

日期：1/08/2012

經文：以賽亞書 42：1—9

題目：僕人之歌（2）

主旨：因耶穌基督是身為僕人之彌賽亞，所以服事的人要以他為典範。

引言：

如果我們對今年的競選有興趣的話，上個禮拜大家的注意力大概都是放在 Iowa 州，這個禮拜將會放在 New Hampshire。在這些的競選的過程裡，我想我們都重復的聽見了一些的採訪，百姓說了這樣的話語‘我們喜歡他的政見、政策，但對於這個人把握不住’，這樣的話語在新聞的媒介下，我想大家都聽過。作為一個領袖他的技巧是非常重要的，要有他的眼光，看見別人看不見的；要能說服別人，將別人帶到大家認為好的境界。但在這個國家，經過最近幾年不同總統的上任，總是不能將一個人的技巧、才干、為人能分開的。所以這個國家在未來的幾年，我們還是會蠻看重一個人是什麼樣的人，而不是把這個人的技巧、才能與這個人完全的分開。

每一年在一月的第二個主日，我們都有一個簡單的長執的就職禮，在這一天我們都是回到神的話語，來看看神的話怎麼教導我們，做一個教會的領袖。當然，領袖這個詞的定義可以很狹窄，也可是一個很廣的圍，就是包括所有服事主的弟兄姐妹們；但是從弟兄姐妹的角度，這個定義是很狹窄的，領袖就是教會的牧師、長老、執事們。所以有著不同的看法，但是我在過去的幾個禮拜包括去年的幾次信息，每次談到領袖有它直接狹窄的定義，也有更廣的。領袖的定義就是任何對人有影響的人，那大概包括了我們當中的每一位（特別是做執事、長老、牧師的）。所以我們要從聖經裡來看，而不是從別的地方得到指示指導，從神的話語來看，什麼是一個教會帶領的人？當我們在讀聖經的時候，舊約也好，新約也好，我們都注意到，聖經裡蠻少提到做領袖應該有的那些技巧，作領袖的技能，好像提的不是很多。但是我們往往看到重復的經文，看的都是領袖是一個什麼樣的人，他的心是如何的。

如果你到這個教會有一段時間，每次我們提到領袖的時候，大概在你心目中該有的聯想就是做僕人。領袖、僕人是一個分不開的觀念。在《以賽亞》這本書裡，42、49、52、53 章，這幾章被叫“僕人之歌”。僕人之歌指的是將來要來的那位彌賽亞，也被稱為僕人的彌賽亞。因為在去年的一個禮拜我們看過《以賽亞》49 篇，所以今天我們在看 42 篇的時候，講道的題目是《僕人之歌二》。今年教會事工的主旨是裝備領袖，建立聖徒。所以我會在這兩個禮拜，接著看《以賽亞書》的僕人之歌，能夠幫助我們從聖經的角度理解，一個做領袖是什麼樣的。在 80、90 時代有許多的書先後的出版，講的是怎麼做個領袖，很多這樣的書都是工商界的，都是工商關係出版的很好的古典的書本。很多教會的傳道人也包括我，被介紹看這些的書，在看的時候卻開始有一點體會，這些教會之外的人在寫領袖書的時候，隱隱約約看到有許多聖經的真理在裡面。蠻特別的就是，在教會內的人，來看領袖書的時候不回到聖經，我們去看教會之外人寫的書。當然，這些都是很好的書，我想這些書的作者你們都很熟悉。但是，我越來越覺得我們跟隨耶穌的人，我們應該更加了

