

The Mission of Jesus – Is 61:1-3

After being away for a few weekends, worship is especially good for my soul

We were able to worship at HBC Aurora last weekend, and I look forward to *preaching* at Harvest West Des Moines in a few weeks

In fact, I'd appreciate your prayers in that respect as we travel and minister to others a few more weeks yet this summer

And as always, I'm thankful for those who preached in my absence – it makes being away much easier

I'm also thankful for the discipleship these past few weeks in our Student Ministries

From our high school students at summer camp, to our JH students on a missions trip, to our 3-5th graders at camp KidJam

It's something we can all rejoice in and be thankful for, b/c we all play a part in making it happen, and we all benefit as the body of Christ (**Intro**)

➤ That said, I'd love for you to turn with me to Is 61:1-3 this week

We're nearing the *end* of our study of Isaiah, with only 3 more messages after this; And they're all chuck full of truths and prophecies and connections . . .

That directly relate to our lives – just like this one

[1] The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; [2] to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; [3] to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

If there was ever a mission statement for Jesus – an overarching, all-encompassing set of guiding principles for his work, this is it

Is 61:1-3 is the mission of Jesus (Lk 4:16-21)

It's why he came; And I say that, not just b/c it fits his ministry and all that he did, but b/c he quoted it, as referring to himself

And that's found in Lk 4:16-21, which I want you to see for yourself

[16] And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. [17] And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, [18] “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, [19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” [20] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. [21] And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Boom! In one fell swoop, Jesus not only claimed that the text in Is 61 refers to *himself*, but that in that moment, it was *fulfilled*

Not b/c he *did* all those things right then, but b/c the Holy Spirit was upon him, and had anointed him to *do* these things

To make this his mission – with all the riches, resources, wisdom, and power of God at his disposal; That's what's implied by the statement in v18a . . .

That *the Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me*

All of which makes Is 61:1-3 the mission of Jesus – the things he did, and the things he's about, even now; Starting with this

Jesus came . . .

1. To bring good news to those in need – Have you _____ it?

Flip back to Is 61, and look at v1

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor [the afflicted, the distressed]

Those in trouble; For *any* reason at all, including sin; That's the idea of *the poor*

Or as one **commentator** put it – Jesus came to bring good news to . . .

Those who are so broken by life that they have no more heart to try

Those who are so bound up in their various addictions that liberty and release are a cruel mirage (next slide)

Those who think that they will never again experience the favor of the Lord, or see his just vengeance meted out against those who have misused them

Those who think that their lives hold nothing more than ashes, sackcloth, and the fainting heaviness of despair (Oswalt, Isaiah, 565)

IOW he came to bring good news to those who need it*****

And make no mistake, we all do; B/c we've all been there at one point or another in our lives; Not to mention the fact that we've all sinned and face condemnation

The good news is for everybody, b/c everybody *needs* it

The question is . . .

Have you heard it?

Have you heard the good news of Jesus?

That God the Father so loves you, that he sent his Son to *rescue* you? To come to earth, take on flesh, live a perfect life, and die on a cross as a perfect sacrifice . . .

To pay the price for your sins? Have you heard that?

And have you heard that he rose again on the 3rd day to *triumph* over sin and its consequences? So that, if you confess your sins and believe in him . . .

You *too* will be saved? Spared from eternal damnation in the throes of hell, and given a place in heaven?

And filled w/ the Holy Spirit to live for God's glory, while we wait for Christ's return?

Have you heard that? As someone in *need*? And someone who *admits* their need?

If not, now's the time; That's the first part of Jesus' mission

2nd, he came . . .

2. To heal the broken-hearted – Do you _____ it?

Or as Isaiah said it – *to bind up the brokenhearted*; It's a picture of wrapping a wound to protect it, and hold it together, and help it heal

And when it comes to the heart, only *Jesus* can do that; Only *he* can bind *those* wounds

Only *he* can work on the spiritual and emotional plane of our lives

Only he can restore a shattered *life*; And it's his mission to do so

That's why we can cast all our cares on him; And trust him; And draw near to him; And
cry out to him; And confidently wait on him
B/c there's healing in his wings (Mal 4:2); And many of you have experienced it
From the loss of a son or daughter, to the pain of personal betrayal, to the
disappointment of someone's failure
You've been there, you needed it, and you've been healed

What about the rest of you?

Do you need it?

