

The Man of War

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If you will, look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 42. I did not plan this particular title, it just happened to fall on Memorial Day when our nation is celebrating those that have gone to war and fought battles and laid down their lives primarily. This particular title is called "The Man of War." The Man of War. As we study military history, different generals and men of war have gotten the credit for what other men have done for them in laying down their lives and following their leadership and yet here is one to whom all the credit is due, Christ the man of war. It wasn't that he led the way and then gave us our part in winning the victory, all of the glory, all of the honor belongs unto him and that is certainly what we see here in Isaiah 42, beginning with verse 12,

12 Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. 13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. 14 I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. 15 I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. 16 And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. 17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.

As we saw last time in this particular portion of Scripture that began in verse 1 with, "Behold my servant," in order for God to do his work of salvation it took a faithful servant. It took one who even as the Scriptures describe him, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but condescended and became a man and took on him the form of a servant and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

So we see Christ depicted there as God's servant. We also in studying down through this passage, saw in verse 6 that he is God's righteousness, in other words, the one who was given that mission to come and to establish that righteousness which none of us given a million years could ever do to satisfy a holy God. And to earn it, it had to be worked out

as a man and then upon completion, faithful completion of his work, to impute it. If any of us are the Lord's today and stand before him with some assurance that we're his, it has to be entirely based upon that work that the Lord Jesus Christ worked out. We have no other hope, no other plea that when he died, he died for me. So you can see the pictures here of a servant, of one called in righteousness but also of light. Isn't it interesting how the Lord uses such simple terms in Scripture because we're simple-minded people. I love to watch these big highfaluting conferences where they are discussing lots of things that are way over my head and you kind of listen for a while and then someone says, "Well, let me illustrate." That's where they've got my ear. Just tell me a story. Tell me something that makes sense in everything that you're saying and all of Scripture, that's what we have. We have these illustrations.

Here in verse 6, again, we see how Christ was established to be the light to the Gentiles and to open the blind eyes and to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sat in darkness out of the prison. That's his work to do. But then, again, we come over and see just another picture here in verse 13 of my text today and that is of this one being a man of war. Now, this is not just any man. When we think of the Lord Jesus and I personally have great difficulty just speaking of him as Jesus. That is true, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin," that was his name in humiliation as he came as a man but now he has been given a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that what? He is Lord. So let's say that when we speak of him, not just the Lord Jesus but if he's mine, my Lord Jesus, our Lord Jesus. But not just any man but the God-man.

It's interesting that this title of "A Man of War" and this is prophetic, it's looking forward to his coming, doing and dying, his accomplishing salvation as a man of war much as any would go to war to win the battle. Christ did not come into this world just to make salvation possible. In fact, we've had wars that have been fought where people wonder the worth of it with all the lives that have perished when in the end we end up giving the land back to the enemy anyway and people look at that and say, "Well, that was a fruitless war. What a waste of lives."

I can tell you that such is never the case with what the Lord Jesus Christ came to do and accomplish. He said with every confidence, "Out of all that the Father has given me, I will not lose one." He's not giving back anyone that he shed his blood for and he paid that debt for. Do you know what? That gives me a lot of hope as a sinner because I've given him many reasons in my lifetime day in and day out for him to give me up and to say, "Go to hell." But he hasn't because he shed his blood for one such as I and all the glory belongs to him and if there's any sinner in this room that knows their state before a holy God and knows a thousand times over why God should have cast them to hell but hasn't, if Christ has paid their debt, their salvation is just as sure, certain as the Lord himself. That's why he's here described as the man of war.

If you go back to Exodus 15:3, look at Exodus 15, this is why I say this reference isn't just to a mere man because this is the first time it's used in Scripture and who is it used of? It says, "The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name." This is in the song of

Moses after he had shown himself mighty in destroying the armies of Pharaoh and delivering his people. So here in Isaiah, anyone that knew the Scriptures, when they see here it's speaking of, "The LORD going forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war," they would have thought of that. They would have thought of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. They would have thought of how God with a high hand, a mighty hand, with strength, had worked salvation for that people.

But the Lord shut them up first. Do you remember he brought them out after the Passover lamb had been slain and he brought them into an isolated place where they had the Red Sea before them, the mountains on either side behind them and the army, the most powerful army in the world at that time bearing down on them and as they began to cry out, what did Moses say? "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." The Lord's word when he gives it is sure. His promise is sure. We're never to look to the arm of the flesh in any type of trouble or time of trouble. We're to look to him and stand still and see his salvation.

So this is the man who is described here. It took nothing less than God to satisfy God but it also took nothing less than a perfect man to intervene on behalf of fallen sons of men. That's why he's the man of war. None less than God condescended to take on flesh but identifying with sinners such as we are.

