

In December 1823 Europe was eyeballing the western hemisphere for expansion. Places like South America and islands in the Caribbean were enticing. A relatively young country and its daring president decided they didn't like that idea. So they said no. The western hemisphere was closed. Europe would have no business coming in and trying to colonize. Any attempts to do so would be seen as threats to the security of this young country. Various countries in Europe had the desire and the will to expand, but President Monroe declared the United States did not want them getting close.

The new world in which the United States existed wanted separation from the old world of Europe. The U.S. had a new way of governing, new freedoms, but few resources. The influence of the U.S. would only go as far as their resources would allow. Any country's influence is limited that way. God however is not limited. His resources and his power extend over everyone. That means all people of all time are under him. God is involved in every event of this world and in the lives of the people of this world. Everything is under God's power and authority and thus his influence.

The prophet Isaiah was God's spokesman. In the first lesson it was Isaiah writing, but the words were those of God's servant. This servant had God's power, his authority, and seeks to bring God's influence. And all this from a servant. This morning...

**God calls his servant to light
Brings God glory
Savior to the whole world**

Everyone had their favorite teacher. Among all the different subjects, styles, and schools there was one that was your favorite. What if you had to pick your favorite before you ever started school? Given a list of teachers' names you didn't know, you had to pick a favorite. It would be impossible without knowing anything about them. God didn't wait to pick his servant out from the available choices. God chose the servant before that servant was even born. **"Before I was born the Lord called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name."** Somewhat of a secret weapon, God kept this servant hidden away until he would come to take on human flesh. Then he would come at just the right time.

The nation of Israel was God's chosen people in the Old Testament. God called them, he gave them special rules to protect them and keep them separate from all other nations. He sent them priests and prophets who cared for them spiritually. Because they were God's people he had special expectations of them. They were to follow his laws and worship him only. They didn't. They were to honor and glorify him. They didn't. So God would send his servant to succeed where Israel had failed. **"He said to me, You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."** God would use this perfect servant to showcase his glory.

For many chapters Isaiah in his prophecy spoke of Israel going into captivity. This captivity would happen among the Babylonians, a world power at the time. For seventy years they would be unable to leave and have to worship God in a foreign country. But Isaiah promised God's rescue. God's promise of rescue went beyond physically bringing them out of captivity. Israel still needed rescue from the spiritual captivity of sin. God's called servant would serve Israel by leading them and rescuing them from their sins. He would lead them out of spiritual captivity. Like any servant it would involve suffering and personal sacrifice. The servant would toil for the master. He'd exert strength on behalf of someone else. But his toil wouldn't be in vain. God would reward him for his toil.

Being a servant isn't the most positive picture. Servants work for the master, often without recognition, serving others. It's a lowly humbling job. Servants are forced into serving, and no one likes being forced. You might already feel forced at your job to work for low pay, no recognition, and no advancement opportunities. You labor but someone else sees the benefits. And if you get your hopes up and expect a raise or a promotion and it doesn't come you're crushed. Was it all in vain? Parents feel the same way raising their children. Who gives them a pat on the back? The parent works hard to provide food and clothing and makes plenty of sacrifices. Is there even a thank you? And what happens when the child still makes poor decisions, gets involved with drugs or alcohol abuse, or picks up bad habits? Parents feel like it was all for nothing. Like the servant of the Lord in our sinful condition we might say, **"I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing."**

Only one is capable of being God's servant, and he was called before he was born to be the Messiah, God with us, the Suffering Servant. When the time was absolutely right, God called his servant to light for his own glory. Jesus came to speak the Word of God to those who were led to listen and those who didn't want to hear. Jesus used the Word to destroy people's thoughts of getting right with God on their own. Jesus used the Word to build people up in faith and point them to God's servant who came to save them. The servant came to rescue. He came to serve God and serve us. He came to show love. That loving mission was to deliver us all, and that's what he did. From beginning to end his life was one of service to us for God's glory.

Because of some people's rejection it appeared Jesus may have labored in vain. But Isaiah says the servant would get what the Lord wished him to have. **"Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God."** God's reward would come through the love the servant showed. People would be led to respond. We have seen and heard the love of Jesus and his love led us to faith. Now we glorify God for the work of the servant among us. We glorify God because he was willing to send Jesus and Jesus was willing to suffer for us. We glorify God for the success that Jesus found as he saved us and delivered us.

The United States exercised a bit of muscle when the Monroe doctrine was presented. The young nation was hoping to push its influence further. God had sent his servant to one nation, the Israelites. In spite of their frequent rebellion and their captivity they were still God's people. The servant ultimately came for their spiritual rescue. But that was too small. **"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."** The servant was too big and too important to only come for one people. He'd have a bigger mission. Israelites and non-Israelites called Gentiles would also be included, all the way to the end of the earth.

What sounded like a new plan wasn't new at all. The chosen people of Israel would in large part reject the Savior. So God would send the Savior to save any Israelites who trusted in him as well as those around the world who trusted in him. The servant doesn't just bring a deliverance to the ends of the earth. The amazing thing is the servant is the deliverance. He is the Savior for all people to the ends of the earth. A servant who would look rejected, beaten up, and absolutely defeated would be raised by God so even kings and princes would bow down to him.

It shouldn't be a small thing to you that the Savior is for the whole world. A Savior for the whole world definitely includes both you and me. Jesus as Savior goes for every man, woman, and child. But he also is your personal Savior. He didn't shrink back from the hard work of a servant that benefited you. He faced the hard and exhaustive work of living a perfect life for you. He sacrificed himself as a servant for all people especially you. Through his blood you who once were without hope and without God are brought into God's family. Christ Jesus is this Savior. His work as servant saves people, including you, to the ends of the world.

Now it would be too small a thing to keep this to ourselves. The Lord wants mission work done, and he wants us involved. The servant Jesus was put here to serve, so sharing that service with others is what we can do. Share Jesus and talk about him. Speak about what he means to you with others. Tell a friend about the changes you've experienced. Discuss what regular worship means to you. Talk about the darkness of sin and the light of knowing Christ Jesus as Savior. While he is Savior for the whole world, you don't have to talk to the whole world. See your sphere of influence, husbands, wives, children, grandchildren, neighbors, friends, and coworkers. These are where Jesus wants you to share his message of service to save.

The United States was without question thinking big when the Monroe Doctrine was expressed. They were doing it for protection; they were doing it for influence. God thought big when he sent his servant to earth. This servant brought God glory. He was Savior for the whole world. God's gracious purpose was to call his servant to light.