

Isaiah 61:1-11

(Luke 2)

"Messiah's Ministry"

It's somehow extremely *fascinating* yet can be extremely *frustrating* at the same time. This element of prophecy that gives no regard, seemingly no respect to time. & It's not uncommon. That the prophet can be speaking of a time (perhaps currently, or even out into the future significantly) & w/the single stroke of his pen, he jumps centuries, perhaps 1,000's of yrs (in the same sentence) & then comes right back where he started (or perhaps goes out even farther into the future (which is the case w/our text today). ☺

It's the ministry of the Messiah that Isaiah brings into focus for us. Now, we've spoken before of what we refer to as "progressive revelation". Meaning, that (for whatever reason) God has chosen to *not* spill everything at once w/regard to His purpose & plan of salvation. But has chosen to reveal different elements & dynamics & dimensions of it as time goes by.

The same holds true as He chooses to reveal the Man & the ministry of the Messiah. For example, directly after the fall God revealed that the Messiah would come forth from the Seed of the woman. (Pointing to the fact that His birth wouldn't be of a natural order to say the least, the woman carries the egg, the man carries the seed. But in this case a man wouldn't be necessary). **W/Abraham & Isaac, God was revealing the love of a father for his only son & that the Father would be willing to lay down the life of His only begotten Son. Exodus shows us that He would be the perfect (w/out fault, w/out blemish) sacrificial Lamb of God who would take away sin. (I trust you get the idea).**

Already in the book of Isaiah we've learned that from man's perspective, unto us a Child would be born, from God's perspective, unto us a Son would be given (Isaiah 9). He would rule. He would be eternal in nature. His name would be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace. In Ch 11 we learn a little bit more about this Man. **"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."**¹ Isaiah 53 is a graphic portrayal of His vicarious death & hints at (or begins to develop the principle of) His resurrection. & Even beyond that, Isaiah has detailed in no small manner the glorious state of His 2nd coming & the kingdom that He will establish over the earth for 1,000 yrs... In fact, that's what we've been considering in Ch 60 & again today in Ch 61...

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Is 11:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But 1st, Isaiah interrupts our regularly scheduled program (considering the Millennial Kingdom & the 2nd coming of Christ) to rewind time (though it was still over 700 yrs away from *his* time) to give us a glimpse into the Messiah's ministry at His 1st coming.

Now, I should say this as well. The prophets didn't *know* they were writing of 2 separate events surrounding the coming of the Christ. Nor were they able to reconcile everything they themselves were writing. Peter makes that clear in no uncertain terms in 1st Peter 1:10-12 (you might write it down & look it up later). They were just being faithful to pen what the Holy Spirit inspired them to write & trusting the Lord for it, even though they themselves might not perfectly understand it.

We have the privilege of hindsight & through that we're able to see a little more clearly. But even still there are no small number of things that (in like manner) we may not fully understand, but we trust the Lord for it because He has said it & He is not a man that He should lie. Listen, God didn't tell you to *understand* everything He's said. He told you to *believe* everything He's said.

Vs 1-2a

When Jesus began His public ministry, the 1st thing He did was come to J.B. to be baptized. & We're told that while He prayed, heaven was opened & the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form (in some kind of visible/tangible way) upon Him.

From there He went out into the desert to fast & pray for 40 days & to be tempted by the devil. After that, He returned to His little hometown of Nazareth & entered the synagogue in which He'd been brought up. (Let's look together in [Luke Ch 2:16-21](#))

Vs 16-21

Don't you love it when scripture speaks to scripture? It takes the hard work out of it. We don't have to really compare scripture to scripture, & seek to find the accurate interpretation because God has done it for us... & I love that. We don't have to wonder who Isaiah was talking about in Isaiah 61 because Jesus tells us, "He was speaking of *Me*."