Are you heart-broken over something you have no control of? Are you suffering the pain
of emotional let-down? If so, cry out to Jesus; That's where the healing starts
Call on him in prayer and ask him to mend your broken heart; Every day if necessary;
Every hour if needed

I love that Chris Rice song in that respect, called "Untitled Hymn"

*Sometimes the way is lonely; And steep and filled with pain
So if your sky is dark and pours the rain
Then cry to Jesus; Cry to Jesus; Cry to Jesus and live*

3rd, Jesus came . . .

3. To free us from sin – Do you _____ it?

That's the idea of v1b – *The Lord has anointed me . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound*
Or as Jesus said it – *to set at liberty those who are oppressed* [Lk 4:18b]

And while there was a near-term fulfillment of this in the Israelite's release from captivity,
it's not until Jesus that we find the *ultimate* fulfillment
Freeing us from the bondage and grip and power and consequences of *sin* in our lives,
through his death and resurrection
It's just like Gal 5:1 says – *For freedom Christ has set us free*
Not freedom to do whatever we want; But freedom from the slavery and penalty of *sin*,
to do what *God* wants

The question is . . .

Do you want it?

Do you *want* to be free? Do you *want* to be released from that irresistible downward pull?
Like the pull of gravity on a skier; B/c that's what life is like apart from Jesus; It's a
downhill slope, headed toward a cliff, with a fiery pit below
And the more you *indulge*, the greater the pull

Which is why God has given us signposts along the way to awaken us and warn us
Like our conscience; And his work of creation; And the events of our lives; And the
Bible; And church; All signposts of warning, and guideposts to *freedom*

But they don't do any good if you don't *want* to be free; If you're not *sick* of your sin; If
you're in denial; Or you actually *like* cycle of sin, guilt and frustration
Jesus came to free you from your sin, but you have to want it

4th, Jesus came . . .

4. To give us a fresh start – Have you _____ it?

That's what he means in Lk 4:19, when he quotes v2 saying – [God] *has sent me . . . to
proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.* (Lk 4:19)

That is, the time in which his *grace* can be found; Just like the Year of Jubilee in
Isaiah's day; That's what the words here, allude to

Found in Lev 25 (v8-55), every 50 years God's people took the whole year off, canceled
everyone's debt, returned all the property to its original owners, and started *fresh*
The very thing that Jesus offers thru the cross; Think about it
He cancels all our debts, leaves our past behind, restores our broken relationship, and
makes us new (2 Cor 5:17)

Only it's not just for a year, it's for a lifetime

And when he ushers in the *new* heaven and *new* earth, it'll be an *eternity* of jubilee
It's all a part of Jesus' mission – to give us a fresh start, starting right now

The question is . . .

Have you received it?

Have you? Have you made the year of the Lord's favor your own? Have you become a
new creation in Christ? Have you made a fresh start? You can
You're never too bad, and it's never too late; At least while you're still living

➤ About 20 years ago there was a man named Westley Allan Dodd who tortured,
molested, and murdered 3 boys in the Northeastern United States
And after being tried and convicted, he was sentenced to hang
And right after the execution, one of the 12 media witnesses read Dodd's last words . . .
"I thought there was no hope and no peace. I was wrong. I have found hope and peace
in the Lord Jesus Christ."

That's a fresh start; For all eternity; Despite the fact that it violates our sensibilities for
such an evil person
But the grace that saved Westley Dodd, is the same grace that saves you and me, and
it's sufficient for both of us; The question is, have you received it?
Have you opened your hands to let go of *your* life, and received the fresh start of his

5th, Jesus came . . .

5. To warn us of judgment – Do you _____ it?

Or in Isaiah's words – he was anointed to proclaim *the day of vengeance of our God* (2)
That time of judgment when Jesus will return to separate those who follow him from
those who don't, just like he told us in Mt 25
The former, to be welcomed into his presence, and the latter to be sent to hell
Part of his mission was to warn us of that

The question is . . .

Do you believe it?

B/c if you don't, you're in trouble; And there will come a day when you stand before the
great white throne judgment as it says in Rev 20 (v11) . . .
And be thrown into the lake of fire for all eternity if your name's not written in the book
of life; Don't be stubborn in your unbelief – you're flirtin' with disaster

6th, Jesus came . . .

