

Behold my servant

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- [0 : 00] Let us turn now to words you will find in Matthew chapter 12. Reading at verse 16.
Matthew chapter 12 verse 16. Matthew chapter 12.
Hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break. And the smoking flax shall he not quench. To descend forth judgment unto victory.
And in his name shall the Gentiles trust. Now these verses which are a direct quotation from Isaiah chapter 42.
Are very obviously messianic predictions fulfilled. And in the context in which they are set.
- [1 : 42] They show us that they refer to the quality. Of the work. That our Lord Jesus Christ.
Performed. And the quality of that work particularly. As the work of the servant.
Of God. As God's servant. While he was in the world. His method. Was not.
That of. Drawing attention to himself. By being ostentatious. Or as we might. Probably.
Today. Colloquially call it.
Being loud. Rather. Rather. He was to. Work. In the lives of men and women. Almost imperceptibly.
- [2 : 41] He shall not strive. Not cry. Now this ready man. Hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed. Shall he not break. And the smoking flax. Shall he not quench.
In other words. Jesus went about his work. Quietly. And. Therefore. As this passage shows us.
His purpose. While he was in the world. Was. Not to. Exalt himself. But rather to. Abase himself. He was in the world. As he himself so often said.
To say. He was in the world. Not to do his own will. But the will of. Him. That. Sent him. And the whole. Trust of the passage here.
Therefore. Is a. Directly. Attention. To the. Servant. Of God. Doing. The work.
- [3 : 39] That God. Gave him to do. And through that work. Accomplishing. The great end. For which. He came. Into. The world. And from the end.
Until this morning. I would like to look with you. At two or three things. As they are brought before us. By these words. First of all. The servant. Described. My servant. To my.
I have chosen. My beloved. In whom my soul. Is well pleased. I will put my spirit. Upon. And then we have. The servant.
Equipped. For the work. To which God calls. And that's a reference. To these words. That's what these words. Refer to. I will put my spirit. Upon. Then thirdly.
The servant. And the work. For which. He was equipped. He shall show. Judgment. To the Gentiles. He shall bring.
- [4 : 33] Forth. Judgment. To victory. Or as. Isaiah. Chapter 42. Puts it more fully. Though the. Holy. Verses.

And quoted fully. In Matthew. Chapter 12. The. He shall bring. Forth. Judgment. To the Gentiles. He shall bring. Forth. Judgment.

Unto truth. He shall. He set. Judgment. In. The earth. This. Was the work. For which. He was equipped. Bringing forth.

Showing. Judgment. To the Gentiles. And to victory. We see the meaning of that. And then finally. And more particularly. The nature. Of this work.

He will not. Quench. The smoking flax. And he will not. Break. The bruised. Read. First of all then. The servant. Described.

[5 : 28] My servant. Who I have chosen. My beloved. In whom my soul. Is well. Pleased. Now you and I. Are. Acquainted.

With the teaching. That we have in the Bible. The Bible. And that is. Set. Forward. Set. Forth. So. Succinctly. In the. Shorter. Catechism. There are three. Persons.

In the Godhead. The Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. These three. Are one God. The same. In substance. Equal. In power. And. In glory. And you know that.

Throughout the centuries. Various. Theological. Battles. Have been waged. Around. This great issue. Whether. The Son of God.

Jesus. Is equal. With God. Is. Jesus. God. And you know that. Today. As in many. Another age. There are some people.

[6 : 24] Who object. To the teaching. That Jesus. Is. God. Now we have no. Problems. Whatsoever. With that. Teaching. That Jesus.

Is God. God. The Bible. Is very clear. On it. The sort of. Catechism. Puts it. In that very clear way. As does the. Confession. Of faith. Our saviour.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Is none other. Than God. They are. Equal. At the same time. There are. Aspects.

Of that. Relationship. To one another. In which. It becomes. Very clear. That one. Is greater. Than the other. It was Jesus. Who said.

My father. Is greater. Than I. Now then. If God. This father. And God. The son. Are equal. How then.

[7 : 19] Could Jesus. Say. Of his father. My father. Is greater. Than I. Well. The way. In which. God.

Is greater. Than the son. Is. As you. Consider. The relationship. Within. What we call. The covenant. Of.

