



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

January 9, 2011  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany  
Sermon Text: [Isaiah 42:1-7](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 42:1-7](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 45](#)  
Second Lesson: [Acts 10:34-38](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 3:13-17](#)

### **Introductions Are in Order**

God introduces the Anointed One  
We introduce the Anointed One

I don't know if you've ever done this to your spouse, but I know I've done this to mine more than I should have. We are at some kind of pastor or church get together and someone comes up and starts talking to me. Paula is left standing there with a smile on her face. Finally, the guy I'm talking to says, "Is this your wife?" I kind of forget to introduce my wife from time to time. I try to get better at it, but sometimes I still screw up. Did you ever do that...forget to introduce someone and it's kind of a problem?

Or maybe you wish someone would have introduced you to the person you were talking to. Did you ever talk to someone and you're talking and talking and you're smiling and smiling and then, when they walk away, you say to your spouse, "Who was that?" You kind of know you should know them but you're not sure who they are or what they do or what exactly they were talking about, but you try to smile and nod a lot.

Our heavenly Father is kind of acting in Isaiah 42 to keep that lack of an introduction from being a problem. In the verses leading up to what I just read to you, he had talked about all the false gods. He said, "Take a look at these guys. They're nothing. They are nothing. They are just made up things. They have no power. They have no reality." Then he points out, "Here is my servant, the one who is coming to do my will." He not only says "Here he is. I'd like you to meet him. He's my servant." He tells us a lot about him. Like when you meet someone and you say, "Where do you work? What are you doing?" Or you introduce a child and they say, "Where are you going to school? What are you studying for?" The Father takes care of all that in these verses some 700 years before Jesus walked on the earth. He says, "Here is my servant. Here is the one I delight in. I'm going to put my Spirit on him so that you guys know this is the one I'm talking about." We just saw that when reading about Jesus' baptism, right? Where he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power like Peter talked about in our Second Lesson. "Here he is. This is the one. Now here is what he is going to do. He is going to bring justice. This is his life's work. He'll bring justice to the nations."

So what does that mean...justice? Justice...is he coming with his Law to judge us in justice? If you look at it, he says he is going to bring it about in gentleness and faithfulness, not raising his voice, not crying out, not by force, but in faithfulness and in keeping with the truth and something that is a reality, not a hoped for event, not a possibility, but a reality this justice that he is going to bring. That's how the Father

describes it when he introduces his servant, his Messiah to us. It makes you wonder exactly what that justice would be. A justice that doesn't crush people. A bruised reed he doesn't break. A smoldering wick he will not snuff out. A justice that brings hope, confidence to the islands. One who will be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles is how he describes him.

The justice he is talking about has to be pure Gospel. It's what gives light to those who are living in darkness. It's this covenant, this legal binding agreement that God is going to make his servant to be.

In the second part of our text when it says, "This is what God, the one who made everything, here's what he says, 'I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness,'" he's not talking to you and me. He's talking to the servant. He is calling him in righteousness. The Father will take hold of his hand and keep him and make him to be a covenant for the people, a legal agreement, something that God is going to bind to himself.

God had made covenants with Israel. When the Israelites heard this, they would have immediately thought of the covenants God had made with Israel throughout the years, this binding agreement that God bound to himself. The one who is holy and righteous and created everything, he has condescended so to speak to make a covenant with his people.

But it's not going to stop there. It's going to be what Peter said in our Second Lesson. He is going to be a light for the Gentiles, the islands. It is going to extend to all people, to all nations. They had been living in darkness. They didn't have the light, this relationship that the Israelites had with God in the Old Testament. They were living in darkness. They maybe only caught glimpses of it from time to time as they came into contact with Jews or heard about the Jews talk about their God. But he says, "I am going to make you a light for the nations," a light that he wants to shine onto the nations so that the blind eyes can see, eyes that are blind to their own sin and the answer to that sin can see. Those held in prison by their sin, those held in prison by hopelessness and despair will have the hope, the confidence that the servant is the answer to life's problems and life's challenges and life's greatest challenge, which is sin. To release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. Here is what the servant is going to do. He is going to do all these things.

He does it by establishing justice, which comes through his life and death that pays for the sins of all people of all time. This is the covenant that God is binding to himself. The sinless Son of God is going to come and stand in our place. He did that at his baptism. Here is one who has no sin, yet he undergoes a baptism in which John's baptism was described as a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, yet he had no sins. So why did he do it? He said it was to fulfill all righteousness. Part of it is to fulfill what Isaiah said, "I will pour my Spirit on him," so the Spirit would come in the form of the dove. The Father would say, just like he said here, "I, the Lord, have called you. I delight in you." Just like he says in these verses from Isaiah. He spoke it so the

people could know for certain “this is the one I want you to meet,” as the Father introduces him at his baptism. But he is the one who would provide this justice which is the payment for all sins of all time.

