go. And anyone was allowed to come, come and go. So having shaken this old fellow out of his slumber, my grandfather said, Where are you going to? What are you doing here? He said, I'm going to a farm called Martell.

I'm going to a man called Llewellyn, he said, and I believe that he'll give me a night's rest. Well, says my grandfather, I've got good news for you. I am Llewellyn and I'm going home to Martell.

And this buggy and horse will carry you as well as it'll carry me. Come on, man, he says, come into the buggy. The old man was almost in a dream, but he stood on his feet.

He needed some help. I was told to squat in the corner of the buggy and then he got up and he sat in the seat where I had sat and there we were for a little while. My grandfather was talking to him.

We got going and then suddenly, my grandfather did something as he very often did, he said, man, you're a bit of a mug, aren't you? I wondered what was coming next and wondered how the old man would take it. Well, he says, what do you mean? Look at you, he said. Here you are in my buggy, carrying an old pack on your back with another heavy burden on your knees and that big, thick coat, wearing it on this hot, sultry day.

Man, he says, get rid of your burdens. The buggy will carry your burdens as well as carry you. Oh, he said.

And we took his coat off. I can remember it now as if it were yesterday. We took his coat off.

And we took the two old bags that he was carrying, put them on the floor of the buggy and here he was without his overcoat, without his bags, trying to relax a little. And we saw the dawn of a smile. But this is what I'm getting at.

We'd come within half a mile of home. We were on the brow of a hill. We needed to go down to the valley and up the other side and to the farm.

They'd been silent for some time and, of course, I was silent all the time. But they'd been silent. Nothing much had been said.

And then my grandfather said, you see that place over there? Yes, he said. Well, that's the farm, he says. That's where we're going to.

We'll be there in less than ten minutes. And let me tell you, he said, it's baking day. And my wife has been baking.

And I tell you, he said, when my wife has been baking, there'll be something waiting us when we get home. And whatever's there for me, he says, you'll have a share. You know, I saw the old man opening his mouth and he really smiled.

And I've never forgotten it. Oh, to have a word for the weary! It's infinitesimally small and unworthy of comparison with what we have here. But, my friends, this is the principle.

Our Lord Jesus stood on the squares, on the highways and the byways of the day and he called to men, come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls. And here in this Old Testament passage, the servant of the Lord is anticipating those days and he's sharing from the vantage point of long ago, he's sharing from the vantage point of that early hour in history, how he would be trained to perform this amazing task of bringing life to the weary.

Now that brings me to the next matter. The servant reveals his training for such a calling. I find this very exhilarating and very helpful.

It opens a door into the life of our Lord Jesus Christ that is not often opened. It tells us something about what went on during those first 30 years that we speak of as the silent years of Jesus. Now the question that is answered in the next few verses is this.

How did the servant of Jehovah qualify to engage in such a gigantic task as is here envisaged? Well now, look, and all that I want to say is right here. First of all, he was given a tongue to speak. Look at the first part of verse 4. The Lord God, says the servant, has given me the tongue of those who are taught in order that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary.

How could Jesus Christ qualify in the fullness of the time to be able to teach men and give them the very message they need to sustain them and bring new life to them? Well, here is the answer seen from the human point of view. God gave him the tongue to speak the message with. The servant's first reference in this biographical passage then is to the divine gift of the tongue given him for his task.

Now there are tongues and tongues. We know something about the confusion of tongues. We know a lot about long tongues and barbed tongues and other kinds of tongues.

Tongues that rage wildly when they should be quiet and some tongues that are far too quiet when they should be moving a little. This is a distinguished tongue that we read of in our text. It is the tongue of the taught.

The tongue of the learned. The tongue that knows when it should speak, what it should say, or when it should be silent. The tongue of the learned.

It is the tongue literally of disciples. Not necessarily the clever tongue, but the knowing tongue. Emphasis is never here upon cleverness, but upon knowledge.