Redemption. And. In that. Covenant. God. The father. Elected. Or. Set apart. God. The son.

For a purpose. Let me just quote one verse in the old testament. From proverbs chapter eight. As the son speaks. I was. Set up. Or set apart.

Or elected. From. All. Eternity. God. In that covenant. God. The father. Set the son. Apart.

[8 : 15] Why? He set him apart. That he may become. His servant. That he might. Come into the world.

To serve. The father. And it is in that light. And in that light only. That the father. Is greater. Than the son. The son.

Came into the world. To serve. The father. And in the covenant. In the covenant. Of redemption. That's the only way. In which. The father. Is greater. Than.

The son. There is no subordination. Of person. Or of nature. But rather. Of. Office. Or. Engagement. Or. Appointment.

The father. Appointed him. The father. Set him apart. The father. Sent him into the world. And commanded him. To do his will. The father. The father. Sent him into the world. And demanded certain things of it.

[9 : 13] The father. Sent him into the world. And required. Certain things of it. He was set apart. Elected. From all eternity. By God.

In the covenant. For this purpose. To serve. And in that covenant. The father. Promised. As he says here. To uphold.

The son. Behold. My servant. Whom I have. Who might have. Behold. My servant. Whom I will uphold. My elect.

In whom. My soul. Delight. The one. Who was the object. Of the father's love. My beloved. And set apart. As my beloved. Was given this promise.

By the father. In the covenant. That when he would come. Into the world. In the form of a servant. That he would uphold him. He would sustain him. He would minister strength to him.

[10 : 07] He would minister comfort to him. And so on. These were the. Terms that the. Father gave. To the son. In the covenant. We sang here tonight.

Today. In Psalm. 89. A. I'll make him my firstborn. More high than kings of any land. My love I'll ever keep for him.

Or my grace I'll ever keep for him. My covenant. Fast. Shall stand. I remember being told some years ago. And I think it's true. Story of the.

Man whom some of you will remember. With affection. Son of an elder in this congregation. Tramad Sonne. I believe that. At one.

On one occasion. When he was returning from communions. I think it was in Point. He boarded a bus in Stornoway. And one of the ministers. Who had been officiating.

[11 : 06] At the communions in Point. Was on the bus. And the worthy elder. Came into the bus. And he went up to the minister. And he just quoted these words to him.

That I've read there in Psalm 89. He just quoted them to the minister. And turned away and left him. My love I'll ever keep for him. And my covenant fast shall stand.

And as it is in the Gaelic. My. Magraska glame. And the minister to whom he spoke these words. was at that time without anyone's knowledge passing through a time of great spiritual conflict and indeed was the point of entering to a period of spiritual darkness and this was that worthy man's way that spiritual man's way of reminding him that in the covenant God was keeping or laying up storing up grace or love for him for the time of need and that's a messianic promise it's what God the father promised to the son when he would come into the world to serve him that in the posture of a servant and in the work of the servant that he would keep lay up store up grace forms in his time of need so that in his need as the servant he would turn to the father and and the father would give him to meet him in his need would give him of his grace to meet him in his need in that covenant the son promised to come promised to serve promised to suffer promised to obey unto death and nowhere and at no time do you see the father's fervent love coming more to the forefront than when the servant was in the throes of suffering even unto death God the father could then say of God the son behold my servant whom I uphold my beloved in whom I am well pleased and with whom I am delighted the son as the servant another way in other words was as much the object of the father's fervent love as he had been the object of that love from all eternity he never ceased to be the son though he became the servant and he never ceased to receive the father's love as he served him in this world unto death that then is relationship that we have here as the servant is described and then we have secondly the servant equipped for the work for which he was sent to the world and these are the words which tell us of his equipment I will put my spirit upon him now these are very very interesting and very important words that we have here I will put my spirit upon him because as there was an inseparable connection between God the father and God the son so there was an inseparable connection between God the son and God the Holy Spirit now let us just for a minute trace this connection we know of course that in eternity and in the in the trinity the three are one and they are the same in power and in glory in other words what so ever you can attribute to the father you can attribute to the son and to the spirit except one thing of the father alone as it said that he eternally begets the son of the son alone is it said