解聖經說的是什麼。所以這幾個禮拜讓我們重溫一下，做神的僕人，無論你是做長老、執事、傳道，還是團契的同工等等，神對我們的要求、期望是什麼？

1. 神的僕人是在他的看顧之下

在今天看的這段經文，首先是第一節：“看哪，我的僕人，我所扶持，所揀選、心裡所喜悅的，我已將我的靈魂給他，他必將公理傳給萬國。”是一句簡單充滿含義的話，這句話就是介紹僕人的彌賽亞，是一個何等模式的介紹。在第6節：“我憑著耶和華的公義呼召你，必攙扶你的手，保守你，使你作萬民的中保，作外邦人的光。”在今年這個競選年，我們時刻都能聽見，這些候選人上來都是，我是某某，介紹自己時，往往會加上一句我不是從首都華盛頓來的，我是首都之外的人。如果你是從國外來的話，一聽你就會覺得首都有什麼不好。中國人就會想你這裡將這個首都你碰都不能碰的，你就拼命的在聲明我跟首都無關的，是首都之外的，首都就好像中國人說的是一個大的醬油缸一樣，你一靠近就會被染色。但從我們的經歷來看，口口聲聲說你是首都之外的，被選上之后你就很快的變成其中一個了，就好像醬油缸，一靠近就會被染色了。所以在這樣的環境下，當我們聽到耶和華介紹他的僕人彌賽亞，是何等新鮮的一個圖畫，這是我的僕人，是屬於我的，是受我揀選、我呼召了他的。而且是我攙扶的、我手拉住的、所保護的，我已經將我的靈給了他了，他是我所喜悅的，何等美的一個身份。

當然，我們小心的不要把自己跟耶穌基督放在同樣的位子上。但是我們也不要忘記，耶穌也邀請我們來效法他，所以想想你和我，教會的執事、長老和在團契裡服事的同工，或任何能影響別人的人，你和我在這個教會裡都是屬於神的，屬於這創造天地的萬軍之耶和華，我們是被他所揀選的、所扶持的，他的手在握住我們；我們也是他喜悅的，並且他的靈已經在我們的身上，我們不需要在禱告的時候說：神啊，求你的靈降臨在我身上，他已經將靈給了我們；也不需要禱告說：神啊，求你扶持我，他說我已經扶持了，這已經成為了事實，是神所給我們的。既然如此，我們能有什麼樣的回應呢？簡單的說三個回應：

首先，要為著神揀選我們，神肯定我們是屬於他的，他的靈已經在我們的身上。而且他是喜悅我們的，為此我們要感謝他。最近在什麼時候，你禱告說：神啊，謝謝你，你揀選了。因為我是屬於你的，你的聖靈已在我的身上。第二，當我知道我是屬於他的，也知道他揀選了我的時候，這個會使我謙卑，知道我今天在這個位置上，絕不是因為我的才干，也不是因為我的恩賜，乃是神的揀選，我是屬於神的，我自己沒有任何可夸的事。第三，當我有了這樣的真理作為我的基礎，我能在不同的地方帶著把握和保障安全在那裡服事神。我做著一切不是在討人的喜悅，因為我知道神已經喜悅我了，已經夠了。記得有一次，大概是好幾年前跟大家分享過的。當我最小的孩子大概三歲多的時候，在所有華人教會舉辦的一次聚會，有兒童的節目，有一個老師到我孩子面前問你是誰，叫什麼名字。小家伙就抬起頭說你不知道我是誰？我爸爸是牧師。後來這個老師跟我們說差點就要向我孩子道歉。他胸有成竹，不是因為他多能干，而是他知道他爸爸是誰。其實，這也是我們都要學的，不是因為你我有什麼才干，而是我們的天父，創造天地的主揀選，呼召了我們，我們

是屬於他的，被他扶持的。所以你和我也能帶著把握在那服事，這不是因為我的才干恩賜，乃是這位神已揀選了我，呼召了我，將他的聖靈賜給了我。

2. 神的僕人是按他的指示而行

神的僕人首先不單有一個清楚的肯定的身份，他也有一個使命。在第 1 節的最后一句話：他必把公理帶給萬國。第 3 節：他憑真實將公理傳開。第 6-7 節：我耶和華憑公義召你，必攙扶你的手，保守你，使你作眾民的中保，作外邦人的光。開瞎子的眼，領被囚的出牢獄，領坐黑暗的出監牢。在一個充滿黑暗、隔離的世界裡，人與神的，人與人的隔離，這個僕人彌賽亞的使命就是成為一個光，成為神與人間的約，把公理、公平、公義帶到這個世界裡。有另外的一句話：這是一個和好的使命。這一位僕人的彌賽亞來了，是為了把人帶給神，也要把人帶到彼此之間的和睦。所以，當耶穌這位僕人的彌賽亞來到的時候，我們就聽見他說我來是要傳好消息，給那些貧窮的人，使那些夏瞎眼的看見，使被俘虜的得自由，釋放被壓抑的。他就是那一位把人帶給神的僕人彌賽亞。同樣，我們要小心，不要將自己跟神跟耶穌同等。但耶穌也多次的呼召我們要學他，效法他。在《哥林多后書》的 5 章有一段話，就是“神在基督裡使世人與自己和好，不在追究他們的過犯，並且把和好的道理托付了我們”。因此，我們就是基督的使者，神藉著我們勸告世人，我們代替基督請求你們跟神和好吧。這不單單的對傳道人、長老、執事，也包括每一個基督徒。在這裡說的，你們在世上的使命、任務，就是把和好的道理傳遞出去。我們是基督的代表，他的使者，神藉著我們要勸告要請求，這個字句是很重的，神說我要你們去求他們。求什麼？求他們與神和好吧。因為人與神隔離了，所有現在屬於他的人有一個使命，就是去求求你啊！相當於今天身邊有一個還沒有信主的朋友或親戚，我求求你，我拜托你跟神和好。這就是一個大事，一個代表要做的，將這個和好的福音帶給這個世界，帶給你我身邊的人，求求他們，跟神和好吧。因為不跟神和好的是好可怕，人與人之間不和好的時候好可怕。所以求，求人與神和好。