Knowledge and cleverness are not quite the same thing. A tongue gifted to communicate what the servant will have first received from God and learned in order to impart. The tongue of the taught is to be distinguished from every other.

It doesn't necessarily make more noise. It doesn't necessarily speak more or oftener. But it speaks effectually to lift the burdens from the souls and from the bodies of man.

We had an English journalist whom I admired so much in my young days. I once heard him say, or rather pose the question, and in so doing giving the answer, How do you measure the power of words? I know of only one answer, he said. By the burdens they lift.

Do your words lift men's burdens or add to them? Do your words bring confusion or do they take men and women out of the prison cell into the liberty and the life that God gives in Christ? Now the donor of the servant's gift is the Lord God. Here the servant uses a double epithet in order to refer to God because there is here a worshipful spirit. He may be the eternal son of God, but when he thinks of God the Father, he does so with adoration and with worship.

Averni Jehovah, he says, he gives me the tongue of the learned. It's no wonder then that men were amazed at the servant's words when he eventually appeared on the scene of history. Let's just take one or two examples and let them speak to us of the way in which these words of the prophet were ultimately fulfilled.

Now I'm only referring to these. We read at the end of Matthew chapter 7 verses 28 and 29 how when our Lord had finished preaching the sermon on the mount, they were amazed at him because he spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes or the Pharisees. They saw, they felt, they heard in him a word that was authoritative.

Now if you want to understand what that means, if you want an illustration of what that means, you have it in the next chapter, Matthew 8 and verse 8. You remember how the centurion made for Jesus because his servant was ill and he bade Jesus, Lord, my servant is at the point of death, can you please come and help me? Then for me to telescope many things into a simple statement, he turns to Jesus and he says, I'm not really asking you to come under my roof because I'm not worthy of that, but he says, speak the word only and my servant will be all right. Have you got it? Anyone come to you like that? You speak the word only, you don't need to come near. You have authority, your word is a word of power.

Speak the word only, that's enough. Or take Luke 4, 22. All spoke well of him and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth and they said, is not this Joseph's son? Or come again to John chapter 3 and verse 34, for he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that God gives the spirit to him.

Or again, the officers came back to the chief priests and Pharisees who had sent them to arrest Jesus and they came back without the prisoner. And the chief priests and the scribes and the Pharisees were a little bit upset and the officers answered, no man ever spake like this man. We couldn't dream of it, we couldn't

lay our hands on this, we couldn't put this man under arrest, no man ever spoke like this man.

Or let him say it himself, it's the capstone to the whole. In Matthew 24, 35, heaven and earth, he says, will pass away. We know it, don't we? The vaults of heaven will melt one day like a scroll on fire.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will not pass away. You and I will meet the word of the servant of the Lord in eternity and we'll be judged by it, we'll be raised from the dead by it if we get there. And we'll be sustained by it, or we'll be judged by it.

The servant was first of all given a tongue to speak. Now look at the second point that is mentioned here. The servant was given an ear to hear.

I want to say hallelujah at this point. It's too simple for us sophisticated people, isn't it? Look at the second part of verse 4 and the first part of verse 5. Morning by morning he awakens me. He awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear. Now remember the question we're dealing with. How is the servant of Jehovah going to be capacitated to speak the word that lifts the burdens from the heavy hearted? How is he going to get that word? One, he's going to be given the tongue, the tongue to speak it with power.

That he can say the right thing in the right way to the person's concern. Objects of God's favor. He's having the gift of tongue, of an ear.

The second thing is this. He was given an ear to hear. Here indeed is the inside story of how the servant became qualified as man in order to declare the burden lifting word of God to weary mankind.

And that story is one of a disciplined daily discipleship. Take just one glimpse at what is said. Morning by morning he, that is God, awakens me.

Such a human touch. What he's saying is this you see. That morning by morning during those first thirty years of his ministry in his incarnation.

The Heavenly Father would wake him up, would sound Reveille. And say, son it's time to get up. But not only did his Heavenly Father wake him up and sound Reveille.

