

# Christ the Perfect Servant

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The fact that the eternal Son of God ever “made Himself of no reputation” by being poured into the form of a servant is a marvel of divine grace. Perhaps even more astonishing is that the blessed Lord Jesus will retain this servant character for eternity ([Luk 12:37](#)). With such a vast subject at hand, it is prudent to meditate on the so-called “Servant Songs” of Isaiah as they paint a concise and beautiful summary of the course of that perfect Servant. (Note: These aspects of service below can also be traced with great profit in Mark’s Gospel of the Servant Son. I encourage the reader to do so! All quotations are from the prophecy of Isaiah unless otherwise noted.)

## His Call

Isaiah first introduces us to the Messiah as one who is a divine Son, born into the world through the means of the virgin birth (7:14). Though He was a child born, He was also a Son given from the Father’s side (9:6). It is this eternal Son that became a servant. From eternity He was the called and chosen Servant whom God would have us gaze upon: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect” (42:1).<sup>[1]</sup> He was chosen because of who He is by nature, for only one who is God manifest in the flesh could accomplish the work for which He was ordained. Indeed, He was called “from the womb” (49:1) and “in righteousness” (42:6), that is, to accomplish God’s righteous purpose. Thank God, He will not “fail” (burn low) nor be “discouraged” (broken) until all is accomplished (v4).

## His Cause

In one beautiful statement, Isaiah summarises the purpose of the perfect Servant. He is the one in whom God “will be glorified” (49:3). The primary concern of the Servant was the glory of His Father ([Joh 17:4](#)). This He did by, amongst other things, healing broken hearts (61:1), opening blind eyes and liberating bound souls (42:7). But such glory was fully manifested at Calvary, and though the Servant crucified on a cross may have the mark of apparent failure (49:4), it is through that finished work that He will restore the “preserved of Israel,” be a “light to the Gentiles,” and be God’s “salvation unto the end of the earth” (v6). Ultimately, He will set justice in

the earth – the Servant, indeed, will be a King reigning in righteousness (32:1). The perfect Servant has unfinished business yet!

## His Character

A perfect Servant must have a perfect character, for the two go hand in hand. The Lord Jesus will yet say to less-than-perfect servants like us, “Well done, good and faithful servant” ([Mat 25:21](#)). “Good” or blameless (upright) character is essential to faithful performance in service. Such was the character of the Lord Jesus. He was never ostentatious or clamouring for attention. He did not complain loudly, cry for vengeance or argue angrily. He did not even raise His voice in the street but spoke calmly, softly and quietly. There was a spirit about this Servant which stands in stark contrast to the pride of the human heart (42:2). He never sought to injure an already fragile broken “reed,” like the widow of Nain, but rather sought her repair by care and compassion. He would never quench two smoking flaxes, like those on the road to Emmaus, but rather sought to ignite the bright flame of testimony again. No wonder the character of this Servant delighted His Master; He was truly one in whom “my soul delighteth” (v1).

## His Consolation

The perfect Servant ministered comfort to others, not least by His words. His tongue was that of one well instructed and educated. He knew exactly what to say and how to say it. James declares that no human being can “tame” (subdue) the tongue, but Christ was in complete control of His. Every morning He awoke to His Father’s instruction that He, in turn, might lift up the downhearted and strengthen the weary. Though part of His ministry was to “comfort all that mourn” (61:2), He Himself was not left without the consolation of His Father’s presence and preservation. His promise was, “I ... will hold thine hand, and will keep thee” (42:6).

## His Conduct

The conduct of the perfect Servant was ever marked by the power and energy of the Spirit. The Spirit of God rested upon Him at His incarnation (11:2), baptism (42:1) and throughout His public ministry (61:1). There was no need for the Spirit to strive with Him as he does with us. Consequently, His words were like a “sharp sword,” indicating the piercing and powerful incision with which He spoke (49:2). The Servant Himself was like a “polished shaft” or “sharpened arrow” which, without roughness or

unevenness, is highly accurate in its flight. His single aim was the Father's will, and He did not miss!

## His Cross

It is inevitable that diligent service for God will lead to suffering and persecution at the hands of those opposed to God. So, the perfect Servant was obedient to the extent of death, even the death of the cross. Long before the time, He knew exactly what His suffering would entail, but He was not rebellious, neither did He turn aside from the clearly marked path that lay before Him (50:5). His back was given to the "smilers," his cheeks to "them that plucked off the hair." His face was exposed to "shame and spitting" (v6). He was brutalised beyond recognition (52:14). But He will accomplish divine purpose, whatever the cost. This is, ultimately, for the glory of God, and He will therefore go without a murmur (53:7).

## His Compensation

But this Servant will receive the highest compensation for His faithful service: He "shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high" (52:13). Though the Jews assigned His grave with the wicked in accord with his shameful death on a tree, God designed that He actually be buried in a rich man's tomb in accord with His moral beauty – He had done no "violence" and no "deceit" was in His mouth (53:9). Moreover, this Servant shall "see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (v11). The fruit of Calvary, His spiritual "seed," will bring Him fulness of delight. To be blunt, the awful suffering of Calvary will be fully compensated (it was worth it!) when His bride is revealed at His side.

Dear believer, it is our privilege to serve Christ. May we seek to learn from and follow the pattern of service so perfectly set by our blessed Lord.