

Born to Set Thy People Free

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[0 : 0 0] Tim is going to come up and read the scripture for this message. Isaiah 61.

The Spirit of the Lord 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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 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 garland 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.

They shall build up the ancient ruins. They shall raise all the former devastations. They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks. Foreigners shall be your plowmen and headdressers, vine dressers. But you shall be called the priests of the Lord.

They shall speak of you as the ministers of our God. You shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in your glory you shall boast. Instead of your shame, there shall be a double portion.

[1 : 2 6] Instead of dishonor, they shall rejoice in their lot. Therefore, in their land they shall possess a double portion.

They shall have everlasting joy. For I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery and wrong. I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall exult in my God. For he has clothed me in the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

As a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with their jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God shall cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

[2 : 3 3] Thank you, Tim. Let's start with a short time of prayer. Holy Father, place your hand on this time. Bless it with your spirit. Take me and all my problems and sins and pride, and move me out of the way, so that your son Jesus can be seen more clearly.

Help your people to love Jesus even more. If there's anyone here who does not know him, I pray that they would find him to be beautiful, gracious, and powerful to save them. Amen.

Amen. So, while I was reading and rereading this text to get ready, I noticed that this is not a balanced, nuanced chapter.

It goes in one direction. It's nearly all smiles and rainbows. I imagine if I sat down with Isaiah 61 and a giant book of systematic theology next to it, I could start analyzing it and getting into details and some of the smiles might start to go away.

Like, we consider Jeremiah's discouragement about Israel's unfaithfulness, or we take Paul in one of his grumpier moods in Galatians, and the judgment of God on sinners, and who really has faith, and who's really repented, and what's the proper understanding of Israel versus the church?

[3 : 53] Are they the same? Are they different? Blah, blah, blah. This chapter could start to lose its magic. But the Holy Spirit led Isaiah to keep this simple, and one message, one unified message in this chapter, and it's wonderful, and I decided to just let it rip with how good this passage is.

And also, I know we're in an Advent season, and I don't mention the birth of Christ at all in here, but Isaiah didn't mention the birth of Christ at all in chapter 61, so I think I'm on solid ground there, but Jesus is still in the middle of it.

So, oh, it's you. Have you ever been in a situation where you finally meet somebody that you've been hearing stories about for a long, long time? Probably it happens when you have a newly married couple.

You tell about your stories, about your past. You hear stories about a particular friend from high school or a favorite aunt and uncle or a sibling whose life intertwined with yours for a long time, and your new spouse hears all about this person.

So after a while, you know a lot of things about this person that you've never met. For me, it was my wife's friend, Sarah, from high school. I heard lots of stories about Sarah and Jenny, and then one day I met her.

[5 : 15] I'm introduced to this person, and I already have a shelf in my brain pre-stocked and labeled information about Sarah. And I knew where she and Jenny used to hang out. I knew a little bit about what her parents were like.

I knew about the time they TP'd somebody's house, which I think was a true story. I knew about some of Sarah's health problems that she struggled with. Lots of stuff. If I had passed her on the street, I wouldn't have had any idea who she was.

She would have been a complete stranger. But it was announced to me, this is Sarah. And now all those stories, all those facts bouncing around my head, they have a person.

Oh, it's you. This is that person. And this is what Jesus did at the synagogue in Nazareth in Luke chapter 4. 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.

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, So Jesus reads to them from the beginning of Isaiah 61 that you just heard Tim read.

[6 : 43] And I think this is one of the most hopeful, comforting, promise-filled, righteousness-saturated, God-is-on-his-throne-and-his-people-love-him passages in the entire Bible, Isaiah 61.

The 11 verses of Isaiah 61 might be the most condensed description of everything Israel was hoping for in the entire scriptures. And I'm sure every devout Israelite knew the passage, was hoping for it to come true, God was going to heal his people.

He was going to rebuild the ruins of the earth. He was going to turn the Gentile nations into friends and co-laborers. He was going to cause God's covenant blessings to be fulfilled in overwhelming ways.

He was going to give his people everlasting joy. He was going to see that righteousness bloomed all over the earth. I'm sure all of Jesus' listeners that day were pleased to be reminded that that promise is still in effect.

It's still coming. But the trigger, the striking of the match, if you will, that would start all this in motion was the anointed one. The anointed one, covered in the spirit of God, he was to come and give a message with his lips.

[7 : 56] He would proclaim good news, liberty, healing, freedom, the year of the Lord's favor. And then Jesus struck that match. In the next couple of verses.

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. And he began to say to them, today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

So all these promises, they're waiting for the anointed one to say it's starting. Jesus just did it. He said, it's go time. These things are now in motion.

All those blessings you've been hoping for. Because I am the anointed one, he says. And I have the authority to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus is saying, all those things God has promised to do someday, the shelf on your brain labeled God's promises to be fulfilled someday by the anointed one, all those promises are about me.