that he is eternally begotten of the father and of the son and of the spirit alone it is said that he eternally proceeds from the father and the son these things are part the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ and the covenant of redemption and an inseparable connection and it begins here that when the son was set apart in the covenant from all eternity the spirit the spirit was at the same time set apart to equip the son and that equipment began when the spirit prepared the body of the son that he might become the servant there was only one way in which the son of God could become the servant of God and that was by taking to himself human nature the only way in which he could become a servant the only way in which the son could obey in this sense was by becoming the was by becoming a a man there's an interesting question that arises there you may like to think about it in what sense did the son serve the father before he became man you may like to think about that question in what sense did the son serve the father before he took to himself human nature but the spirit of God the holy spirit had to prepare a body for the son and you know that this was the message with which the angel came to Mary that the spirit would overshadow her and that she would conceive a son and that that which she would conceive which she would conceive would be called the holy one would be called the holy one this is what we call in reformed circles the immaculate conception not the immaculate conception of Mary but the immaculate conception of the son of God within the womb of the virgin Mary there are some people who can't seem to grapple with this problem that a sinful woman could give birth to a sinless being the son of God but if we believe anything we must believe that he that was born of the virgin Mary was none other than the son of God and that there was conceived within her by the power of the holy spirit the son of the human nature of the son of God this is the great teaching of the bible and of the confession of faith you know the way the confession puts it the holy spirit took of the substance of Mary and conceived in a very miraculous way the sinless human nature of our Lord a body says the psalm says psalm 40 again a messianic psalm a body hast thou prepared this is the

this is the way in which the new testament explains to us these words mine ears thou bold sin offering thou unburnt it's not required in other words what the psalmist is talking about there is the preparation of the body of our Lord by the power of the holy spirit hebrews chapter 10 makes that very clear the holy spirit prepared the body of our Lord of Mary's substance within the womb of the virgin there are some people Roman Catholics included who try to get away from the difficulty of a sinful being giving birth to a sinless being by saying that the sinful being herself was immaculately conceived that Mary herself had no sin but there is not a shred of evidence in the Bible to substantiate that claim for all have sinned including Mary and come short of the glory of God since the sin of Adam except one man the Lord

[20 : 48] Jesus Christ and you and I should get to grips with these teachings they are of tremendous importance you should know them you young people should know these things and try to understand them fill your mind with them that the son of God took our nature and the way in which it was done was that the Holy Spirit prepared that nature for him and then that son and I wouldn't want I wouldn't expect when I send some of you young people to understand this that son took that nature to himself took it to himself the way the Old Divine used to put it the only immediate act which was performed by the son with reference to his own human nature was that he took it to himself he took it the human the Holy Spirit prepared it within the womb and from that instant the son united that nature to himself in his own person so that in one person he had two distinct natures from the time of his conception human and divine in one person and from that moment and this is the point

I want to make from the moment of that conception from the moment that he took that nature conceived by the Spirit to himself into union with his person from that moment in that person the human nature was dependent upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit and that's the point that this verse makes I will put my spirit upon him from that moment he was dependent upon the Holy Spirit when he was born into the world as a child he was dependent upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit you are here today as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and you are dependent for your spiritual development and growth upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit so was Jesus you are dependent for your knowledge and your light upon the Holy Spirit so was Jesus ah you see

I thought he was God he was do you remember that he took that God took to himself a human nature and that human nature was not God the moment you deify human nature Jesus ceases to be the God man that human nature was dependent and that's that's the force of remember he was a servant he was a servant and as a servant he was dependent upon the work and the ministry and the light and the aid and the help and the comfort of the Holy Spirit as a five year old he was perfect perfect but remember it was the perfection of a five year old not the perfection of a fifty year old he grew says the New Testament in wisdom remember that he grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour just as there was a physical development the development of a physically perfect being remember there was also the development of a spiritually perfect being and you cannot possibly run away with the idea and it would be wrong of you to think that that when Jesus was a twelve year old boy disputing with the doctors with the theologians in the temple you cannot run away with the idea that as a twelve year old disputing with the doctors of law and theology in the temple that he was as perfect that his understanding was as extensive as it was going to be when he was thirty years old he grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and men the Holy Spirit communicated knowledge to him now he was always perfect but remember something growth development is not inconsistent with perfection those who are in heaven today are perfect perfect in holiness but though they are perfect they are capable of development the lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to fountains of living water and there's a very real sense in which even the human nature of our lord and glory itself perfect is developing it is still human nature remember it is still human nature it is still finite human nature it is still created human nature and the creature the creature or the creation must never become the creator and that is what makes eternity eternity that the creature for all ages will go on and on and on and on developing and all was perfect all was perfect will go on seeing and getting and learning and yet all was perfect and remember that that was true of our lord when he was in his world and his human nature the spirit of god was given to him to equip him to furnish him to minister to him to comfort him and in a very special sense and yet the spirit of course the difference from him and you and me is that he had the spirit in its fullness