6. To comfort those who mourn – Have you _____ it?

Referring to those who grieve; Those who lament; Those in sorrow

It could be sorrow over your sin; It could be grief over the sin and mess of others

It could be a depressed state of your soul due to your circumstances; Whatever

One of the reasons Jesus came, was to comfort you – with his words, his promises, and his presence

The question is . . .

Have you experienced it?

B/c you can; Even in the *midst* of your trials

➤ I love the example of Allen Gardiner in that respect

He was an English missionary in the mid 1800's; And while traveling by ship off the southern tip of South America, he was thought to have been lost at sea

But in 1852, a search party found his body on a deserted island, and with it, a *journal*

And in that journal he wrote of their shipwreck, and struggle, and loneliness, and

“almost intolerable” thirst for water

An experience you'd think would make a man bitter

But not Gardiner; B/c he also wrote out Scripture passages like Ps 34:10 . . .

“The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.” (KJV)

IOW he took comfort in the *promises* of God, even though he was experiencing just the opposite at that point

And his last journal entry, penned in feeble handwriting near his death, was this – “I am overwhelmed with a sense of the *goodness* of God.”

Despite his hunger, his thirst, his weakness, his isolation, and his struggle for life itself – he found comfort in the goodness and presence of God

And you can too if turn your eyes on Jesus, and *keep* them there; If you look *full* in his wonderful face, so that the things of earth grow strangely dim

He may not *relieve* your struggle, but he'll sure comfort you in the midst of it

It's what he came to do

7th, he came . . .

7. To give us joy – Do you _____ it?

Like it says in v3 – *To grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit*

It's a picture of joy; Joy that comes from being clothed in garments of salvation and robes of righteousness (10); Joy that turns our mourning into dancing (Ps 30:11)

Not that it's something you can manufacture, but only receive; He came to *give* us gladness

The question is . . .

Do you have it?

Have you received, and do you enjoy, the joy of the Lord? I hope so; B/c it not only makes all the difference in how you *live* your life, but how you *end* your life

➤ In his book *If God Is Good*, Randy Alcorn relates a story about an elderly woman named Mabel

Mabel was 89 years old, blind, almost deaf, and suffered from a cancerous condition that ate at her face

In fact, it so deformed her, that her nose was pushed to the side, her eye drooped, and the disfigurement of her jaw caused her to drool constantly

All of which forced her to live in a nursing home for 25 years, strapped to a wheelchair

And on one particular Mother's Day, a man named Thomas Schmidt, who had befriended her, gave Mabel a flower and said, “Mabel, Happy Mother's Day”

And upon trying to smell it Mabel said this – and I want to read you the rest of the story as recorded by Schmidt

“Thank you” she said, her words garbled. “It's lovely. But since I'm blind, can I give it to someone else?” When he wheeled her to another resident, she held out the flower and said, “Here, this is from Jesus.”

Schmidt asked, “Mabel, what do you think about when you lie in your room?”

“I think about my Jesus,” she said

“What do you think about Jesus?”

And as she spoke slowly and deliberately, he wrote down her words: “I think how good he's been to me. He's been awfully good. . . . I'm one of those kind who's mostly satisfied. . . . I'd rather have Jesus. He's all the world to me.”

Then Mabel started singing, “Jesus is all the world to me, my life, my joy, my all. He is my strength from day to day.”

Thinking of this woman bedridden, blind, nearly deaf, cancer eating her for 25 years, Schmidt said, “Seconds ticked and minutes crawled, and so did days and weeks and months and years of pain, without human company and without an explanation of why it was all happening – and she lay there and sang hymns. How could she do it?”

The only good answer to that question [Alcorn adds], is supernatural. The Jesus Mabel loves is the Jesus who sustains her. (Randy Alcorn, *If God Is Good*, p124-25)

And I would add, the Jesus who gives her joy, b/c of the joy she gives him

I hope you have it; And if you don't, I hope you make your life one great big pursuit of it; B/c God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied, most joyful, in him

Last, Jesus came . . .

8. To make us righteous – Do you _____ it?

God anointed him with his Spirit, to do all these things – *that they* [we, his people] *may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.*

Jesus came to fix our righteousness; Establish it; Grow it; Just like an oak tree is firmly established in the earth, and grows to the glory of the one who planted it

That's what Jesus came to do in us

The question is . . .

Do you show it?

Is God glorified in your life? Does his righteousness *shine* in you?

I hope so; B/c he's done an awful lot for us; Including sending Jesus on a mission