去年我跟大家分享過章伯斯的一句話，他說：每一個信耶穌的人都不要再有自己的議程，使命，雄心。我們要有的是神的雄心、議程。神的議程、指示就要成為我們的，要我們成為他的大使要把人帶到他的面前。無論你在哪個崗位服事，神給我們的使命就是把人帶回神那裡，與他和好。你可能在不同的崗位作事工，我們的責任因著我們的崗位不一樣，但是我們只有一個使命/指示，就是我們是耶穌基督的代表，是他的大使，要把人帶回的神的面前。最近我跟教會的長執們有一些分享，我是覺得在我們評審自己的事工的時候，我們不是單單看我今年做了什麼，很多的時不不小心我就會說今年講了多少次的道。人家說你講了這麼多次，你真是辛苦了。真的審核是我做了這麼多，會眾的生命有沒有被改變？是不是很多人因著我們的服事，跟神和好了？是不是因著我們的服事，他們之間更加的彼此相愛？這是我們要問的，我們的責任都不一樣，但是我們的使命只有一個，要使人與神和好。一個神的僕人，有一個清楚的身份，使命，你怎麼樣把他帶出來呢？怎麼樣把人與神和好的使命做好呢？有沒有簡單的技巧你能告訴我的呢？我想在這個及時得到滿足的社會裡，我們要的都是一些簡單的技巧。最好能有一些模式，能下載到手機、ipad 裡面，然後有困難我一看，我要做某點就可以了。會想有沒有十分鐘就能教你做個好

執事的書本呢，在中文裡沒有見過，在英文裡見過。有沒有書叫《領袖 101》《長老 101》《講道學 101》，有的話就好了，一看就知道怎麼去做了。當然技巧很重要，但是聖經裡很少會告訴我們實際的技巧，反而告訴我們關於心的狀況。因為技巧，教會跟教會是不一樣的，也是按人而異，這樣技巧在這個人身上很好，用到另一個人身上就糟糕了。我們也可以想到目標教會和它的手冊，對有些的教會是非常的有效，有了手冊可以很快的帶領人信主，教會成員的成長；但是，當另外的教會在用同樣的書同樣的手冊，卻造成極端的混亂，甚至教會的分裂。也有許多的方式講同樣的道，也有不同方式帶領部門或者教會。如果我們的心不正的話，這一切在神的眼光中大概都不是最重要的。

3. 神的僕人是照他的心意而行

我們再回到今天的僕人之歌，來看看這個作僕人的彌賽亞，神的使者，他的心是怎麼樣的？2 節：他不喧嚷，不揚聲，也不使街上聽見他的聲音。這一個僕人在街上行走的時候，不會打鑼打鼓讓人注意他的，這跟今天的世界是完全顛倒的。在過去的幾個月一直到這未來的幾個月，各樣的政治家、候選人，花盡了錢財，用了上百萬的數目，請那些顧問來幫助他，讓人更加地注意他們，注意他這個人以及傳帶出來的信息。這裡說這僕人在街上的時候，他不呼喊、不揚聲，不叫人在街上聽見他的聲音。如果我們在街上出聲，讓別人注意到我們的時候，不過是把這榮耀帶給我們自己。對於這一點，第 8 節神說：我是耶和華，這是我的名，我必不把我的榮耀歸給假神，也不講我的稱贊歸給雕刻的偶像。在這裡說，如果有注意的話，那注意是在耶和華身上；如果有榮耀的話，榮耀是歸給耶和華的，不會給任何的人。因為只有他配得榮耀，配得注意。一個僕人，他的職責就是要帶人指向這位神，好讓人說這神的好話。當人說神好話的時候，這就是聖經裡說的榮耀神。我們這些做僕人的就是要在末后，教會的長老、執事今天大概是今年最后一次，也是唯一的一次站在大家面前，讓大家知道這個人是誰。當然，這不是讓你注意到某某是長老，某某是執事，你可以好好的為他們禱告。但是這次以后，我們做長老執事的會在幕后默默工作，不揚聲不呼喊，為的是把一切的注意都帶到那位耶和華、萬主之主、創造天地的主。