Over in 1 Samuel 16 and I know I'm making you turn here a little bit but I believe it's important to reinforce this truth of Christ as the man of war. David was a type of Christ and here in 1 Samuel 16:18 when David was to be anointed as the king in verse 18, you notice what....you talk about stirring up jealousy as a man of war, you stir up jealousy in men's minds when you say that your righteousness is nothing but Christ's is all. That's what the jealousy is. When there's a man that has all the glory and honor and you're on the other side, there's jealousy. There was jealousy with Saul here in verse 18, "Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him."

Wouldn't that be a great message to preach on the character of Christ with David as a type? Because everything that was said of David is true of our Lord Jesus that he is cunning in playing. Cunning not in the sense of deceptive but talented. That everything about him is glorious. A mighty valiant man, a man of war and prudent in matters and a comely person and the Lord is with him. His name, Immanuel, means "God with us." So everything about him is to be glorified.

Over in Isaiah 59:16, so this is a special term is what I'm showing you. It's not used that much in Scripture but where we find it used in some way or other it either looks forward to Christ or it describes Christ. Here in Isaiah 59:16, this is why the Lord Jesus Christ came. God said, "And he saw that there was no man," among men, "and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." When you hear people say, "Well, men are basically good," they're saying something that the Scripture knows nothing of. "There is none

righteous, no not one." No, he's good. He is that name above every name and where he saw that there was no man and no intercessor among men, here is the love of God that he would send his Son and that his Son would be willing to stand in the place of guilty, lost sinners and bear their sin and satisfy law and justice and establish that righteousness and had put it to their account. That's an amazing grace.

So we see the importance of this word "man of war" but the second part of that is important too: it's a war. There was a fight to be fought. There was a battle to be won in order for God to be just and justified. Some people say, "Well, God can do anything he wants to do." Well, he can't deny himself. We know that from Scripture. And he cannot save sinners in an unjust way. We know that from Scripture. He cannot lie. There are a number of things that God cannot do and one thing he can't do is to save sinners without the shedding of blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. When you think of war, don't you think of shedding of blood? Bloodshed. A lot of our hymns regarding our nation, our country, have to do with those that have shed their blood. That's a picture of substitution, people that have gone to war that we might enjoy the freedoms that that shed blood brings.

But here is one, none other than God himself, who took on flesh for that one purpose because God cannot die. Only man can die and so he came for this one purpose that he might lay down his life and shed his blood in order that there be total satisfaction of God's law and justice and the absolute acquittal and deliverance for every one for whom he would do battle. But herein is the difference: the man of war did all the battle. He's not soliciting us to come along and help him. If any of us is saved, we were saved through what he accomplished and what he did. Even before we were born, this battle was fought. This battle was done. You can understand that even in our country. We enjoy certain privileges as Americans because of battles that have been fought in the past. I wasn't there, I wasn't even born yet and I'm born into it and I'm made to enjoy the blessings and benefits of what was done before.

But that's what he's done. This matter was settled at the cross. If you look over in Hebrews 2:10, this is why I had asked Bob if he would read this and I appreciate so much the reading but notice in verse 10 it says, "For it became him, for whom are all things." God judges no man. The Father, he has put all things in the hand of his Son. "And by whom are all things," whether it's in creation or salvation. If it's done, he did it. Notice, "in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect," complete is what that word means, "through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth," that's God, "and they who are sanctified are all of one," they are of Christ. If they are sanctified, Christ did it, "for which cause he," Christ, "is not ashamed to call them brethren." So Christ came with one specific mission: to bring, it says, many sons unto glory. Imagine someone going in and delivering out from the hand of the enemy these sons that are called sons of glory. Left there they would have most certainly died but he did the work. He did the battle. He fought the fight and delivered them.

You say, "Well, who was his enemy?" Well, sin. He had to be perfect in every manner, otherwise he would have died for his own sin. That's why it's so ludicrous to think that he

was made a sinner. He bore the sin of his people but he was not a sinner and so he fought sin, if you will, in his life but also in his death. He put it away. So complete was Christ's work as that man of war, that captain of our salvation, that when he had laid down his life and cried, "It is finished," it was finished. It was finished. The wrath of God swallowed up. That was his work to do.

Satan was certainly his enemy. Continues to be. Will be forever. Satan will never be granted repentance. You know, the last chapter of this book talks of him being cast into eternal flames of fire and those that followed him.

The law, if you will, was certainly his enemy. You say, "How so?" Well, it stood in the way of mercy. God would not show mercy at the expense of his law. It took him fulfilling that law completely in order for God to justly show mercy to any sinner. That was necessary.

But most of all, the very sinners for whom he died were his enemies. It's not that we were really just sitting here waiting to be delivered and, "Hurry up, let's get it done." We were by nature rebels. The very Christ who came to lay down his life for sinners, if he died for us we were his enemies. We were born in rebellion. If in a real war situation, we would have fired on him to kill him who was coming to deliver us. "He came unto his own but his own received him not." It says, "as many as received him," the reason they received him is that he gave them the power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name.

