

Jesus and His Transformational Ministry and Work

Isaiah 61:1-11

Thesis: God the Father has anointed Jesus, God the Son, to meet every need that we have. In the power of the Holy Spirit of God, Jesus brings transformation to our lives and planet. And, Jesus wants to breathe life into us in our places of poverty, pain, despair, need, brokenness, weariness, bondage, shame, etc.

Text: Isaiah 61:1-11; Luke 4:18-19.

Context:

We are living in a season of fulfillment of a prophetic word given decades ago to Bob Jones about the Luke 4:18 anointing. Chris Reed said on April 9: "When the Prince (Phillip) shall pass, it will be 418 at last."

We have been praying and living into Luke 4:18-19 since the mid-1980's here at Calvary. Luke 4:18 describes the ministry of Jesus, the Appointed and Anointed One. And, it describes the ministry Jesus gives us by his appointing and anointing us.

When we read Luke 4:18-19, Jesus is quoting Isaiah 61. As often happens among Jewish people, when they quote one part of the Scripture it brings to mind the entire context. Jesus quotes 2 verses from Isaiah 61, and he points his hearers to the work of the Lord throughout the Isaiah 61 passage.

And today, Jesus wants to breathe life into us in our places of poverty, pain, despair, need, brokenness, weariness, bondage, shame, etc.

Isaiah 61:1-11

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. 4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. 5 Aliens will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. 6 And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. 7 Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance;

and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs. 8 "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. 9 Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed." 10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

Commentary:

Isaiah 61:1-11

The ministry and work of Jesus is transformational.

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,

- **The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord** is on the Anointed One (Jesus, the Messiah).
 - If Jesus needed the anointing and empowerment of the Holy Spirit on his life, how much more do we?
- **Sovereign**: able, unstoppable.
- **Lord**: Yahweh, the Exodus God who saves his people and overthrows enemies.

because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

- Jesus is anointed **to preach good news**: from Isaiah 52:7 and other passages, the good news is that our God reigns.
- **To the poor**: the downtrodden and disadvantaged; helpless in themselves and at the mercy of powerful people and adverse circumstances.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

- **To bind up**: bandage. Personal ministry of soothing and healing.
- **Brokenhearted**: we need healing of the heart from wounds and pain from living in a broken world, sins we commit, sins others commit against us, demonic attacks, trauma, etc.

to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

- **Freedom**: specifically setting free slaves held captive by people (Lev. 25:10; Jer. 34:8), linking the ministry of the Anointed One and the Year of Jubilee

- **Captives:** prisoners; those imprisoned in jail. Jesus brings freedom and release in every way, bringing of prisoners out of the dark dungeon into the light (Is. 42:7).

2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God,

- The repetition of **to proclaim** indicates that the Anointed One deals with the same subject but from a different perspective.
 - In Isaiah 61:1, the proclamation touched on the human side—freedom, release.
 - Now the proclamation concerns the divine side.
- **Favor... vengeance:**
 - In Isaiah 49:8, the Lord's favor guaranteed the Servant's success.
 - In Isaiah 60:7, the Lord "accepts with favor" the offering of the Gentiles.
 - And in Isaiah 60:10, his favor expresses itself in "compassion."
 - If someone is a recipient of the favor of the Lord, then others experience God's vengeance or judgment.
- **Year... day:**
 - The coming of the Anointed One marks the year, which is a prolonged period in which the Servant's achievement are enjoyed.
 - Gentiles are fully accepted and compassion flows freely.
 - His coming makes inevitable the **day of vengeance**.
 - **Day** contrasts with year; a sharp, quickly accomplished work.
 - **Vengeance:** just requital, the apportionment of what is justly due (Isaiah 35:4; 47:3; 59:17; 63:4).

to comfort all who mourn,

- **To comfort** is the other aspect of requital: exact recompense for wrong suffered (Isaiah 57:18).

The work of Jesus is a great reversal.