Now, you'll notice that Jesus stopped reading right in the middle of Vs 2 (just like I did w/you). He didn't say, "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, & the day of vengeance of our God". Why not? Because *that* element of His ministry will take place at His 2nd coming, it wasn't reserved for His 1st coming. Jesus was (as Paul would say) "rightly dividing the word of truth". Fascinating to realize that by the time Jesus *began* His ministry He was already in tune w/the fact of His death/resurrection & 2nd coming.

But this is what I was talking about in our time of introduction.

Isaiah was already speaking into a time that's still yet future for you & me. Then he snapped back at least 2,000 yrs to the 1st coming of Christ, *then* (in the course of a word, the word "and") he jumps *back out* at least 2,000 yrs to the return of Christ & continues on into the Millennial Kingdom.

But there are a few things I want you to see here. #1 We see the Triunity of God in the very 1st Vs. "The Spirit", "The Lord God" "Upon Me" (Messiah, Jesus, the Son).

The 2nd thing I want you to see is that it's God who empowers & directs this "Anointed One" through His Spirit. So, He's being *led* of God & because He's empowered by the *Spirit* of God, that will ensure He successfully accomplishes the *will* (the plan/purpose) of God... It was not uncommon for Jesus to say things like, "*The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.*"² & Again, "*For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.*"³ He was *led of* & directed *by* the Father, through the Spirit.

*"The Spirit of the LORD God is upon Me..." (Don't miss this) "*Because*". The word "because" implies purpose. One might ask the question, "What was the point?" "Why did God put His Spirit upon Him, or upon *anyone* for that reason?" I'm glad you asked ☺ .

"*Because, the Lord has anointed Me* (think, empowered/consecrated Me) to (notice) *preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, & the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*"

Listen, when God places His Spirit *upon* you, when He *anoints* & *empowers* you, it's for a purpose. And here's the hard truth, the purpose isn't really to (in any way) serve you. Did you see anything in this list that would personally profit the One whom God anointed? I didn't. – God *empowers* you, *anoints* you, places His Spirit *upon* you (enabling you in supernatural ways) for the sake of *others around* you!

Yet how common is it that people, rather than *ministering* the gifts that God has invested into them for the sake of others, wind up *burying* the gifts & allowing them to lie dormant in their lives due to any number of excuses (too embarrassed, too introverted, don't have time, ad infinitum)? Read 1st Cor 12, 1st Peter 4:10-11, Romans 12, Eph 4. There's a common theme woven through them all. – That God sets each of us as members in the *body*, gifted in ways unique to us *specifically* by which God would have us minister to, build up, edify & encourage one another.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 8:29]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 12:49]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now; I'm deviating slightly from our text. But I'm wanting you to catch the application. God anoints you, empowers & enables you for a purpose. To minister, to bring hope & healing to others. Let's not just *talk* about it, let's *be* about it. *

But *we see here the ministry of the Messiah. To preach good tidings (good news, the gospel) to the poor. It's not a reference to financial poverty, but to spiritual poverty. Sin impoverishes people. It's what Jesus was talking about when He said, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"⁴ Sin morally/spiritually bankrupts people, leaves you unable to pay the debt it incurs before God. Jesus has good news. He came to pay the debt we owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay. & All God asks is that we believe in J.C. (trust in the sufficiency of His payment on our behalf). Jesus said that like this, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*"⁵ And again, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*"⁶ He came to preach glad tidings to the poor. He didn't come to call the righteous (people who think that because they're so religious that they're doing fine) but the sinner to repentance. Recognize your need, repent of your sin, believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved. *

He was sent to heal the brokenhearted. – The psalmist said this; "*The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.*"⁷ The Bible teaches that God is Love. It would only stand to reason then that He has this innate, or intrinsic care & compassion for the one w/the broken heart... If that's you, you need to know that Jesus wants to bring healing & wholeness to your heart. But you've got to let Him get close enough to administer His healing touch, to work in your life... As people, we can sometimes grow weary of people whom we might consider to be always depressed or emotionally crippled. But ladies & gentlemen, that's ministry. Jesus had a concern, He looked on the hurting w/compassion... Healing hurting hearts is what He's about.