you and I don't have the spirit in that measure he had it without measure we have it in measure or we have him rather in measure and another thing he was given the holy spirit as the unction the sanctified the anointing oil set apart for the work of prophet priest and king remember that's why the oil that was poured upon these men at the times of their consecration or ordination when a man was set apart to the office of a prophet he was anointed with oil similar to the office of priest or king they were anointed with oil and that signified that that man was not just set apart by God for the office but that he was equipped by God for the office so was the Lord he was given the spirit not just set apart to others but equipped for it and given the spirit in its fullness that he might serve the Lord then thirdly in the word the servant and the work for which he was equipped he shall show judgment to the gent bring forth judgment to victory or bring forth judgment to truth set judgment in the earth now what does this mean well it means very simply this the word judgment means righteousness and the purpose for which Jesus came into the world was to establish righteousness how was he to do it by his own death this is how he was to do it he was to bring forth judgment unto truth or perhaps even judgment by the truth and this is interesting the work that Jesus accomplishes in the world he accomplishes it by means of the truth by means of the truth of the world and the word is all about himself and the world hears what Jesus did and why did it that's righteousness the passion of the son of God suffering unto death and this is what is proclaimed by the word to the world to the Gentiles to the Isles to all the world the news comes that Jesus is

God's righteousness Jesus is man's remedy in his ruin and this comes to men through the truth and the Lord accomplishes his purpose through the word through the word we sang there in Psalm 45 that pic that we have of the king going forth to battle riding forth prosperously in state in what what cause what is the cause that is emblazoned on the flag for the truth in the interest of the truth that is why in other words another way of putting this that the true religion or the Christian faith is going to spread abroad through the truth and this is the instrument of his victory the word the truth he will bring forth judgment of righteousness and to victory through or by means of the truth and you know that this is why the church of God exists in the world today to proclaim the truth and were it not for the truth there would be no church and this is the only instrument that the church has disposed from the hand of our king the truth and if God doesn't bless the truth in the lives of men and women boys and girls there would be no blessing if people hadn't saved through the truth in the hand of the spirit there would be no salvation there would be no Christians and this is our only instrument our only hope we have nothing else

[31 : 40] Paul said this to the Corinthians the Jews they seek a sign they want miracles the Greeks they want philosophy wisdom we can't give it to them he says we preach that's all we have to do all we have to give we preach Christ crucify from every pulpit throughout the land today it's the only message that God has given to any man commissioned by him go and preach tell the truth give the truth communicate the truth nothing else that's the instrument in the Lord's hand that is going to produce the victory and how now finally does he accomplish it in a very wonderful way he shall not strive nor cry neither shall any man hear his voice in his streets a bruised for he shall he not breathe and the smoking flax shall he not quench till he has brought forth judgment of truth of righteousness undelicted by the truth this is how he does it he doesn't deal with men violently he doesn't have to work grabbed them by the rappels and shake them to lie he doesn't do violence to any man's will or heart or conscience or understanding he takes that individual and he works on him through the truth bringing him to see his need of Christ as a savior these I blot I believe is what is the meaning of these two metaphors that are used here he will not break the bruised weed and he will not quench the smoky blood he doesn't manipulate he doesn't brainwash he doesn't hoodwink he brings the influence of the truth to bear upon the mind and through the truth he saves men and women boys and girls there is no place for the manipulating of the mind in the Christian church there is no place for the tactics of the moonies in the Christian church the Lord brings the truth to bear upon the mind by the saving irresistible evocations influence of the spirit and the mind comes to understand and to see but what kind of people does he deal with like that well he calls them here too he uses two metaphors bruised, reeds and smoking blacks and the idea here is to bring before us the thought of the weakness and the brittleness and the brokenness of the human being with whom he deals here is an individual and he's broken broken and bruised and dented and dented by forces external to himself a straw bruised you know what I read this a bull roger just like straws long straws standing up beside their other body intending to be trodden on their foot by man and beast and they're bruised almost snark and tool and the moment they're snark and tool they're worthless useless that's the idea that you have here some that is broken another point just of useless the head is hanging by a thread but not yet broken off here you have a picture