3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

- **Provide ... bestow:**
 - In verse Isaiah 61:2c, the hurt was soothed, but now every possibility of further hurt is removed by a divine replacement.
 - The first verb points to a decision of God and the second to an act of God: he wills our comfort and then gives that which brings and perpetuates comfort.
- Notice the downward movement of the transformation: from the **crown** (lit. "head-dress"; 3:20; cf. 61:10; Exod. 39:28), to the **head** (oil), to the **clothing**

(garment). (Cf. the running down of Ps. 133:2–3, significant of heavenly outpouring.)

- Notice also the inward movement of ashes, the visible evidence of grief (Isaiah 58:5; 2 Sam. 13:19), to mourning--grief in the heart, to the inner spirit of despair.
- The Lord moves to touch the innermost need.
- **Oil of gladness:** in Psalm 45:7 the “oil of joy” explains the distinctive character of the king. Therefore, the Anointed One replaces mourning with new life.
- **Garment:** more properly “a wrap,” overall cover (see Isaiah 59:17). Just as putting on garments symbolizes character and commitment, so the gift of an all-covering garment symbolizes the gift of a new nature leading to a new life.
- **Despair:** used in Isaiah 42:3 of the dimly burning wick-- what is dull, listless, expiring.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

- **They will be called:** the infinitives that express the aims of the Anointed One give way to a statement of achievement; literally “It will be called to them.” This stresses the objective reality of the gift of a new name, i.e. a new nature with new potencies (Gen. 17:5–6).
- **Oaks:** used in Isaiah 1:29 and Isaiah 57:5 in connection with false religion, but here they have been recovered for the Lord and given an established place in his garden.
- **Righteousness:** their status and acceptance before God are entirely of his doing (as in 53:11; 54:17); they are a planting of the LORD.
- **Splendor:** Trophies on display radiating with God’s beauty.

Jesus invites Jewish people and Gentiles to partner with him in the rebuilding, restoring, and renewing work.

4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

- **They will rebuild.**
 - Since they have been given a new status and a new name with new powers, they are able to enter upon new activities.
 - The picture references the return of the exiles from Babylon to face the task of reconstruction.
 - The eschatological reality is the new life into which the Anointed One will bring his people (healed, comforted, clothed, rooted), comes with powers of reconstruction to mend every past breakdown, no matter how long-standing (ancient, generations).

5 Aliens will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

- **Recognition by the nations and nearness to the Lord.**
 - The picture here is not of slaves or second-class citizens shepherding flocks and working in the fields and vineyards, but of the glad commitment of those coming from the “outside” (aliens) to serve the people of God, to take their place within a serving community (see Isaiah 60:10).
 - Illustration from Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast: the testimony of people moving to Israel to work the land and partner with Jewish people to build, plant, and develop the nation.
- **Shepherd:** stand and shepherd or care for the flocks.

6 And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God.

- **Priests:** There is an unrealized ideal from Exodus 19:6, where the Jewish people were called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
 - However, the priesthood of all believers is now fully realized.
 - Incoming Gentiles are included in this priestly nearness to the Lord.
- The thought seems to be that Jews and the nations would work together in building the new Zion. In fact, when the nations and Jews come to Zion, they will all be called “priests of the LORD, ministers of our God” (61:6); there will be no distinction between them, for all will be priests and ministers of God (61:6; cf. Exod 19:6, which refers to a “kingdom of priests” among the nations). This high position is one of responsibility, as that of a priest, a mediator between God and people. The nations come to God through Israel (the true heirs of Abraham), and there will be no special priesthood apart from all the citizens of the new city, for each will be a priest. Certain passages such as 1 Peter 2:9 indicate that early Christians understood these words as applying to themselves as heirs of OT religion (cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9–10; Rev 1:6; 5:9–10). (Larry L. Walker, Elmer A. Martens, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Lamentations, vol. 8 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 265.)

You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. 7 Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs.

- Reversal, recompense, and transformation.
- **Wealth** (material) **and riches** (glory).
- **Shame:** is more than embarrassment, but humiliation, devoid of hope, exposed.
- **Double portion:** amply, more than fully.
- **Rejoice:** “sing” (Isaiah 54:1); enter with joy forever into what has been freely provided.
- **Inheritance:** literally “portion”; what the Lord has allocated to them.
- **Double portion in their land:** “abundantly more than enough.”
- **Everlasting joy:** deep connection to God and to others for eternity.

