

Pray

So this term we are looking at the book of Isaiah
 And today we come to Isaiah 49 which you will find on page 736
 And unusually I want to start with the title
 And to ask

Who is The Servant of God?

In Isaiah there are 4 servant songs
 And they are in Isaiah 42, 49, 50 and 52
 So this is the second of the servant songs
 So **Who is the Servant of God?**

Well there seem to be three answers
 And the simplest explanation is the servant of the Lord is
 Sometimes Israel and sometimes Jesus and sometimes the church
 And it helps to look at this as being like a capital X

In the creation story in Genesis 1, 2
 God original plan was that all of humanity would be the friends of God
 And then in Genesis 12 – the people of God is narrowed down
 And God chose the People of Israel to be the people of God
 And it continued to narrow down
 Until Jesus was uniquely the servant of God
 And from Jesus ministry onwards – the people of God grew in number
 From the 12 – to the 72 of Luke 10 – to the 3000 of Acts 2
 Until now there are 2.300 Million people who go to church each Sunday

So Who is the Lords Servant?

In Old Testament times it was **the people of Israel**
In the gospels it is Jesus
 And New Testament times it is **the church**

I Let's allow God to equip us**Isaiah 49.2 says**

***He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
 in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
 he made me into a polished arrow
 and concealed me in his quiver.***

And in the second servant song

In **Isaiah 50.4** we read

***The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue,
 to know the word that sustains the weary.***

And you probably know that this theme
 of the word of God being like a double edged sword
 continues into the New Testament

in Ephesians 6.17 as part of the armour of God
 we are told to

¹⁷ ***Take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.***

Hebrews 4.12 says

¹² ***For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart***

Revelation 1.16 Jesus is described as

¹⁶ ***... coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword.***

And it seems to me that **right now** during this covid crisis

We are in a preparation time so

Now is the time read our bibles each morning

Now is the time to pray the Lords prayer each lunchtime and

Now is the time to review the day with God each evening

While many activities are prevented

Lets use this time to get close to God

Lets use this time to increase our understanding

I Let's allow God to equip us

2 Let's reflect God's Character

Isaiah 49.3 Says

**He said to me, 'You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will display my splendour.'**

God wanted his people Israel to display his splendour

And God displayed his splendour in Jesus

So that John can write in **John 1.14** says

¹⁴ **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.**

**We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son,
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

So John is saying he saw God's character

revealed in the character of Jesus

and slowly but sure God is transforming us to reflect his character

So **2 Cor 3.18** says

¹⁸ **And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate^[a] the Lord's
glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing
glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.**

So when we read our bibles and pray God is transforming us

So that our character will be like the character of Jesus

And we will bear **the fruit of the Spirit in**

Love Joy and peace, patience kindness and goodness

Faithfulness Gentleness and self control

And I want to plead with us to be Humble

Which is very similar to what gentle means

Please don't be like Trump and encourage violence

But rather lets have the humility to laugh at ourselves

And lets be down to earth – Lets be humble

Mother Teresa is a great example of what I want to be like

Indira Gandhi wrote **“to meet her is to feel utterly humble, to
sense the power of tenderness, the strength of love ...
Gentleness love and compassion radiate from her”**

And her obituary in the independent said

**“She changed the world, she made an imaginative, inspirational
and practical difference to millions of peoples lives. She did
indeed accomplish something beautiful for God”**

Mother Teresa is a great example

And slowly but surely God is doing the same work in us

We are being transformed into his image

2 Lets Reflect Gods character

3 Let's be a light for Hungerford

Isaiah 49.6 says

**'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.**

**I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'**

God's vision is always bigger than ours

And so Yes I would love to enable every member
to be growing and active followers of Jesus

but that is too small for our God

He also wants to make us **a Light for Hungerford**

So that slowly and surely more and more people come to worship
Until the church is full over and over again

and the reality is it will be costly

Isaiah 49.7 says Gods servant will be **despised and abhorred**

This was Jesus experience – he was the ultimate suffering servant

And because we are the followers of Jesus

This will be our experience too

But we are still called to be **a Light for Hungerford**

So for example

We are trying to build a hall at the back of church

But it is not just for us

It is also for the parish lunch, the toddlers group and the coffee corner

And Gods vision is always bigger than ours

And I have a sense that he wants us

to work with the nursery school and doctors surgery

to work with them to serve the people of Hungerford

3 Let's be a light for Hungerford

VIDEO

Let's all work together to bring love and HOPE to Hungerford

The wellbeing of the UK is about Body and Mind and Spirit
The NHS is doing their utmost to care for our bodies

The education system aims to stretch and develop our minds

And it seems that there is a new realisation
that worship is essential for our wellbeing
perhaps because of

Love Christmas sending 1 million Christmas boxes of love and hope

Perhaps because

The Trussell Trust foodbank have fed 1.8 Million people since March

Let's all work together to bring love and HOPE to Hungerford