第二個心態是要有溫柔的心。‘壓彎的蘆葦他不折斷，將息的燈火他不吹滅’這是大家都很熟悉的經文，特別是做了很久基督徒的人，我們都會唱這首歌。我是上中學的時候學會這首歌，大概只有 16 歲，現在想想，16 歲你怎麼知道什麼是壓傷的蘆葦什麼是將息的燈火，一點的小知識，我不知道。但是，這話就一直在我們心裡。雖然，我們沒有經歷像蘆葦將要折斷、像燈火將要熄滅，但是，我想有一天我感覺到像壓傷的蘆葦像將息的燈火時，這位耶和華這位僕人彌賽亞不會折斷不會吹滅，何等的安慰。很多時候，我們成長了，看看我們的周圍，感覺好像壓傷的蘆葦像將息的燈火，我們在那裡問為什麼還要活下去？但是，我們的主在那裡很溫柔的幫我們再一次的站起來，讓我們的火再一次的燃燒。有時候他是直接的介入，也有時是通過另一個信徒，將那位信徒帶到我們的身邊，使我們不被折斷，使我們的燈火繼續燃燒。所以我們當中做領袖的，我們教會的長老、執事、牧師們，透過神的

眼睛來看四周列位，這些人不是我們用來在教會裡可以做這做那的，不是我們手上棋盤上的棋子，服事是重要的，但更是要看到那些生命裡的破碎，在這個世界裡，有太多的人像壓傷的蘆葦像將息的燈火。有人問今天的服事跟二三十年前有什麼差別，我唯一能回答的是在今天的 world 我看到比過去更多的破碎。讓我們用神的眼睛來看這些破碎的心靈，伸出我們的手使這些壓傷的蘆葦不要被折斷，將殘的燈火不要不吹滅。作為神的僕人、教會裡做服事的，神要我們有一顆溫柔的心、柔軟的心，像母親遇上她的嬰孩一樣，讓我們口中出來的話語是建立的，建造的，是有幫助的，鼓勵的。

最后的一個心是不灰心，持久的一個心。他這個僕人不灰心不沮喪，直到在地上設立公義，就是他一直的堅持，直到他任務的完成。這一句話的意思就是說，這僕人的處境是很困難的，是會令他失望灰心的。但是，他沒有灰心沮喪，他一直堅持將給他的任務做好。當有些時候，在事工裡我很需要幫助，我很容易跟一個人說這件事需要你的幫助。這件事很簡單容易的，大概一個星期一兩個鐘頭準備，你就可以勝任的。現在說出來可能沒有人相信的，他會說如果這麼容易的話，你會來這樣的求我，容易的話，很多人都在做了。越來越體會到沒有一個的服侍是簡單的，事先我都會說這個事情不容易，會有很多的挫折，你要不要做，有很多的時間是出力不討好的。有一次一個弟兄，我跟他說這件事進展怎麼樣，他說牧師你就不要給我壓力了，我現在已經很多很多壓力了。我就半開玩笑的說你現在就感覺到壓力，等你做了傳道人你就知道什麼是壓力了，現在你所經歷的都是小兒科的事。