of human nature so often in its brokenness in its feebleness in its brittleness ready to be snarked off the idea of the uselessness and the hopelessness of this individual and there are many people like that in the world today people whose hearts are broken by distress by calamities and sorrow broken by opposition and loneliness and persecution broken by burdens that they find impossible to shoulder and to bear broken by unkindness by unfeeling cruelty broken by their own lack of strength feeling just cast aside and of no use to anybody I'm sure you've said this yourself even when you're confronted with the claims of Christ who me me what use would I be in the cause of Christ what purpose could I say if you only knew who you're talking to if you only knew how hopeless and how worthless my whole life is well my friend may you know more of it because as to such a person the Lord comes and says he will not bruise the smoking flax you see in a minute what that means he will not bruise a broken reed and then he says he uses the second metaphor the smoking flax he will not quench you know what this what this was this was the this was the like a wick that was used in the oil lamps in the old fashioned oil lamps flax and the idea here is the flax is smoking it's it's been lit and at least someone has tried to light it no no that's coming from it is this smoke this vapour this this say this say evil smelling vapour doesn't seem to be any fire no flame and it's been said that there's a figure a type of the work of grace in the human heart something's working there the will is being influenced but it hasn't yet been holy one the heart is under the ends of the gospel being moved and directed and channeled into the ways of the lord but still hasn't come into the light or into the flame hasn't burst into the light or the flame of the love of god if there's faith there it is very weak if there's love it's so feeble you wonder if you love at all there are some things you like but really do you love the lord and the cause of christ the grace of patience and desire and courage perseverance the desire to stand on the side of the lord it seems to be there but seems to be there but it does seem to be strong enough the progress from smoke to flame seems to be so slow it's fruitful irregular and really when you think in terms of light well my life is in light just again like the bruised reed it is so useless and so hopeless destitute of kindling power now there may be two stages in a person's life when this could be true could be true of the newness of it perhaps in someone's life here when the work of grace has had just been newly lit but it doesn't yet

come as it were to the light the flame hasn't burst out it could unfortunately also be true of those in whose life the flame of grace has burnt but it is now as though it were burning out burning out a book was published a booklet was published some two years ago called the burnt out ministry perhaps some of you are writing your own booklet of late the burnt out Christian life influences brought to bear upon your life from outside and from inside your life that are as it were quenching the flame of grace and the flame of love in your life and there are things that tend to extinguish grace if you're not very careful worldliness materialism sinful practices sinful pursuits sinful company sinful associations weak resolve giving place to temptation in your life not being as careful as you ought to be in your Christian life lack of Bible reading and prayer

Christian fellowship and attendance upon the means of grace oh yes these things my friend can influence your life and you may not be aware of it as the insidious influence is going on but after a period of time what happens you discover that the flame that used to burn so brightly is almost extinguished and so you're just going through the motions for the sake of going through the motions in both metaphors the ideas very clearly brought before us that here is life for usefulness of light and just hanging on by a thin thread well here's encouragement for you today this is the promise that he has given he will not break the bruised reed and he will not quench the smoking flax you

I and other people might tend to break you and might tend to quench it but he won't here is a picture of one who deals lovingly and tenderly and at the same time firmly with these kisses the tenderness of his dealings have you ever seen you know what a gardener is like remember once being often with a man who was a gardener in Dingwall he was a big big man and he remember how how he would spend hours transplanting seedlings you could hardly see them transplanting them into their own boxes where he was going to bring them up going to bring them on and of course the summer they developed into wonderful strong plants there was that big man huge hands dealing so tenderly with these tiny seedlings here you have a picture of the