He said, I'm also going to wake your ear up so that you can hear what I've got to tell you. See it's one thing to be physically mobile and physically alive speaking in a general sense. It's still another thing to have the ear open to the word of God.

Now we're all here physically tonight. Of course we are. But you know there may still be someone within these four walls in Knox tonight whose heart, whose ear is closed.

Whose ear is dull of hearing. Not awake, not alert. And even though God was to thunder his voice very near to you, you wouldn't move.

You're deaf. There is a verse in the epistle of James which literally probably means taking out the wax from the ear. All these metaphors of scripture.

Sometimes we become so full of wax that spiritually as well as physically we are incapable of receiving the word that is coming to us. And to change the metaphor it falls like water on a duck's back. Says the

servant, my father is going to sound rebelling morning by morning.

And not only that, he's not only going to wake me up, but he's going to wake my ear up so that I'll be able to hear. Notice, as one who is learning. As one who is learning and applying the lessons.

So that as I grow in stature before God and before men, I shall be able to speak the word that brings life to the dead and hope to the weary. Yet you notice that this is a long progressive experience. I get a little bit upset when some young people after they've only been converted for two or three weeks or two or three months think that they've got everything they need to know in order to minister to a world such as ours.

With all its vast complexities and needs and problems as if they've got everything. And Jesus of Nazareth spent thirty years listening. Don't you grumble at your five, six, seven, ten years, my friend.

If Jesus of Nazareth needed thirty years to exercise three years of public ministry, you and I need a good little time too. Morning by morning with a ear open to hear. Now this is a remarkable statement.

And of course when we take a leap now on into the New Testament, we can see exactly how this happened in the life of our Lord Jesus. There are some passages of scripture in which the experience of our Lord in this respect needs to be recognized behind his incisive word to people. He spoke the word that he had heard.

Jesus didn't speak of himself. Let me refer to some scriptures. It's far better.

Take a verse like John 3 verse 34 for example. He whom God has sent, the servant, he whom God has sent utters the words of God. John 5 verse 30, turn over the page.

I can do nothing of my own authority, says the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. As I hear, I judge. Oh, that's beautiful, you know.

How do you judge the woman of Sica as well? How do you know how to speak to her? How do you know what to say and what not to say? How do you know how to behave? Well, I don't do anything of myself, he says, but I hear. His word was told. I hear.

And as I hear, I judge. How do you know what to say to Nicodemus? How do you know what to say to the other people? Well, I don't do anything of myself, but as I hear, I judge. I am the father of working together.

My father worked at Hitherto and I worked. I am the father of one. And out of that deep communion with the father, with the attuned ear, he receives the words and he declares what he has given.

I have given them thy word, he said in this great, high, priestly prayer in John 17 at the very end. What you have given me, I have given to them. Well, didn't the father give him many words in the plural? Yes, he did.

But all the words made one word and one message. And Jesus said, I've given it to them. I've heard it.

I could quote many scriptures that deal with the same thing, but let me hurry on. This is a very, very wonderful passage of scripture. Now, will you notice the first words of verse 5? I have understood them as referring back to what we have been just saying now.

But they could equally refer, on the other hand, to that which is to come. And they might, perhaps they ought to be linked with what is to come in verse 5 and verse 6 and verse 7. We have understood them as having, and have interpreted them as if they referred to the passage which we have just concluded. But now let me take the other possibility.

And let me say what I want to on the basis of that supposition. There are those who take the view that right here in verse 5, we have a cross-link and a connection with what we also discover in Psalm 40 verses 6 to 8. Now, I'll read Psalm 40 verses 6 to 8 to you, and then I'll come back to something there in order to show the link. Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire, but thou hast given me an open ear.

This is the RSV. An open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not required.

Then I said, Lo, I come, in the roll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God. Thy law is within my heart.

We're speaking about the same person. We're speaking about the Messiah, the Son of God, the servant of Jehovah of the passages in Isaiah. Alright.

