

still waters

home church studies

isaiah 42.1-9

[Worship]

1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; 3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. 5 Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: 6 I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. 8 I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. 9 See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

We seem to have little time for gentleness and humility. In our modern world, the person who does not shout and who tenderly nurtures bruised reeds, as the servant does in Isaiah 42:1-9, is likely to be trodden underfoot. The world of Isaiah was one in which vast competing empires fought with each other for rich pickings. The servant was as likely to be trampled by those stronger than as someone would be today. The values espoused by the servant in Isaiah are countercultural whenever they are practiced.



Jesus acts in the same way. We may think that the way to establish authority is to stand our ground and not to defer to people who are popular, as John the Baptist was. Yet Jesus publicly submits to John during his baptism. Gentleness and humility feature in Jesus' life alongside passion and proclamation; contrary to what we might expect, they are powerful weapons in bringing in the kingdom. Isaiah promises that God's servant will not "grow faint or be crushed" until "he has established justice in the earth" (Isaiah 42:4). The way of gentleness is not an easy one to take but, as Isaiah promises and Jesus illustrates, it is the path that leads to justice.

[The Scripture]

Matthew 3.13-17

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."