[43 : 19] Lord dealing tenderly with people who otherwise could be easily broken what a gardener this person is remember what Maryam Magdalene thought about him at the sepulcher she thought he was the gardener well in a real sense he is a gardener and the best gardener this world has ever known and ever seen how tenderly he deals with these tender plants and how graciously he transplants them how graciously he brings them on have you noticed maybe in your own life as you look back how insignificant as it were the beginning of all this process was in your life perhaps a wee word that you heard somewhere some that you read or some that you saw and it triggered off this thing in your life and today it's stronger than it was then but it's not strong enough you need more but you see he's dealing with you my friend he's dealing with you and he's bringing you on and he's bringing you through and isn't it wonderful that in the face of all the opposition and the face of all the difficulties that you've had to contend with isn't it significant that the work is still there albeit weak but it's there and why because he hasn't broken it and he hasn't quenched it that's why because he has dealt so tenderly with you a wee word here and a wee word there has as it were fanned it's as though it was a spark and then there's a wee flame that wee word perhaps that leg to that sermon maybe that

Christian fellowship that testimony maybe that prayer or that chapter brought life out gave you more light more heat more feeling more meaning than you had the other day and you see this is the way the Lord works bit by bit he brings people on and he brings people through no man is so bruised that he cannot be healed no man is so injured that he cannot be restored no man is so far off that he cannot be brought near no man is so removed from that self-complacent idea of soundness that he once had about himself and that's been shattered but not to the extent that you cannot be renewed by the grace of the Lord of the Lord Jesus Christ no faith no love no hope no desire no matter how weak it may be it's there from his hand that it may be destroyed but that it might be strengthened it is said that he may fan it into flame how well you know how you fan a piece of smoking paper into flame let the air to it give it some oil some fuel remove the things that are opposing its development and this is what he does the oil of the spirit the air of his word and the removal and the discipline of these things that stand between you and yourself if you want your life to be aflame for the Lord if you want your life to be strong and not broken get rid of these things that come between you and your spiritual development and growth do the things that you ought to do there are two sides to it there are beautiful pictures

I'm going to finish there's a beautiful picture in the New Testament of a man in whose life the light and the flame of love and faith that all was died but the Lord didn't allow it to die he found it into glorious flame who was it Peter of course who denied his Lord with cursing and swearing then at the resurrection Peter got a message the Lord this whistle he wanted to die and he ran to the grave then he got another message go and tell my disciple and tell Peter that I am this Peter his spirit was revived remember how he put it later on years after when he wrote that letter God he said has begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the dead that's it he started the fire all over again he said with that wonderful message and with that wonderful achievement and that same man seven weeks afterwards went out and in the hand of God he was the instrument of bringing three thousand to the

Lord Jesus Christ that's what the Lord can do no wonder the Bible puts it like this he will not break the smoking flax and the way that Isaiah puts it is this he will not fail he will not be bruised he will not be discouraged he will not be quenched you see the idea you see the two contrasts you and I will but he won't you and I are weak and faint and broken but he isn't you and I are brittle and unworthy and useless but he isn't the same message that Isaiah gave in chapter 40 he giveth power to the faint and to them who are without my dear precious thank you see the two things brought together you and I in our hopelessness in our uselessness in our emptiness and our weakness confronted by the Lord and his strength and his grace and his power he will do it he will do it for you and this is the encouragement that comes to you today he is not subjected to pressures from the outside as you are he is not subjected to pressures from the inside as you are he is there to strengthen and to encourage and to illumine he is there to revive so that nothing will thwart his purposes he will bring forth judgment truth unto victory is this what the

Lord is doing for yourself today is this a message you need today in your weakness in your emptiness in your own seeming hopelessness encouraged to believe the Lord has done so much for you well my friend you take this great encouragement with you he didn't give you that to leave you he gave you that to bring it on and to bring it out see that you don't hinder it let us pray bless us oh Lord today we thank thee for thy word and for thy grace and we pray that thy spirit may work in us through thy truth more and more to the glory of thy glorious name for

[51 : 05] Jesus sake amen■■■ day et