So this whole portion of Scripture, coming back here to Isaiah 42, is designed to show us the glory of this man of war. I can't give you eyes to see him. It takes the light that the Spirit of God gives but if he has opened your eyes, you'll behold him. You'll know of what I'm speaking here concerning this one who is the man of war and the very first thing we see in verses 13 and 14 is that he is said to appear in his power and glory more than ever. That's an important part there, more than ever. The way the Scriptures are written, there is the light of Christ that as you continue to read, that progressively gets brighter. Shining brighter and brighter unto a perfect day. That's why I like to read the Scriptures through because you see what you see in the first part in maybe seedling form. He's described as the seed of a woman and then in Exodus you see him as the Passover lamb. In Leviticus now you see him as the priest. All of these progressively. Here we see him as this man of war. But just as you would teach anybody on a subject, so you start with what's known, you move to the unknown.

As you read through Scripture, we see that crescendo and here we see in just a few verses the power and the glory of this one who was to come, something that couldn't necessarily been seen with the physical eye because when Christ did come, they mocked him. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" This took spiritual eyes to see this one who would come described here as "crying, yea roaring and prevailing against his enemies." Now, with the natural eye when he was hanging there on that cross, there wasn't anybody that saw a man prevailing against his enemies until the Lord opened the eyes of the one thief who had been railing against him and yet suddenly said to his partner on the other side,

"This man has done nothing amiss. We deserve our condemnation," and then looking to Christ, speaking to him said, "Remember me when you come into your," what? "Kingdom."

Kingdom means a King. Suddenly his eyes were opened to see Christ as this man of war crying and roaring and prevailing against his enemies. He prevailed against his natural enemies in that they couldn't even take his life. A lot of people study his torture as a man, what he endured, the beating even before he got to the cross, and yet no man took his life from him. It says he laid down his life of himself. Such was his power in glory. Such was the commandment that he had received of his Father. Any other man beaten the way he was beaten would never even have made it there. His back lacerated with the whip and yet none of that brought him down. He gave up his life. He commended his soul unto his Father.

So he prevailed against his natural enemies but he prevailed against his spiritual enemies as well. While all the world was against him, there was that thief on the cross that was caused to cry, "Remember me when you come in your kingdom," and there was that Centurion who said, "Never a man has died as this man." This is a man who had seen many deaths and had been responsible for many executions and yet he said, "Truly, this is the Son of God." This is the Son of God.

It may not be a battle that's won like most people think, bringing in masses at the same time, but one thing is for certain: he will prevail against his enemies. I know it because he prevailed against me. He would not let me go the way I would go. He did not let me grow up in religion and die a lost soul. That blood was shed to deliver one such as Ken Wimer in the heat of missionary work out there supposedly serving God but a God I did not know and he took me completely out of all of the citadels of education and religion that I had grown up in and isolated me out in a country in Africa and there alone with his word brought this sinner low at his feet and I've never been the same. What I'm preaching to you has nothing to do with religion or how I was raised or how I was taught. All the glory belongs unto the Lord Jesus Christ himself and his shed blood and that righteousness that he worked out.

You know, just like the Pharisees who didn't like the children and the people as Christ entered into Jerusalem that day to lay down his life, they wanted the crowds to be quiet and the Lord said, "If I command that these be quiet, even the stones will cry out." You can't quiet one of the Lord's that has been taught of him though the whole world rage against him because they know, having been taught by the Spirit what it is to be lost and what it is to be found. That's how Christ prevails against his enemies.

Now, in verse 14, it shows his forbearance, God's forbearance. How important is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? How important is the message of the cross? Here God said, "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once." You could look at that and say, "Well, he's talking about devouring his natural enemies," but I believe in this context it's talking about destroying every obstacle that stood in the way of his justice to

justly redeem sinners. Like a woman giving birth to a baby, a travailing woman. Christ was the seed of a woman. That's unusual. You say, "Well, women don't have a seed, it's the male." Well, he was the seed of a woman who was planted there by the Spirit of God himself and that birth of that woman brought forth into this world a child. "Unto us a child is born," that's his humanity but also it says, "Unto us a son is given." God gave his Son. He did it that he might come and destroy and devour at once. I like that word "at once." In one time, in one place, put away sin. Destroyed the enemy. That's where the battle was fought. That's where it raged and there was never any question of who was going to get the victory because God was with him.

But until then, you notice the words there, "I have long time holden my peace." God was forbearing with that wrath that should have befallen those up to the cross until Christ paid the debt. He was forbearing. If you look over in Acts 17, we've just come through a period of time here where there has been a lot of interest in the Second Coming of Christ. People wondering, "Well, is this the last days? The last time?" and a lot of curiosity about the Second Coming of Christ when the people really haven't understood the first. They assume they do but here's what was before the cross. There was a forbearing and at the cross a finishing.

