

## Sermon Outline

# “God’s Chosen Servant”, Matthew: Life and Words of Jesus, Part 38 – Matthew 12:15-21 – Mark Mitchell – May 5, 2013

## Introduction

1. In the first 14 verses of Matthew 12, opposition to Jesus is on the rise. It is coming from the Pharisees, a highly respected group of religious leaders who sought to regulate the religious life of the Jewish people according to their traditions and rules. When Jesus and his disciples disregarded the Pharisees’ Sabbath traditions and rules, controversy and a plan to kill Jesus follows.
2. So what does Jesus do? He doesn’t denounce the religious rulers. He doesn’t defend himself or commence a teaching on God’s original intent for the Sabbath laws. Instead Jesus quietly withdraws and goes about doing what he came to do – healing those who followed him.
3. Who is this man and how do we make sense of his actions? Matthew’s answer is that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the Messianic figure foretold by the prophet Isaiah and anticipated by the Jewish people.

## Jesus is God’s Chosen Servant (verses 17-18)

1. Matthew quotes from one of four passages from Isaiah in what is referred to as the Servant Songs. In these Servant Songs, the person referenced is called the Lord’s or God’s servant. In Isaiah, the servant’s identity is left undetermined, but his work is vividly described. In quoting the first of the Servant Songs, Matthew reveals that Isaiah’s prophetic words pointed forward to Jesus.
2. Notice the personal references by God: “my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased”. This Servant is deeply, personally and intimately connected to God himself.
  - a. Jesus is the servant of God. He’s here to bring about God’s will not anyone else’s. He’s here to represent God’s rule and authority.
  - b. Jesus is chosen by God. God appointed him to his task. Readers of the Old Testament would recall that from the earliest pages of the book of Genesis, God promised to send an offspring of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent. God later promised to provide a descendant of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. Hundreds of years later, God promised King David that he would raise up a descendant from his royal line whose kingdom would be established forever. Jesus is the chosen Servant of God to fulfill God’s special task of bringing redemption to the world.

## Sermon Outline

- c. Jesus is loved by God and is well pleasing to God. God finds the deepest satisfaction and delight in him. God has a strong bond of love and affection for him. These verses recall Jesus' baptism, where God the Father spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
  - d. Jesus is empowered by God. The very power Jesus exercises to heal and work miracles is there because it's the power of God's very Spirit who rests upon him.
3. The fulfillment of God's great promises of old stands before us in Jesus Christ. He is the One the Jews had looked for and longed for, the promised Messiah. Jesus is God's Chosen Servant.

### Jesus Came To Establish God's Justice (verse 18b)

1. The key word in this passage is justice. This is fundamentally what the Servant has come to bring about. He proclaims justice; he brings justice; he establishes justice. The Hebrew word from which "justice" comes is the word **mishpat**. Tim Keller in his book, *Generous Justice*, describes it as follows:

"The word **mishpat** in its various forms occurs more than 200 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Its most basic meaning is to treat people equitably... But **mishpat** means more than just the punishment of wrongdoing. It also means to give people their rights... **Mishpat**, then, is giving people what they are due, whether punishment or protection or care. This is why, if you look at every place the word is used in the Old Testament, several classes of persons continually come up. Over and over again, **mishpat** describes taking up the care and cause of widows, orphans, immigrants, and the poor – those who have been called 'the quartet of the vulnerable.'" (See also Deuteronomy 10:18, 32:4; Psalm 146:7-9; Jeremiah 9:24)

2. As God's chosen Servant, Jesus came to establish God's justice. When Jesus healed the sick, he brought God's justice. When Jesus delivered individuals from evil spirits, he established God's justice. When he ministered to the afflicted, displayed mercy to the weak, and preached good news to the poor, he brought God's justice to the earth. He made wrong things right and set things in order. He brought protection and care. This is God's justice for Jews and Gentiles.
3. How does this apply to us today? If we recognize areas of our lives (physically, relationally, spiritually, financially, etc.) where we need God's justice, where we need wrong things made right, then we must look to Jesus. We must put our hope and trust in Jesus.

## **Sermon Outline**

### **Jesus Shows the Meekness of God's Power (verses 19-21)**

1. The mark of Jesus' ministry was his meekness. Meekness is not weakness or timidity. It's the combination of gentleness with power, tenderness with strength. Jesus is a lion and a lamb, a King and a servant, all-powerful and humble. This beautiful combination of excellent and admirable traits is what makes Jesus uniquely glorious as God's chosen Servant.
  - a. Jesus shows his meekness when opposed. In the face of opposition, Jesus doesn't pick a fight, flaunt his power or use his authority for personal gain. In the face of opposition, he quietly withdraws and continues to serve others.
  - b. Jesus also shows meekness in his care of the weak. He doesn't trample the broken, or ignore the vulnerable. Those who are bruised to the point of breaking, he gently restores to usefulness. Those who are on the brink of being or feeling extinguished – due to age or weakness or oppression or mistreatment – he skillfully and gently serves to make them bright again.
2. At this point in Jesus' ministry, he withdraws in the face of opposition and quietly goes about his work of justice. But a time is going to come when he doesn't withdraw. He sets his face like flint and marches straight to the cross. He embraces the mockery and shame, the brutality and injustice of those who oppose him. But it's not a display of weakness. As an act of great power and authority and in humble obedience to his Father, Jesus, the chosen Servant, embraces the cross and submits to death.

### **Conclusion**

1. Jesus is God's chosen Servant precisely because he's the Suffering Servant, who takes the punishment of sin so that the perpetrators of sin – all of us – can be forgiven and can experience God's justice.
2. Jesus Christ is God's chosen Servant who came to establish God's justice according to the meekness of God's power in order for every tribe, people and nation to find hope in him.

## ***Sermon Outline***

### **Fellowship Starters**

1. Take time as a Care Group to read Matthew 12:1-21.
2. From this passage, what aspect of Jesus' character and work is particularly meaningful and encouraging to you?
3. In what area of your life do you need God's "justice"? What practical ways do you and can you demonstrate God's "justice" to those around you?
4. Christ's character of meekness, tenderness and strength can be ours by his Spirit. In what areas of your life do you desire to imitate Jesus by expressing meekness?
5. Where is your hope disappointing you because it is wrongly placed? Hope in what (reputation, possessions, relationship, security, etc.) tends to compete with your hope in the Lord?
6. How would your daily living change if you were responding to the situations and relationships of life from a heart filled with hope in the Lord?