

Depressed Servants (4) God's Perfect Servant – The Lord Jesus

Isa 42 v 1, 4 “Behold my servant....he shall not fail nor be discouraged”

Great men of God failed; there were times when they went through periods of depression, discouragement and despair.

Moses experienced a day like this, a day when **'he lost his confidence in God'**. Num 11

Elijah had a similar experience when **'he lost his courage for God'**. 1 Kings 19

Jonah also had a time of depression when **'he lost the compassion of God'**. Jonah 4

In each of these 3 areas, where great men failed, the Lord Jesus was tested and tried and yet *“he shall not fail nor be discouraged”*. Paul writes to the Christians at Rome of us *“who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.”* This will be true in a future day (1 John 3 v 2), but what about now?

Read – Isaiah 42 v 1 – 8 and 50 v 4 – 9 *“Behold my servant...he shall not fail nor be discouraged”*

Moses – 'he lost his confidence in God'

The people discouraged and disappointed Moses and the servant lost his confidence in God.

There was much to discourage and disappoint the Lord Jesus with those he counted as his own.

1) John 1 v 11 *“he came unto his own and his own received him not”*. He came into the world his hands had made, the nation he had chosen and *‘they received him not’*. When the day of decision came in John 18 they said *“Not this man, but Barabbas”*.

2) There was a day when the Lord Jesus returned to Nazareth Luke 4 v 16 *“where he had been brought up”*. He read from the scriptures concerning *“the acceptable year of the Lord”* and taught concerning the mercy of God to gentiles and *“they were offended at him”*.

3) In John 6 the Lord Jesus taught *“I am the bread of life”*. However, his disciples *“murmured at it”* and *“many went back, and walked no more with him”*. They found his teaching hard and were offended. The Lord Jesus said to the twelve v67 *“Will ye also go away?”*

4) Of the immediate family, who knew the Lord Jesus best, who had shared many family experiences with him John writes *“For neither did his brethren believe in him.”*

5) The evening before the cross the 12 disciples gathered with the Lord Jesus in the upper room. The Lord Jesus looking on them said, *“All ye shall be offended because of me this night”*. Later that same night the gospel writer records *“they all forsook him and fled”*.

6) The Church...you and me. We are all conscious that we have failed and disappointed the Lord. In Rev 2 and 3 writing to the 7 churches in Asia had to say *“thou hast left thy first love”*, *“I have not found thy works perfect before God”* and *“thou art neither cold nor hot”*.

There was much to discourage and disappoint the Lord Jesus about the people of God, and there still is today. But listen to the words of God *“behold my servant...he shall not fail nor be discouraged”*. Despite all the potential for discouragement the Lord Jesus did not fail, he finished the work the Father gave him to do. He cares for his people, he bears their burdens, he encourages and supports – Isa 50 v 4 *“that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary”*. Where Moses failed, where he lost his confidence in God the Lord Jesus wonderfully triumphed.

What about us? Can we follow his example? There is much to disappoint and discourage in the Christian life. How do we cope, how do we react? Do we respond like Moses, *“I am not able to*

bear...”? In the verses in Isa 50 we have the secret v7 *“For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded”*. It was this that Moses forgot; but Paul knew the secret 11 Tim 4 v 16, 17 *“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me....Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.”*

Elijah – ‘he lost his courage for God’

Having won a great victory for God on Mount Carmel, a threat came from Jezebel and the servant lost his courage for God. In the life of the Lord Jesus on earth his enemies were many, the threats and persecution constant, but *“behold my servant...he shall not fail nor be discouraged.”*

- 1) At the beginning of His public ministry the Lord Jesus was *“led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”* The temptation lasted for 40 days and nights and then Luke 4 v 13 *“And when the devil had ended all the temptations, he departed from him for a season.”* The great enemy had been defeated, but he departed only for a season. Throughout the Lord Jesus’ time on earth the devil was constantly there, seeking opportunities to bring him down.
- 2) The test that Elijah failed came. Having won a great victory, a threat came with encouragement to flee Luke 13 v 31 *“...certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.”* The Lord Jesus did not flee, like Elijah, He continued to rely on God and walk in his will.
- 3) In Luke 4, as He taught in Nazareth, the people would have killed him. The people rejected the message He brought, but persecution did not change the message God had given to him. He demonstrated courage for God and as they would have cast him over the cliff *“he passing through the midst of them went his way.”*
- 4) There were occasions in Jerusalem *“when they took up stones to stone him”*, but John records in chapter 8 v 59 *“Jesus went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”*
- 5) In Gethsemane he said *“Rise up, let us go: lo he that betrayeth me is at hand.”* Knowing all things he went forward to meet his enemies and the cross.

The Lord Jesus steadfastly followed the path set out by God, the Father, despite the conflict and persecution he would face. How wonderful to remember, *“behold my servant...he shall not fail nor be discouraged”*. The secret of courage for God Isa 50 v 7 *“For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded”*. It was this that Elijah forgot as he sat under a juniper tree and *“requested for himself that he might die”*. We too can show courage for God, *“For the Lord God will help me”*. We have the indwelling Spirit to help us. In Acts 2 we read of the difference the coming of the Spirit made, from frightened men in an upper room to fearless preachers on the streets of Jerusalem.

Jonah – ‘he lost the compassion of God’

Jonah believed that the men of Nineveh deserved the judgement of God, and was angry when the mercy of God was seen. When we consider the Lord Jesus his compassion never fails. The response of men and women to Him deserved the judgement of God – *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”* - but His compassion for men and women never failed. He would say to the people of Jerusalem Luke 13 v 34 *“how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”* As the Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross He said *“Father forgive them: for they know not what they do.”*

Do we seek to follow this example, to love and forgive as He does? Jonah failed, but the help of the Lord God we can triumph. The world is full of wicked men deserving the judgement of God, but we must remember 1 Cor 6 v 11 *“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God.”*