

Sight for the Blind

✧ Needs unknown (vv.14-17)

✧ Needs fulfilled (vv.18-21)

In the name of Jesus, the Servant of the LORD, our soul's **Sight** and Light, dearly redeemed:

What if we were able to upgrade our electronic equipment to dream levels? New projectors with laptop brightness and resolution so everyone could enjoy full depth of color and clarity even online. LiveStream equipment at professional levels. Exciting, right? Until you're asked to evaluate this fine new equipment on the day the Internet died, and electricity failed. Impossible – like unbelievers reading Isaiah.

Let me illustrate. Some years ago I was excited to see in the waiting room of a local rehab center a devotional booklet entitled *Servant Songs of Isaiah*. When I tried to check the Fourth of the *Servant Songs*, Isaiah 53, I was shocked. Formerly even Jewish interpreters saw the Messiah in Isaiah 53. But in that devotional booklet, the Fourth Servant Song of Isaiah was not even listed. Isaiah 53 is Good Friday for us. And every time I open my Bible, Isaiah 53 is still there! I see my Jesus again! Amazing!

Not surprisingly, the other three *Servants Songs* – Isaiah 42, 49, 50 – did not lead to Jesus the Messiah either. Needy souls would see no connection to Jesus as the LORD's Christ because the writers were spiritually blind. It was as if the Internet died, and electricity shorted out. It's the way we are all born spiritually blind by nature. Desperately, beyond comprehension, we need **Sight for the Blind**.

✧ Needs unknown (vv.14-17)

Let's say you're a teenager working ten summers to pay for school. You go to your boss with a simple request: "Granddad, I could sure get a lot more work done if I had a better tractor." There's a sly smile, an unexpected answer, "But then I wouldn't have enough work to keep you busy all summer."

You're out there sweating on an underpowered lawn tractor trying to pull a 12-foot wagon with a short tongue between all the trees. You can't even back up. You have to pick your way carefully or get hung up against a tree trunk. So aren't you glad when somebody else finally convinces your boss to get a little diesel tractor with high-low range, four speeds forward, four in reverse and turning brakes!

Think about it. God doesn't need any of that. He never has to check if the fuel gauge is broken, because he's always fully powered. His batteries never run out; he doesn't need any. God is absolutely almighty, invincible, totally independent of solar and wind because God is their energy source. That's why God does whatever pleases Him no matter what anybody says. In spite of all the human criticism, everything the LORD God does is guided and directed by His infinite mercy. He covered our infinite sin. If you doubt that, consider this: **Christ died for all**. God justified all – universally, objectively – whether they see it or not. God gives **Sight for the Blind** to see His mercy and kindness in Christ full and free.

Hear the LORD's shout of intense love: ***"I have been silent for a long time. I have kept still. I have restrained myself. But now, like a woman giving birth, I will scream. I will gasp and pant."***

Isaiah often pictures the struggles of the Messiah in connection with His birth from the virgin's womb. People naturally want to ignore such pain because humans always default to the theology of glory. And yet throughout Isaiah, God's holy zeal as Savior of the world echoes what Jesus said to his disciples, ***"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."*** (Matthew 16:23-25 NIV84) Because God's kindness took this intense pain on Himself to be our Savior, our Lord can

give expectant mothers a most encouraging promise. In the quiet beauty of *“holy women of the past”* (1 Peter 3:5 EHV), every mother has the Lord’s blessed assurance that *“she will be saved – while bearing children – if they remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control.”* (1 Timothy 2:14 EHV)

As if in childbirth the LORD shouts: *I will dry up mountains and hills. I will make all their grass wither. I will turn rivers into islands. I will dry up pools. I will lead the blind on a way they do not know. Along paths they do not know I will direct them. Ahead of them I will turn darkness into light and rough places into level ground. These are the things I will accomplish for them. I will not abandon them. They will be turned back and completely disgraced— those who trust in an idol, those who say to molten images, “You are our gods.”* Moderns worship idols of *money, power, influence, convenience.*

Spiritual blindness cannot see it’s blind. By nature there’s no reference because we’re all born spiritually sightless. Our infinite **Needs unknown** need infinite help. We need healing from above for...

☆ Needs fulfilled (vv.18-21)

The LORD levels the playing field: *“You deaf ones, listen! You blind ones, watch carefully so that you can see! Who is as blind as my servant? Who is as deaf as my messenger whom I sent? Who is as blind as my associate, as blind as the servant of the LORD? You, Israel, see many things, but you do not observe. Israel opens his ears, but he does not hear.”*

Our old nature is still blind and deaf, yet the LORD does not discriminate. In the Messiah’s perfect, divine justice neither the poor nor rich, neither the famous nor infamous, neither higher ranks and low births have any advantage or disadvantage. *“For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.”* (Romans 11:32 NIV84) In amazing grace God details this mercy in our Midweek Lenten Services as we read the Passion History of our Lord from the four Gospel accounts. *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.* (2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV84) Wednesday evenings light up our hearts with **Needs fulfilled** in God’s kind and glorious way. Come, follow Jesus to the cross.

“Because of his own righteousness, the LORD was pleased to make his law great and glorious.” God’s *law* in the broad sense is literally His *instruction*, preserved for us in the sixty-six books of the Book of Books, the Bible. Here the blind can see and the deaf can hear how God fills **Our Greatest Needs** with His *great and glorious...righteousness*. What God has every right to expect from us, we cannot give. So, God gives His *righteousness* to us like a judge in a courtroom declaring, “Not guilty! Debt paid. You’re free to go.” Our debt God paid in the holy, precious blood of His Suffering Servant who assures us: *“A bent reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not snuff out. He will faithfully bring forth a just verdict.”* (Isaiah 42:3 EHV) By the blood of Christ God’s justice is on our side.

Three years before he died, Martin Luther preached a sermon about people saying, *“The inn was full....If only I had been there! I would quickly have helped the baby Jesus!”* Why don’t you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor, for what you do to your neighbor in need you do to the Lord Christ himself. As Jesus says, *“Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.”* (Matthew 25:40 EHV) So, we pray: “In the hurting eyes of the lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, O Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.”¹ Say, “Thank-you!” for God’s gift of righteousness: school supplies and backpacks for underprivileged children in Colorado; medical equipment, supplies for Africa and Asia; drilling boreholes, wells to clean water in Zambia; technology, vocational training for the poor in Asia; mosquito nets against malaria; warm clothes for widows and orphans; food and support for the poor in Africa, Asia, and Europe. And all along the way, great care that physical help brings with it God’s Word that fills **Needs unknown** with **Needs fulfilled – Sight for the Blind**. Come, see Jesus. Go, show Jesus. Amen.

¹ Quotes from “Christ in My Neighbor,” WELS Christian Aid and Relief, Pastor Dan Sims. (Visit: wels.net/subscribe)
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