He's about setting people free from the chains & the bondage & the slavery to sin (write it down & read it later Jn 8:31-36)! "& Opening the prison to those who are bound". Now... there's a sense in which Isaiah may be simply reiterating (sort of underscoring) liberty to the captives (w/that statement). But scripture speaks of a fascinating event that happened when Jesus died on the cross... Where did He go & what did He do?

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 5:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 5:24). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 6:47-48). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 34:18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The Bible teaches that prior to the resurrection of J.C. There were actually 2 compartments in hell. On one side were those who were in torment & on the other, those who awaited the coming of the Messiah by faith were in Paradise (otherwise known as Abraham's bosom). Between the 2 compartments was a great gulf fixed so that no one could pass from one side to the other. (Jesus teaches on this in Luke 16).

The reason for this is because no one could enter heaven prior to perfect atonement being provided through the death & resurrection of Jesus. So they were "bound" there, being comforted until they could be released to enter heaven. & Paul teaches us in Eph Ch 4 that when Jesus died upon the cross, that before He *ascended* on high, He 1st *descended* into the lower parts of the earth. That is, He descended into hell. But not on the side of torment (as some blasphemous positions would hold, the price was already paid at the cross. "It is finished"! He descended into paradise (remember what He told the thief on the cross?), "Today you will be w/Me in...Paradise".

& He ministered to those in Abraham's bosom (presumably sharing the gospel w/them) & led "captivity captive" taking them to heaven when He ascended. & This is why (it would seem) you read that strange occurrence in Matt's gospel that after Jesus died, there was a great earth quake & the graves were opened & many bodies of the saints that had died were raised; & coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into Jerusalem & people saw them walking around the streets! ☺ He "opened the prison to those who were bound". & Now, to be absent from the body is to be present w/the Lord.

& * He came to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. That is, now is the acceptable time to be saved. This is the time in which God is offering salvation to mankind. Such won't always be the case. You recall, Noah (whom Peter refers to as a "preacher of righteousness") preached & preached for 100 yrs, but finally the day arrived when the rains came, Noah & his family entered the ark & were saved. But the opportunity to call upon the Lord, to be saved by the Lord came to an end. All that was left was the fearful indignation of God's judgment. Even so, the day & the hour is coming (no man knows the day & the hour, God the Father knows, we don't) when the opportunity to hear the gospel, believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved will be over. The door will be shut as it pertains to *salvation* & all that will be left is the indignation & condemnation of God's judgment. & That's why Paul writes in 2 Cor, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."⁸ *

Which is what the next line in Vs 2 points to that Jesus did not read when He taught in the synagogue on that day... “And the day of vengeance of our God”. Sin invokes God’s vengeance, His retribution. God is Holy, His is Righteous. His righteousness demands justice.

But w/this sudden shift of gears, Isaiah takes us from the 1st coming of Christ to His 2nd coming. From the suffering Servant to the Conquering King. & Note the grace of God in that the “acceptable time” is pictured in time as the “year” as to where the vengeance of God is pictured as a “day”.

Jesus will return, He will take care of business & move immediately into the ministry of comfort, restoration & rejuvenation. Notice

Vs 2b-3

There are those who will be on the earth at the return of Christ who came to know Him, gave their lives to Him after the rapture & remained faithful to Him until His return. Upon His return He will comfort all who mourn over the destruction of sin, the toll that they’ve paid, the suffering they’ve endured. (We’re moving back into the Millennial Kingdom)

& He will console (minister to, provide for) those who mourn in Zion. To give them beauty for ashes. This word “beauty” more literally speaks of a headdress or crown. In ancient Israel when people would mourn they would heap ashes upon their head. It was a sign of mourning, of contrition & repentance... The picture here is one of exchange. He’ll take the ashes of contrition from their head & place upon them a crown of praise. Where there was sighing there will be singing.

The oil of joy (think of beautiful perfume). Don’t forget that “oil” is often a picture of the Holy Spirit. We might think, “the joy of the Lord” where there was mourning, sadness & sorrow.