But now, it may be noted in the margin of your Bible, I don't know, or at the footnote somewhere, that you can translate the second line, which I read in this way, but thou hast given me an open ear. That more literally should be interpreted, but thou hast dug for me an open ear. Or the reference at the bottom of the page in the NIV has something else.

But my ears you have pierced. You say this is all too mysterious to me. What on earth are you saying? What do these things refer to? Well, the Hebrew is a little bit uncertain.

And there are many Bible scholars who believe that the reference there is to something that you encounter in Exodus 21. In verses 5 and 6 in Exodus 21. If a slave did not want to be released from his Jewish master, the first sabbatical year after he had been taken slave, he could go to his master, his owner, the Jew, whoever he was, and he could call the priests together, and together they would listen to his statement, that he wants to serve his master as long as he lives.

He's got a wife, he's got children, he doesn't want to leave his master, he wants to be a slave forever. And this is the custom. They would take him to the door post or to the door, and he would put his face to the side of the door, and the priest or someone would bore an awl through his ear.

And the hole through his ear would symbolically signify that he was his master's servant forever. Now is that what we have in this passage in Isaiah? Does it say that the servant will be loyal and he will be prepared to suffer because he has, as it were, submitted in that way to the father's demand and has made him the father's slave for anything? Well, one thing is quite clear. The next passage before us speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as saying, The Lord God has opened mine ears and I was not rebellious.

I turned not backward. I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard. I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

That passage could very well, therefore, be an introduction to what we're going to look at next. Let's look at verses 5 and 6. The servant avows his dedication. Whether that imagery comes in at this point or not, the passage is clear.

Verses 5 and 6. Now if the first part of verse 5 did not introduce the thought of the servant's consecration in terms of willingness to be pierced in order to manifest his total surrender to his master, then the second part of the verse very clearly brings us to that aspect of the subject. The servant of these passages, you see, is not wholly qualified for his ministry by having a tongue to speak. Oh, it was important that he should be the teacher supreme, the prophet supreme, and that he should have the tongue to speak the word of God.

Equally important was it that he should have the ear attuned to receive the Father's word in order to deliver it. But he was not yet fully qualified for his ministry. He must learn perfection through suffering.

Here we have precisely what we have in the epistle to the Hebrews. He had to be perfected through sufferings in order to qualify for his delicate and his daring mission. Now look at what we have before us.

The servant did not rebel. He's been listening to the word. Morning by morning he's been wakened up, and his ear has been alerted to the Father's voice, and he's been listening every day, and the word has been coming, word line upon line, teaching upon teaching, until he knows all that the Father wants him to know and wants him to communicate.

Now what? I was not rebellious. I turned not backwards, says the servant. And this means, you see, that our Lord Jesus was dedicated to do the servant's work before he ever became man.

His dedication was not on the banks of Jordan in the first place. His dedication was in eternity. Now this kind of thing is not always the case with us men and women.

God calls us to his service, and he endows us sometimes with a year to hear his voice and a trained tongue to proclaim it, but unfortunately many of us at that point rebel. That was the case with Jonah. When God told Jonah, I want you to go to that wicked city Nineveh and preach repentance to it, and tell it that it's going to be judged, Jonah said, not on your life, I'm not going, and he took a single ticket elsewhere on the ship.

The perusal of the biblical record will show that even some who were later destined to eminence in the service of God at one point or another rebelled when the call came to them first. Certainly, if the word rebellion is too strong, they were disinclined, and they did their very best to get out of it. I think of Moses, for example.

When you have time, you'll read again Moses, Exodus chapter 4. Just let me remind you of some of the words there. Moses said to the Lord, Oh my Lord, I'm not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant, but I am slow of speech and tongue. Then the Lord said to him, Who has made man's mouth? The Lord is a way of asking the most baffling questions, isn't he? Who made man's mouth, Moses? What are you grumbling for? If I'm the one who made man's mouth, can I not make your mouth that it can speak? Who made him dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.