當然，每一個事工都是不容易的，很快你就會發現人不一定跟你合作，反而在那裡批評你，他們給你承諾，最后會令你失望。你以為你有最好的計劃、你講了最好的道，但是很快的有人上來對你說你要做的是什麼，你那篇道是要講什麼，我根本沒有聽懂你說的。這些灰心失望的事是經常會有的，但是不要讓它來控制你。為什麼？因為你是神所揀選的，屬於他的，他要扶持你，他用他的手拉住你，他的聖靈已經降臨在你的身上，他是以你為樂的。你不是單單一個人在做，當你發現這些會令自己灰心失望的時刻，你要來到他的面前；當別人在那裡挑戰你/我的時候，你/我要思考你/我是誰。我們要記住，我的父親就是那位創造主，揀選我扶持我又將他的靈給了我的那位。

在最近的幾年，神給我有一些的機會在國內服事，服事的對象是一些傳道人，我到的培訓都是講道學和教牧學，這是第一次告訴你我做的培訓是什麼，其實我一直不敢告訴你們。如果我說我教講道學，你會說你去那邊教講道學；如果我說我在教教牧學，你會說什麼你在教教牧學，你還不如在這邊先好好的做，再去教人。在那邊教教牧學的時候，我大概會有一天的時間在跟學員看《僕人之歌》，每個人做一些的反思，幫他們怎麼樣從聖經的原則做一個傳道人；同時，我也會跟他們分享我的見證，有喜樂的時刻，也有令自己傷心難過的時刻；有成功的時刻，也有失敗的時刻。當我一邊教一邊聽的時候，很快地就能發現他們所在的那種困難的處境，無論他們是家庭教會的同工，還是公開教會的同工，他們的挑戰都是一樣的。當我聽到他們的困難的時候，我感到非常的慚愧羞恥，因為我感覺我沒有任何的資格埋怨我

在北美的服事。當我想起在休斯頓服事的時候，相對他們，這邊就像天堂一樣，當然我們在這裡想的是剛剛相反，因此，在他們當中的時候，我時常感受到，就算我們沒有去做外面的培訓，他們一樣可以在神的看顧下好好的成長帶領。

去年十一月，我就帶領一批傳道人，在上課期間我就帶領他們唱一兩首詩歌，我就選一些認為大家都熟悉的歌。當然，不難找大家熟悉的歌，帶了一次我就知道自己不是那個該帶的人，就像我唱歌一樣的死氣沉沉，后來我就跟他們說他們選人來帶那個禮拜的詩歌，換幾個都很好，他們來選。結果下午的時候他們就選好了，你們要知道他們不是經常在一起的，他們分散在六十幾個不同的教會。他們就在那裡帶唱，很歡快的場面，這樣的圖景在很多地方都重復的出現，我不能帶，甚至我很難跟他們一起唱。因為我沒有經歷他們所經歷的，我唱不出他們的感受，當我聽他們唱歌的時候，也體會到他們面對的挑戰。

我想沒有一個國外的傳道人願意跟他們換位置的，但當我聽他們唱歌，禱告的時候，我的心靈被觸摸，我忽然覺得不是我在那裡做培訓，是他們在那裡做培訓。當我看到他們的那個投入，又加上他們在教會服事的艱難、挑戰，使我深深地體會到，這就是中國教會的靈魂。他們為什麼能在這艱難的處境下服事？如果在西方我們早就會說了，這樣的情況年輕人就不會出來服事，因為太苦了。但是我發現每一次去的時候，在不同的城市，去參加培訓的都是越來越年輕的，一開始都是四五十歲的，現在最年輕的隻有二十二歲。他們還是出來，他們知道那個辛苦，還是在那裡服侍，原因在什麼地方？——這是我的僕人，我服侍他，我所揀選的，我的心喜悅他。我們一起禱告：天父啊，我們謝謝你，因你的話再一次鼓勵我們.....

Date: 01/08/2012

Text: Isaiah 42:1-9

Title: Servant Song (2)

Theme: Since Jesus Christ is the servant Messiah, therefore those who serve in His kingdom are to model after Him.

Introduction:

Last week many eyes were upon the Iowa's Republican caucus. This week it will be New Hampshire. We have heard this sentiment expressed many times; "I like his policy, but I am not too sure about him as a person." Leadership skill is important, but in this country, we still put weight on who you are as a person.

Every year, on the second Sunday in January, we have a simple service to install the deacons and elders of HCC. On this day, we turn to God's word to see what we can learn about being a leader in HCC, in God's church. In our study of the scriptures, we noticed that there are few mentions of the so called leadership skills. Yet most of the passages is about what kind of a person a leader is.