8 *"For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them.*

- **Love justice:** Our God is a God who "loves" actions characterized by justice.
 - Love is a choice of the will that God makes; it is his choice to be emotionally involved by displaying his deep commitment to his people and to show his approval of a specific kind of favored action.
 - God's choice to love just action is evident in all his behavior; it is central to his command that the Israelites should "maintain justice" (Isaiah 56:1) and his advice to avoid injustice (Isaiah 58:6; 59:4, 8, 14, 15).
 - When "justice and salvation/righteousness" are used of God's activity, justice can take on the meaning of "saving justice" or God's "just saving deeds" (Isaiah 59:11, 14).
 - But when it refers to human acts of justice, it refers to moral behavior that treats other people with equity and fairness.
 - In order to emphasize the point, God states that he hates (the opposite of loves) human actions that involve unjust taking of things that belong to others as well as all other acts of "iniquity."
- **Reward:** Those who are fully committed to God's moral standards of justice will receive from God an appropriate "response, compensation."
 - Elsewhere God promises to bring his "recompense, reward, what is due" (40:10; 49:4; 62:11) with him when he comes to earth, although it is never fully described.
 - God can be counted on to do this because he acts in "faithfulness, truthfulness" with those he loves.
 - The essence of what God is talking about is a covenant agreement that he has with his righteous followers.
 - This will be an eternal covenant relationship with his people, probably the same covenant spoken about in Isaiah 54:10; 55:3; 59:21.
 - God is here guaranteeing the everlasting Davidic covenant relationship described in Isaiah 55:3, probably the same covenant relationship that the "Anointed One" who has the Spirit will implement (Isaiah 59:21; 61:1-3). (Gary Smith, Isaiah 40-66, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 640-641.)

9 *Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed."*

- Now God describes how the implications of this covenant will impact the life and reputation of the "seed, offspring" of the Israelites, a consequence already promised to those who repent in Isaiah 59:20-21.

- A strong connection exists between the impact of the Anointed One who has the Spirit (Isaiah 59:21) and the repentant seed (Isaiah 59:20–21).
- God will make his covenant with these people (Isaiah 59:20–21); God’s presence will be with them (Isaiah 60:1–3); the Anointed One will work on their behalf (Isaiah 61:1–3); and God’s blessing on them (Isaiah 61:6–8) will mark these people as unique.
- The other nations will recognize this unique relationship God will have with his people.
- The second half of the verse reemphasizes the special relationship between the Jewish people and God.
 - It will be seen, recognized, and acknowledged as a direct result of the blessing of God.
 - Two points are implied by these facts. First, God’s marvelous work among the righteous, holy, and repentant Israelites will serve as a witness to other peoples. Second, the eyes of the blind nations that formerly despised and attacked the Israelites will be opened so that they can appreciate the great work of God among his people.
 - J. Oswalt finds in these factors the fulfillment of the Abrahamic blessing in Gen 12:3, for at this time through Abraham’s “seed” all the nations of the earth will be blessed. The idea of the inclusion of the Gentiles was introduced in 2:1–4 and has appeared again and again throughout the book of Isaiah (14:1–2; 18:7; 19:18–25; 45:20–25; 49:22–26; 60:1–14), but in this verse the presence of the nations is specifically connected and limited to their recognizing God’s blessing on the covenant seed.
 - One might imply from this verse that the nations would not just observe God’s grace on Israel based on other passages like 60:1–11, but the focus of this verse is primarily on nations’ new ability to identify God’s people as a very blessed people. (Gary Smith, Isaiah 40–66, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 641–642.)
- The theme of God’s goodness to his people is further developed in 61:8–9. In exile, Israel had been mistreated and oppressed (cf. 42:24), but all this would be changed as the Lord confirmed the “everlasting covenant” he had made with Abraham (61:8; Gen 12:1–3) and with David (cf. 55:3). Jeremiah and Ezekiel also speak of the “new covenant” (Jer 31:27–44; 50:4–5; Ezek 16:60–63; 37:15–28). This “everlasting covenant” should probably be associated with the covenant referred to in Jeremiah 32:40 (cf. Isa 59:21). The close connection between the everlasting covenant and the “new covenant” in these passages reminds us that God brought to a climax what had been there all along in the old covenant. (Larry L. Walker, Elmer A. Martens, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Lamentations, vol. 8 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 265–266.)