But he added, Oh my Lord, God send, I pray, some other person. And you remember how it goes on. Dear Moses wanted to turn back.

Find exactly the same with Jeremiah. When the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, you'll find it in chapter 1, you'll find it again in chapter 17, chapter 20. In chapter 1, it's there very, very clear.

Jeremiah has the word of the Lord and he's frightened. He says, Lord, I'm but a na'ar, which is a Hebrew for a stripling, a teenager, and I've no experience, and I'm not stable, and I haven't found my faith, and I haven't found solidity and stability and meaning in life in all its fullness. Ah, you can't trust me.

I'm just a sapling. And you know what the Lord tells him? I've called you, he says, and I'm going to put words in your mouth, and I'm going to send you, and no one who withstands you is going to have victory. By way of contrast from these lustrous servants of the Lord, however, the servant of our text was wholly dedicated to do his divine master's work from the very outset.

He knew no rebellion in his heart. I was not rebellious. I turned not backward.

Then this, the servant of the Lord of whom this passage speaks was destined voluntarily to accept suffering and gross humiliation. Verse 6, I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard. I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

These words might well have been written by a reporter covering some of the climactic events in our Lord's earthly life. Each strand in the predicted record of what was then 700 years earlier was positively and uniquely fulfilled in the life of the Lord Jesus. Jesus, the son of Mary, conceived of the Holy Ghost.

What he heard from God he received. What he received he obeyed and delivered, irrespective of the cost. Now it may well be that there are others who have expressed some such loyalty in some measure, but these prophecies only find their fulfillment in toto and in spirit as well as in truth in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just take a look into the New Testament briefly with me. He gave his back to the smiters. The giving of his back to the smiters was fulfilled, for example, and I'm only taking one illustration of this, when Jesus submitted to the wholly unjust scourging of the Romans.

That was ordered by Pilate, despite the fact that Pilate could find no fault in him. I read in Mark 15 these words, Pilate again said to them, then what shall we do? What shall I do with a man whom you call the king of the Jews? They cried out again, crucify him. And Pilate said to them, why, what evil has he done? But they shouted all the more, crucify him.

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. I don't know whether you've ever read the description of the Roman scourging. The back was bared, and the object of the humiliation was bent over a piece of wood, as it were, over one of these pews, with a bared back.

It was a soul-shattering, nerve-wracking, as well as a physically mutilating experience. If it took the normal course, and there is nothing to suggest otherwise, then it could be lethal. Many scourged people died before the outrage was complete.

Whilst others swooned, others were disbowled, and so grievously mutilated by the multi-thonged whip that was used, generally knotted and weighted with pieces of metal or of bone, that they were thereafter mentally unbalanced for life. Scourging could also take the form of beating with rods, as Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 11. My Lord Jesus Christ was scourged by Pilate the Roman.

His back was bared. He received the lashes. Now, we Protestants do not stress the physical stripes of our Lord as some others do, but I think it is good for us from time to time to be reminded of the ignominy and the shame and the physical anguish that my Lord undertook voluntarily for my salvation and yours.

The stripes inflicted on the bent and the bared back of the victim thus beaten were deep and terrorizing in their effects. The cruel treatment rendered many incapable of speech. Many people were unable to speak thereafter.

As long as they lived, they could not find words to speak because the body was so sharp. Jesus, however, as the servant of Jehovah, actually and actively gave his back to the smiters. Now, that's the emphasis of the New Testament.

Just as he could say, No man takes my life from me, I lay it down of my own. He gave his back to the smiter. Oh, they forced him, you say.

Well, it might have seemed as if they did force him, for he was under arrest, but he was willingly under arrest. He was giving himself. He wasn't fighting against it.

His will was to do the Father's will, and therefore he yielded, he gave in, he offered his back. Come further. He gave his cheeks to those who pulled out the beard and his face to those who spat at him.

I give my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. The ancient Orientals had a great respect for a beard.