It’s an amazing thing that our Savior does for us, but if it isn’t revealed or made known, it’s an amazing thing that can remain in darkness. It can remain unknown to people. So when the Father introduces the Son to us and who he is and what he will do, it’s only natural that the Father expects us to also make introductions. This legal agreement, this covenant, doesn’t do people any good if they don’t know about it, right?

A few weeks back, I had a phone call from a lawyer. My father died of complications from exposure to asbestos. There are all these lawsuits that this lawyer has been doing on behalf of my father’s estate. There was one settlement coming up or one court hearing about who would have a right to this settlement from this company. If you wanted to present the case that you should receive a part of it from the settlement from the estate, you had to be there and do all this. This one lawyer called and wanted to talk to me about my minor children. She was the lawyer that speaks on their behalf. So she wanted to know what their relationship was and how close they were to my father and things like that and then let them know if they wanted to be there to make a claim against this, they had to be in Michigan on this date at this time. I basically told her that whatever goes to the estate goes to my mother and that’s what we want to happen. We don’t want to make a claim for ourselves for it or for my minor children for it. But we would have known nothing about it if she wouldn’t have told us, right? We would have been in the dark to this legal right that we had; we would have been blind to it if no one would have told us about it.

Isn’t this the picture of what God is telling us? Once we know this covenant and the one who establishes this covenant, so that the people that are still living in darkness and so they don’t continue to live in darkness or in the dungeon or captivity of their own sin, that you and I are the ones that are to make these introductions so they know their legal rights before God. God has declared them not guilty through the life and death of Jesus. That’s some of the introductions that God wants us to make, just as Jesus did.

Did you notice the other one...not only did it say Jesus would come to give sight to the blind and release the captives, but it also says a smouldering wick he will not put out, a bruised reed he will not break. I think that’s talking about how Jesus would come for the lost sheep of Israel as well.

For us today, do you know anyone whose faith is just a glowing ember? Do you know anyone whose connection to Christ is a broken, bent over reed that’s close to dying? God sent Jesus. Think about how Jesus loved those people and how he reached out to them. Think of how many times in the Gospels it says Jesus’ heart went out to people. He had compassion on them. Think of Jesus with that Samaritan woman at the well, the one that was caught in the sin of adultery. He didn’t condemn her and grind her down. He saw that she had some desire for knowing the true God. He didn’t condone her sin. He told her “Go and sin no more.” But in compassion and love for her, a

bruised reed he didn't break and a smouldering wick he didn't put out. He didn't say, "You come to this on my terms." He went to where she was and led her to his terms, which is "I take away all your sins."

The question is, do we introduce Jesus to smouldering wicks yet today? Do we have people in our congregation that are this glowing ember? Do we reach out to them and long for them and have a heart for them? Or do we say "Hey! You know when service is...if you want to get here, get here. If you don't, that's your problem."

Look at our congregation. By all rights, we should probably have more than one service on a Sunday morning, but because those who come like it when it's full, don't like it when it looks empty, we don't have more than one. We are kind of saying to those smouldering embers and those bent reeds, "To hell with you. You're our cousin. Just sit on my lap. I won't care. Come and be a little closer." Christians who view Christianity as being hashed, mashed and dispatched, baptized, married and buried, aren't all that interested in coming and sitting real close to you on a Sunday morning because they'd like a little space of their own most often. We might do it when we come to look at our children and video tape them, but we don't seem to have a love of God enough that moves us to want to sit that close to each other during a regular Sunday. But are we having concern and compassion for them if we say, "They could come and we could just sit closer together," or do we really find a way to get them connected with the Savior? It's a question that we have to answer for ourselves.

Are we doing all we could, like Jesus did, to not put out these smouldering wicks? Or do we simply say it's all about us and whatever makes me happy, they should accommodate themselves to it? Think about what our Savior did. He didn't say "Whatever makes me happy, I'm staying in heaven and to hell with them." He put himself on the line and he lived and died in our place.

God calls us to introduce the Anointed One to others, to those that don't believe and to those who do believe and are in danger of losing their faith. Sometimes that means we put ourselves on the line or inconvenience ourselves or make ourselves this light. We know people and we ourselves at times go through those times when we go back to the bondage of different sins and different things that separate us from God. The sense of purposelessness or what is the point of it all is a chain that Satan puts around us at times. Or, there's no use, nothing works, nothing matters...Satan wants to put us in that dungeon from time to time. Or we go back into the darkness of the depths where it seems like no light can reach. That's when we need our fellow believers to introduce us again to the Anointed One and tell us that they love us and that the Savior loves us and to not demand of us that we be like them, but rather say "How can we be Christ to you." That's what God has called us to do.

There are a lot of captives. You rub shoulders with them every day of the week. They don't know they're in darkness. They don't know that they are missing life's greatest gift, which is forgiveness through faith in Christ. God's only plan for them to get introduced to his Son, the one with whom he is well pleased, is you.