The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He takes the drab, depressing heaviness & brightens our lives w/praise.

*“That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.” The idea here is that of a deep/abiding work of righteousness that God will establish in their lives. & It’s what He wants to establish in our lives as well. Family, we all well know that the time it takes for an acorn to become a mighty oak involves decades, storms that will test the depth of their roots that they might continue to stand... If you garden at all, you know that a cucumber can all but spring up overnight. ☺ I don’t see here God calling anyone “cucumbers of righteousness” ☺. Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.

Testifying to the age abiding faithfulness of God. Notice, “That He might be glorified”. When God changes our lives, plants us deep & makes us strong standing testimonies of His love, His grace, His mercy & faithfulness, it serves to glorify Him (& I for one am honored to have any part in anything that glorifies God). *

Vs 4

If you haven't picked up on the picture here yet, allow me to make it plain. God loves to rebuild, to raise up & to repair old ruins. That's what He's done in the life of every individual who's ever come to know Him in a personal way.

& Through the empowerment of His Spirit, under the ministry of the Messiah, God's people will be rebuilders. The desolation of many generations will experience restoration under the leadership of J.C. We might say that the land of Israel will experience a geographical facelift.

Vs 5-6

We spoke last week of the generosity of the Gentiles toward Israel during the millennial kingdom. Here we note that the people of Israel will fulfill the role that God had called them to from their inception. They'll be a kingdom of priests, servants of our God, ministering to the nations on His behalf.

Vs 7

Again, transformation, restoration & everlasting joy.

Vs 8

Why the restoration, the rebuilding that which was torn down? Why the transformation & generosity pouring into the nation? – Because the Lord loves justice. Love to right things that have been wrong.

He hates (on the other hand) robbery (or injustice) in the burnt offering. We spoke a bit about sacrificial giving last week. But if you obtain what you're offering through unjust means. Or if your heart isn't right *before* God in what you're offering *to* God, God doesn't honor it. It's not sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice that God is offer. He loves (2 Cor 9:7) a *cheerful* (willful, glad to worship the Lord in this way) giver.

So He says, “I will direct their work in truth & it will be forever”. That's when the heart of God will be fulfilled in/through the people of God.

Vs 9

Those who enter the millennial kingdom after the Great tribulation will marry, have children & enjoy the blessings of God for 1,000 yrs.

& The world will know that Israel is blessed of God. (You might reference this Vs in some connection w/Ch 59:21).

Vs 10-11

Close We love the fact that though all these blessings will be poured out upon the nation, we don't read, "I will greatly rejoice in the blessings..." but rather, "I will greatly rejoice in the *LORD*." (The Blessor). In the NT Vernacular Paul said, "Rejoice *in the Lord* always & again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil 4:4)

"For He has *clothed* me w/the garments of salvation, He has *covered* me w/the robe of righteousness." Do you see what I mean? God is into taking the old raggedy garments we've defiled through sin & replacing what we had w/what *He* has. The garment of salvation, the robe of righteousness by His grace through faith in J.C.

...He's doing a work in your life. It's nothing you can manufacture, it's like seeds sown in a garden. Now you can cultivate that seed through faith, through fellowship, through obedience to God's word. But only God can cause the growth. He's *begun* the work, He'll *finish* the work, & He'll be glorified in your life...

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for the richness, the wealth of Your word. The hope we have in J.C. & the tenderness of His ministry toward us, in us & through us. Have Your way in us, be glorified in us & use us to make an eternal difference in the lives of those around us, to the praise of Your name.

I'd be remiss if after a message like we heard today I didn't give you an opportunity to turn from your sin & believe on the Lord J.C. That He might bring healing to your heart, freedom to your soul. You've known the depression of sin, the mess it makes in our lives... God wants to set you free; to clothe you in the garments of salvation & cover you in the robe of the righteousness of Christ. Now is the acceptable time, today is the day of salvation.