Now, I don't want to talk about beards tonight. Not a subject. But the beard was to the Orientals a sign of freedom and respect.

I'm not sure what it's a sign of in our modern world. Perhaps some of you can tell me someday. But in ancient society, to pluck out the beard or to cut it or shave it against the will of someone was really something terrible.

It was the gravest possible insult next to spitting in that face. Spitting was a token of equal contempt, if not greater contempt, and was only done when it was desired grievously to humiliate someone, even to the utmost degree. But notice, and this is where I come back, a servant of our text has been listening to his father.

He's got the word. He's got the tongue to speak it. Now he must suffer in order that that word, like the ointment in the alabaster box, should be, as it were, broken and bathe the world with healing ointment.

And he gives his back to the smiters and his cheeks and his beard to the ruffians. It was literally fulfilled. Read Matthew 27, verses 27 to 30.

I don't need to go through it. And they spat upon him. And they took the reed and they struck him on the head and so forth.

Now we must not use these references to the physical miseries of our Lord in order to create a merely natural sympathy. What I want you to notice is the spiritual behind this. It's the fact that the servant from eternity was determined to be qualified to become our Savior.

That is, qualified as a man among men, as the eternal Son of God become incarnate, to qualify himself to receive the word, to declare the word, and with the word to do what was necessary to lift the burden from sin, cursed humanity, that he should utter the mighty word, Go in peace. Your sins are forgiven you. There's more here in my text, but I shall not go any further tonight.

When you have time, just read forward into verses 7 and 8, and 9 particularly, and you will see that on the basis of his experience, the servant has convictions emerging. Convictions relating to that which is past and that which is future. And he says among the only thing that I want to say to close with, because the Lord God is with me and is close at hand to help me, I will set my face like flint, irrespective of my foes.

When we come to Luke chapter 9 and verse 51, we are told that when they tried to dissuade him from going to the cross, and going to Jerusalem, and going into the very heartland of his enemies, he would set his face like flint to go to Jerusalem. Neither friend nor foe could stop him. On he went.

The servant supreme. Oh, for the servant spirit in our hearts. You know, there are many things we need.

And as we meditate upon a theme like this, one thing we need, again let me repeat it, is we need the spirit of worship and admiration. We need to be able to stand back and look at this as if we're from a distance, and be able to adore and magnify our Lord. My friends, I hope there is something of that spirit in our hearts tonight.

That when you leave this place, you don't shake it off, but you go and praise him and bless him, and pour out your heart's gratitude at his throne as the one who was willing to die in your stead. There's something else to which I've already referred. Oh, we need to catch something of the spirit of the servant.

We need, too, to be listening for the morning-by-morning conversation with our Father. Or it may be evening-by-evening, I don't know, but it must be there. The day must be punctuated with it.

There must be a time when we hear him speak to us, especially, of course, now that he has given us his word, through his word, by his spirit, communicating with us, and directing us, and preparing us, and strengthening us. When we go out and speak the word to the weary, burdens are slapped, passions are broken, Satan's tyranny vanishes, and the kingdom of God is extended. Oh, may God make us a community of servants of the servant, to the glory of his name.

Amen. Let us pray. Most gracious God, our Father, thank you for bringing those along to this service tonight for whom you had prepared this word from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

You know our need. You know our individual needs, our needs as families, husbands and wives, parents and children, or single people, single parents in some cases. You know our needs in the sphere where we are found every day, working and toiling.

And you know all our problems, remembering that the servant Savior has gone ahead of us and has suffered and not been rebellious. Give us of his spirit. Oh, mighty God, flood these hearts of ours and fill them to overflowing with a spirit of grace that will enable us to hear.

And when we've heard, to believe. And as we believe, to obey. And as we obey, to sustain with the word him that is weary.

Remember the weary ones in our families, in our neighborhoods, in our spheres of toil, in this congregation, everywhere. And make us the vehicles of your mercy to all such through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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