Here in Acts 17, you notice in verse 30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at." What is he talking about? Well, when you go back and look at how men lived in total ignorance and darkness, "but now commandeth all men every where to repent." When it says that God winked at it, it doesn't mean he made light of men's sin. That would be the appearance, you know, because Christ hadn't died yet and so we find him showing favor to one like David or Abraham or Jacob and you say, "Well, how could God ever show favor to sinners such as these were?" Well, there was a forbearance, "but now," he says, "commandeth all men every where to repent." Now? Since the cross. There was a settling before God. There was a judgment rendered before God on behalf of those people that God had purposed to save. God didn't lower his standard and he proved it and showed it in that he delivered up his own Son to bear the sin of sinners. He died the just for the unjust. They weren't justified before he died otherwise it would say he died the just for the just. He died the just for the unjust.

Now in verse 31, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." What righteousness will he judge the world by? Here again is the ignorance of men. There are many in self-righteousness that hope to stand before God and defend their righteousness. It's like a student showing up on test day and finding out they studied for the wrong test. Whoa. What a shock to find out that you won't be saved based upon any righteousness of your own but only that righteousness which the Lord Jesus Christ himself worked out and God imputed and put to the account of his people.

It says, "whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Do you see where it points us back to? Not something we're doing and working out now. The assurance for every sinner that ever wonders on what basis will God declare them righteous, it has to have been in that work that the Lord Jesus Christ

did there at the cross when he raised him from the dead. All those for whom he died, died in him. All those whom he has raised, were raised in him and that is our hope of eternal glory. Everything until then was forbearance.

If you look over in Romans 3 and now there's no more excuse. God doesn't have to be forbearing because Christ has paid the debt. He has satisfied the law. Now, he is forbearing, the Scriptures say, toward the vessels of wrath. In other words, he immediately casts vessels of wrath into hell. He is forbearing with them. He gives them a good life, feeds them, takes care of them temporally but the only reason he hadn't destroyed this world right now...I hear people say that, "Well, as bad as things are getting, why doesn't God just destroy this place?" Well, there are still some of his sheep for whom he died that he must call and will call as part of the victory that Christ won at the cross. But when that last sheep is brought in, there is no more reason for this world to exist and the Lord will exercise his will and judgment.

But here in Romans 3 in verse 23 it says, "For all have sinned," did sin when Adam sinned, "and come short of the glory of God." That's every one of us in this room, every one of us in this world. "Being justified," literally having been justified, "freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." Propitiation means satisfaction, a turning away of his wrath. How is it that God can show any sinner favor? Well, because Christ finished the work. He is that propitiation. Now, here's where you need to put a comma. There were no commas in the original and some of the editors put the comma after "faith," but it really should be after "propitiation." Everything that he said up to now with regard to putting away of sin has to do with that propitiation but now "through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness," that's what faith in his blood does, it declares his righteousness, notice, "for the remission of sins that are past." If anybody wondered, "Well, how did he deal with the sins of those that were in the past?" it was through his forbearance. Notice it says that, "through the forbearance of God." But now, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness." It was as if God was withholding his wrath from those who lived before the cross until Christ should come and pay the debt and when he did, it was not only for those that were before the cross but since, that was for whom he laid down his life. God's forbearance, his willingness not to put to the account of those that he purposed to save their sin but to withhold as Acts says, to wink, until the accomplishment of his work and what he came to do.

That's why the cross is so vital, why the cross is so important and coming back here to Isaiah 42, Christ is that man of war roaring and devouring and making waste, as it describes there, mountains and hills and drying up all the herbs. Anything that man would ever put his confidence in is taken away and anything that stood in the way. There was no obstacle that men, Satan or this world could put against him that would keep him from accomplishing his mission. He says, "I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools." There are some that say this is in type referring to Cyrus when the Lord would raise him up against the Babylonians and then deliver the people of Israel out of Babylon and send them back into Israel and certainly I have no problem with that but that's a type. Evidently to conquer Babylon, they did some engineering work to dry up some of the

rivers and they walked over on dry land and in areas where the Babylonians weren't even expecting and in a night, that powerful nation fell according to God's purpose and Cyrus happened to be that man of war.

But even there, he was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work that he would come to accomplish and verse 16 tells us that. You see, this man of war, all the power and the glory is revealed in him in a way that to this point had not but we can see here his work was a spiritual work to do. "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not." That's what our nature is. We're born blind. "I will lead them in paths that they have not known," not just show them but lead them. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me," Christ said. "I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." He says, "These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." What a glorious Savior indeed that he is. May the Lord grant us eyes to see him, to know him and certainly to worship him and him alone.