Jesus sings and rejoices over what God has done and what God will do through his work.

10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

- These two verses are a hymn in which the Anointed One rejoices (a) over what God has done to prepare him (not Israel) for his work of bringing salvation (61:10) and (b) over what God will accomplish through his work (61:11).
- The reason for this joyful response is “because” of what God has done.
 - Since God is the one who “has caused me to be clothed” with salvation, God deserves all the credit for preparing this Anointed One to bring the gift of salvation to others.
 - The garments of salvation and robe of righteousness are metaphors (similar to the “clothes of vengeance” in 59:17) that describe how God has empowered the person wearing the clothes to accomplish the task (61:1–3) of establishing salvation.
 - Having the character and the ability to grant salvation and righteousness will enable the possessor of these qualities to deliver people from their former unrighteous state and will prepare them to enter into God’s glorious kingdom.
- The second half of the verse expands the clothing metaphor by comparing the accessories worn by the Anointed One with wedding finery.
 - The text identifies a fine turban (similar to what a priest might wear) that would be worn by a bridegroom and the expensive jewelry that a bride might wear. The author is using the same analogy found a few verses earlier in 61:3, where the Anointed One replaces Zion’s ashes of mourning with a crown of beauty.
 - The second half of the verse is comparing God’s preparation of the Anointed One to putting on the finest, richest, and most beautiful finery that people would wear at a wedding.
 - Since the turban and jewels are not interpreted, it is probably best not to guess what these fine accessories symbolize.
 - We note that God has fully and magnificently prepared the Anointed One.
- The response of joy ends with a second reason that explains why the Anointed One rejoices.
 - This reason is expressed by making a comparison between the earth’s ability to cause plants to spring up and the Lord’s ability to cause righteousness to spring up.
 - Every reader in an agricultural economy would know that when the rain falls on the soil, shoots will spring up out of the dormant roots of grass; seeds that were sown in a garden or field will start to grow.
 - These undeniable facts of nature are compared to what the Lord will do to cause his seeds of righteousness and praise to spring up.
 - It is a great joy to know that God has the power to produce these unstoppable results.

- The comparison presents a guarantee or promise that the Spirit's empowerment of the Anointed One is sure to bring about the results of salvation and righteousness.
- The exuberant praise that will spring up from Zion will be the people's joyful response to God's great gift of salvation.
- The final comment in this hymn is that this human praise of God will be heard by all the nations. This partially explains why the nations will come to Zion and will join in this praise of God (Isaiah 52:10; 60:6, 9; 66:18). (Gary Smith, Isaiah 40-66, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 643.)

Summary:

Jesus has a transformational ministry and work. The work of Jesus is the great reversal. And, Jesus invites Jewish people and Gentiles to partner with him in the rebuilding, restoring, and renewing work.

God the Father has anointed Jesus, God the Son, to meet every need that we have. In the power of the Holy Spirit of God, Jesus brings transformation to our lives and planet. And, Jesus wants to breathe life into you and others in their places of poverty, pain, despair, need, brokenness, weariness, bondage, shame, etc.

We are living in a season of fulfillment of a prophetic word given decades ago to Bob Jones about the Luke 4:18 anointing. Chris Reed said on April 9: "When the Prince (Phillip) shall pass, it will be 418 at last."

We have been praying and living into Luke 4:18-19 since the mid-1980's here at Calvary. Luke 4:18 describes the ministry of Jesus, the Appointed and Anointed One. And, it describes the ministry Jesus gives us by his appointing and anointing us.

Ministry Time:

Jesus has a transformational ministry and work.

Jesus wants to breathe life into us in our places of poverty, pain, despair, need, brokenness, weariness, bondage, shame, etc.