By now, if you have been attending HCC regularly, you probably will, rightly so, associate leadership with servanthood. In the book of Isaiah, there are 4 chapters called the Servant Songs. They provide us with a snapshot of the Servant Messiah, Jesus Christ. Since in January, 2011, we studied one of these chapters: 49, so this morning's sermon title is Servant Messiah 2. This year, our ministry theme is Equipping the Leaders to Equip the saints, so from today and the next two Sundays, we will study the remaining 3 Servant Songs. As we serve in this and other churches, it is our desire to model after the Servant Messiah.

I. God's servant is under his watching eyes.

Vs.1, "[Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;](#)

I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.” A simple but poignant sentence. What an introduction to this servant Messiah! This being the election year, we will have an earful of candidates saying, I am so and so, I am not from Washington D.C. We see D.C. as a huge soy sauce jar; anyone who gets near it will be tainted. However, no matter how much of an outsider you are, it appears that the moment you are elected, you become one of them, you are tainted. Isn't it refreshing to hear that this servant belongs to God, chosen by God, sustained by God, that God delights in him and God's spirit is upon him? So, what does this mean to us?

We have to be careful not to equate ourselves with the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Yet, he has also invited us to learn from him. So, imagine, you and I, leaders in God's church, belonging to him, chosen by him, sustained by him, He is well pleased with us and his spirit is upon us. We don't even need to pray and ask that we belong to him; that he will sustain us and his spirit would come upon us, He's already here with us. These are God's endowment to us. We can respond in three ways:

First, thank God for choosing us, affirming that we belong to him, that his spirit is upon us and is pleased with us. Secondly, knowing that I belong to Him and am chosen by him, will keep me humble for I know there is nothing I can be proud of. Thirdly, with this as the foundation, we can serve in this and other churches with confidence and security. We are not doing this, in order to please God or to please men, for God is already pleased with us..

I remember an incident about Sean, my youngest son. When he was a toddler and in a children's program while the adults were attending a joint city wide gathering, his teacher asked for his name, and he responded, “you don't know me? My dad is the

pastor.” The teacher said, oh, I am so sorry. Sean was so full of confidence because he knew who his father was. Isn’t this something we can learn from? Because we belong to God, are chosen and sustained by him, we too can serve and lead with confidence. Not confident in ourselves, but in the God who has first called and chosen us.

II. God’s servant is under His directives.

God’s servant not only has a clear and unfaltering identity, he/she is also given a mission. “I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.” Vs 3,6,7, “he will faithfully bring forth justice;.....”⁶ “I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,⁷ to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.” In a world that is dark and full of alienation; from God and from each other, the Servant Messiah’s mission was to be a light and to bring about justice. It is a ministry of reconciliation; bringing people to God and to each other. And with the coming of Jesus, the servant Messiah, we saw him setting the prisoners free, gave light to the blind. Again, we are to be careful not to equate ourselves with Jesus, but to be mindful that we are called to be like him. In 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, we have these words: “¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” So, what is our mission, our agenda? To bring about reconciliation between men and God, and men with each other.

Last year I shared with you a thought from Oswald Chambers that we have no

agenda of our own. God's agenda is to be ours. God's agenda, directive is that his servant be his ambassadors, to bring people to Him. No matter in what capacity we are serving, our mission, our directive is to bring people to God, to be reconciled with Him. When we serve in the Adult Education, Outreach, Assimilation, General Affairs, Children and Youth departments, our responsibilities may be different, but we all have one mission, one directive, that is we are Christ's ambassadors, to bring others to God. I have also shared this with the elders and deacons recently. When we look at our ministry, or when we evaluate ourselves, we don't just look at what we have done or accomplished, but to see how our ministries have affected people's lives. Have they come to know the Lord because of what we do? Are we bringing people closer to the Lord? We are on a mission: to bring people back to God.

III. God's servants serve with God's heart.

We have a clear identity and mission. Now how do we carry out this mission? How do we bring about this reconciliation between God and men? Are there skills we need to know? In this instant society, we want some simple skills, or Apps to help us, so that all we need to do is to press a button, and the methods are all there. we want a manual like: 10 minutes to be an effective ambassador for Christ, Counseling for Dummies; Preaching for Dummies, Leading a church for Dummies. Certainly skills are important, yet the scripture seldom provide us with that. Instead, the scriptures constantly tell us about our heart condition. Skills and techniques will vary from church to church. The Purpose Driven church and its operating manual works well with some churches, but brings havoc to others. There are many ways to preach a sermon, to lead a department and to lead a church. But if the heart is not right, it is really nothing in God's sight. Let's

take a look at what this Servant Song tells us about the condition of the servant's heart.

