

# Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



## Transformed to BE Transformative!

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### Devotion and Discussion Questions

**Key Texts (TLV):** Isa 61:1-4; Is 1:28-31; 54:7-13; 57:17-18; 60:17, 21; 1:28-31; Lam. 3:21-41

Isaiah 61 is such a central passage because it shows us the heart and mission of the Anointed One, the Messiah. He does not come merely to give people a spiritual experience or a moment of emotional relief. He comes to transform the afflicted, bind up the shatteredhearted, proclaim freedom to captives, comfort those who mourn, and establish something entirely new in those who have been broken by sin, sorrow, exile, and consequence.

And this transformation is never meant to end with us. God does not transform us and then set us on a shelf. He makes us sons and daughters in the family business. He restores us so that His restoration can move through us—into our homes, our relationships, our neighborhoods, our congregations, and the places where we stand. We are transformed to BE TRANSFORMATIVE.

#### 1. HE GIVES THE BEST IN EXCHANGE FOR THE WORST

Isaiah says the Anointed One comes *“to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for (instead of) ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”* (Is. 61:3). This mourning is not only the sadnesses of life in general, but the mourning of repentance—the grief that comes when we awaken to “the way of the heart” that has led us away from the Lord. The mourning one is pictured with ashes on the head, wrapped in sackcloth, crushed in spirit, and weighed down by despair. Yet into that place, the Lord comes with an exchange.

And what an exchange it is! He does not merely give something slightly better. He gives the best in place of the worst. Instead of ashes, beauty. Instead of mourning, the oil of joy. Instead of a colorless, expressionless, heavy spirit, an all-encompassing garment of praise. The Lord applies His cure precisely to the point of need. He says, in effect, “Give Me that, and I will give you this.” THAT is the good news of Messiah: He sees us where we are, but He does not leave us that way.

#### 2. HE GIVES A NEW NAME AND A NEW REPUTATION

The transformation continues: *“that they might be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of ADONAI, that He may be glorified”* (Is. 61:3). The ones who were once mourning, crushed, and covered in ashes are now called oaks of righteousness. That is a new name, a new reputation, a total reversal. Earlier in Isaiah, the people were compared to withering oaks—dry, lifeless, and ready to burn because of rebellion and self-exaltation. But now, by the work of the Anointed One, they become oaks defined by righteousness.

And this righteousness is not something they produced in themselves. They are *“the planting of ADONAI”* (Is. 61:3). Their strength, their stability, their character, and their righteousness are entirely due to what HE has done. Here is one of the great paradoxes of Scripture: when we try to make ourselves mighty, we burn ourselves up; when we come honestly before God, helpless and repentant, He gives us His beauty. We were made to be mirrors. When His beauty is reflected in us, we become beautiful.

### **3. HE RESTORES US SO HE CAN RESTORE THROUGH US**

Isaiah 61:4 says, *“They will rebuild the ancient ruins. They will restore former desolations. They will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.”* The ones who once were ruins and devastations themselves have now been transformed to become part of God’s transforming work. The Lord uses these oaks of righteousness to rebuild what seemed permanently ruined, restore what looked hopelessly desolate, and make new what had been broken for generations.

That means nothing and no one is beyond His repair and restoration. The places that seem long gone, the ruins that have become so familiar that everyone has stopped imagining them whole, the generational desolations that seem irredeemable—God is able to make them new. And just as He has done in us, He wants to do through us. He restores us so that His righteousness, love, mercy, and light can overflow through us into the world around us.

### **CONCLUSION**

The good news of Isaiah 61 is not small. Messiah comes to the afflicted, the shatteredhearted, the captive, the bound, and the mourning. He comes to those who are covered in ashes and weighed down by heaviness, and He offers an exchange that only God can offer. Beauty instead of ashes. Joy instead of mourning. Praise instead of heaviness. A new name instead of an old reputation.

And He does not stop there. He calls the transformed to become transformative. He calls restored people to participate in restoration. He calls oaks of righteousness to rebuild ancient ruins, restore former desolations, and make new what has been broken for generations. If He can do it in us, He can do it through us. And if He can do it in us, then no one else is beyond His reach.

Maybe today you recognize yourself in the picture Isaiah gives us. Maybe you are carrying ashes, mourning, heaviness, regret, or the consequences of your own choices. Maybe you have tried to make yourself strong, only to find yourself dry, weary, and burning out. The invitation of the Anointed One is not to hide that from Him, but to bring it to Him. Come to Yeshua with open hands. Give Him the ashes. Give Him the mourning. Give Him the heaviness. Let Him heal, restore, rename, and replant you. And as He makes you an oak of righteousness, ask Him to use your life as a place where His beauty is reflected and His restoration begins to touch others.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What part of the exchange in Isaiah 61:3 speaks most deeply to where you are right now: beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, or praise for heaviness?
2. Why is repentance often connected to mourning, and how does God meet that mourning with comfort rather than rejection?
3. What does it mean that we are “the planting of ADONAI” rather than self-made “oaks of righteousness”?
4. Where have you seen God rebuild something in your life that once seemed ruined or beyond repair?
5. What is one place—home, family, congregation, neighborhood, or relationship—where God may be calling you to be transformative?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

ADONAI Elohim, thank You for the good news of the Anointed One. Thank You that You do not leave us in ashes, mourning, heaviness, captivity, or despair. You see us honestly, and You meet us with mercy, healing, comfort, and restoration. Yeshua, we bring You our ashes and ask You to give us Your beauty. We bring You our mourning and ask You to pour out the oil of joy. We bring You our heaviness and ask You to clothe us with praise. Make us oaks of righteousness, the planting of ADONAI, so that Your beauty would be reflected in us and Your restoration would move through us.

*B'Shem Yeshua*, In the name of Yeshua, amen.