

### Scripture Text

Isaiah 49:1 - 50:3

### Context

Isaiah 49 is a turning point in the book. Here he will focus on the coming Servant (Messiah) Up until now Isaiah has made specific predictions including how God's people (Judah) will be invaded and exiled by the Babylonians. Eventually Judah will be rescued from exile by a God-appointed conqueror named Cyrus. The plan of God will move on to the salvation of the world. But will Cyrus be an adequate Saviour? No, a more powerful 'Servant' is needed. Who is this Servant then? Isaiah 49-55 begins to draw closer to an answer.

### Observation and Meaning

- 49v1-6 show a portrait of the servant and his work. What is he called to do and how does he accomplish his task?
- 49v7 is a promise to the servant. How is this promise fulfilled in Christ?
- First objection: How do God's people object to God in v14? Why do you think they feel this way? How does God answer their objection in 49v15-16? What does God promise to do for them in 49v17-23?
- Second objection: How do God's people display lack of faith in God in 49v24? How does God answer them in 49.25-26?
- Third objection: God's people think he has divorced them (50v1). How does God answer this? What does God say in 50v1 to explain why they are in exile? And what does he say in 50v2 to show that He is able to deliver them?

### Big Idea

God is one who reassures his people, and desires to use them for his glory even when they display outrageous unbelief towards him and his promises. He has not forgotten his people, and has power to save them. This is seen through his servant who will come to accomplish his will.

### Connecting to Bible Storyline

The storyline of the bible is Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Our passage shows us how God's Servant is the one who comes to redeem his people. His work will not only gather Israel, but be a light to all nations, so that all creation is restored and rejoices in God.

### Sermon Outline

1. The Servant Whose Triumph Liberates His People (49v1-13)
  - a. The Servant and His Work
  - b. The Effects of that Work
2. The LORD Who Reassures His Doubting People (49v14-50v3)
  - a. God has forgotten us (49v14)
    - I have engraved you on the palms of my hands (49v16)
  - b. God can't deliver us (49v24)
    - I will contend with those who contend with you (49v25)
  - c. God has abandoned us (50v1)
    - Why, when I came, was there no man? (50v2)

### Applications

- How does the suffering (49v4) and yet ultimate vindication (49v7) of the Servant encourage you when you feel discouraged in your faith?
- Which (if any) of the lingering doubts that God's people display in this passage are ones that you are prone to think? How does God's answer to them help you?
- How does Paul's understanding of this passage show you how you can continue the servant ministry of Jesus today? (Acts 13v47?)

## Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

### Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

### Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

### Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.