First, a humble heart. Vs. 2, “²He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;” this servant will not make noise so that others will notice him. This is so upside down to today's attitude. Politicians spend millions of dollars to hire consultants to make them noticeable and marketable. Mit Romney and some other candidates spent two months going to every Iowa county to make themselves known. We keep telling ourselves, publicity is number one. But here we read that don't make noise just in case others will notice you. If we make others notice us, we are bringing attention and glory to ourselves. What does vs. 8 say? “⁸I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.” If there is anyone to be noticed, it will be God. If there is any glory, it will go to God. A servant is to point others to God, so that others will speak well of God, to give him the glory. We the servants are to be in the background. To the elders and deacons among us, this will be the one time in a year that you will stand in front of the congregation, so the people can know who you are. From now on, you will be working in the background, without being noticed, and yet pointing others to Christ, so that he alone will get the honor and glory.

Secondly, a tender heart. Vs.3, “³a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;..” this is a favorite text for many of us. As we look at life, there are times we feel that we are that broken reed, like the candle that is about to go out. Yet our Lord, so tenderly helped us to stand, and to start glowing again in the dark. Sometimes it was his direct intervention, other times it was through another believer. As a servant leader, we are to learn to see people through God's eyes. They are not just individuals that can help and serve in this church, but with soft and tender hearts

to see them as reeds about to be broken and candles about to go out. As a servant, as a leader, God wants us to be tender, gentle to them, like a mother being tender to her children. Last year this time we learned that our words are to encourage and help those that carried heavy burdens of life. No matter who they are, be tender towards them.

Lastly, a persistent heart. Vs. 4, “⁴He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth;..” The servant Messiah will not grow faint or discouraged implies there are times he will face situations and events that can cause him to grow faint and discouraged. And in those moments, he is to stand firm and be strong. When I find myself desperate for help, I am so tempted to say, “this is not a difficult ministry. Anyone can handle it, and you certainly will have no problem doing so.” Now, have you heard this before? Do you believe in it? Instead, I learn to tell you as it is, “this ministry is not easy, you will get burn out real fast if you don’t do it properly; it will take up quite a bit of your time, and if you don’t work smart, you will be out in no time.” Once a brother, who was preparing for ministry said, “I have too much on my plate, too much pressure.” I jokingly responded to him, “If you think this is bad, wait till you actually start your ministry.”

On a serious note; ministry, any kind of ministry; is difficult. Soon you will find out that people, instead of cooperating, will criticize you. They may have promised but eventually let you down. You think you have the best program, preached the best sermon, and someone will come up and say, I really don’t understand what you are trying to say. Discouraging and disappointing events can occur daily; but don’t let them get to you. Why? God has chosen you, you belong to him, he will sustain you, his spirit is upon you. You are not doing this alone. So when you find yourselves in those situations and

moments, come and talk to him. So, in those moments when people challenge us, who are you? What, you don't know me? My father is the creator, the almighty God and

Conclusion:

In recent years, God has given me opportunities to serve different ministers in China. I either teach Homiletics or Pastoral theology. In pastoral theology I taught biblical principles of what it means to be a minister and also share with them my experiences, the joyous moments as well as the sad and failing moments. However, in teaching, as I listen to them, I quickly learned of the difficult situations they are in. Whether they are house churches or open church ministers, they face similar challenges. When I learn of their hardships, I find myself ashamed, that I really have no right to complain about my ministries in NA. Compared to my ministries in STL and Houston, they would consider it heaven, even though at times I may consider it otherwise. I also come away realizing that even without our going there to train and teach, they will do just as well under God's watchful eyes.

In November, in between the classes, I led them in singing one or two songs that I am familiar with. After one session, I realized that I am not the right person to do so. So I asked them to name one person to lead. Here are two clippings of the same group.

Yes, their ministry was tough, challenging and no minister from outside China would like to trade places with them. Yet as I listened to their singing and how they prayed; I was deeply touched. And I realized that this is the soul of the churches in China. Why were they able to continue in spite of the hardships? ⁴¹[Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him;..](#)"