I'm going to bring them to pass. It's a, oh, it's your moment. It's for them and it's for us to read about today. So let's take a look at what Isaiah put on that shelf in your brain that Jesus is going to fulfill.

[9 : 13] I want to talk about the master of the jubilee. The master of the jubilee. Turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 61 if you're not already there. I'll read from verses 1 and 2.

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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

So the year of the Lord's favor. I don't know if that rings a bell to you, but I believe Isaiah is strongly hinting to us to think about the year of jubilee. And if you don't know what the year of jubilee is, we're about to talk about it.

Leviticus 25. If you want to turn over there or just read from the screen. Leviticus 25, verses 8 through 10. You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you 49 years.

Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the day of atonement, you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the 50th year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.

[10 : 34] It shall be a jubilee for you when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan. So every 50th year, the Israelites were released to return to their land and their family, their clan.

So why were they separated from their land? Down in verse 25. And it's then 25 and 28. If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, but if he does not have sufficient means to recover it, to buy it back, or his family can't buy it back for him, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of jubilee.

In the jubilee, it shall be released and he shall return to his property. A little farther down in Leviticus 25, another example. If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave.

He shall be with you as a hired worker and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. Then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the possession of his fathers.

So it's not all that hard to imagine a situation that would cause somebody to have to sell their land or to sell themselves into indentured servitude, which is what this is describing. Someone sold you a rotten bag of seeds to plant your crops.

[12 : 02] You have a crop failure. The locusts eat your figs for the second year in a row. You've got nothing left. A family member is sick.

You spend all your money trying to find a cure and traveling this place and that place because you heard there was a doctor there that could help you and you're out of money. You've taken out loans. You're done. Maybe you live near the border and the Philistines are constantly raiding your plantation and they keep stealing your wealth.

You can never get ahead. Or maybe you're poor because your dad or your grandfather royally screwed up 49 years ago and your entire family has been poor since then.

You weren't even born when it happened. None of this is your fault. There's plenty of innocent reasons why a good, righteous person might find themselves in this situation, having to sell their land or sell themselves into servitude.

But every 50 years, you or your descendants get your land back. Everything is back to square one. Everything is set right the way God wanted it. But what if you deserved to be poor?

[13 : 14] What if you lost all your money gambling? What if you just didn't plant the crop because you were lazy or frequently drunk? What if you were a kleptomaniac?

You kept stealing your neighbor's animals. You kept getting caught and paying fines. What if you were like the prodigal son? You spent all your money on partying and prostitutes. Is there a reduced strength jubilee?

Like a low-fat jubilee? Where you get... You get... We'll forgive half of your debt. And if your descendants are still behaving well in 50 years, then we'll forgive the rest of the debt, let you have your land back.

Quick answer is no. The restoration was full and free for everybody. Hopefully the law of Moses had been dealing with law-breaking and things that were happening along the way.

But the restoration is full for everybody. No questions asked. Let's go back to Isaiah 61. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

[14 : 27] 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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. So the anointed one has good news for the poor.

Why are you poor? Is this your fault? The anointed one doesn't care. He doesn't care why you're poor. The anointed one is here to bind up the brokenhearted.

Wait a second. Why is your heart broken? Is this your own doing? It might be. This makes me think of the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter 4.

No one from that town wanted to be seen with her. That's why she had to come to the well to draw water at the hottest part of the day. She had been married four times.

She wasn't even married to the man she was with now. Her heart is broken. She can't have a good marriage like others. She can't have enjoyable, profitable relationships with other women in town like others can.

[15 : 33] She's in a prison. She really is. She's trapped at the bottom of her society. Why? Was she the bad apple that made all of her relationships go bad over and over again?

Maybe. Was her first husband cruel and neglectful? And after the divorce, she was considered untouchable by all the respectable men in town?

Maybe. Maybe. It doesn't tell us. But here's the sweetest part. Jesus knew whose fault her situation was, right? He knew if she was innocent in this, if the men were all guilty, if it was a mix.

He knew everything. But what did he not say to her? He did not say, you can have the living water, but only because it wasn't your fault. He doesn't say, you can have the living water, probably, but tell me how you're going to do better next time.

He doesn't tell her any of those things. He just says, just ask me, and the living water is yours. The jubilee is here, just believe that I am the master of the jubilee.

[16 : 44] That was the only condition. Let's look at the end of verse 2. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn.

So who are captives? The woman at the well was a type of captive. She could not escape from her situation on her own.

Someone could also be a literal slave. You're captured in war. You're sold at a slave market. Many people have been practically enslaved by employers who don't want to pay a penny more than they have to, and they're not bothered by the poverty of their workers.

Their workers are trapped. You could be trapped in a prison of your own making. Addiction, a history of abusing others, a criminal record, a public embarrassment, reckless spending and mountains of debt.

You don't have the freedom to act how you would like to. You're in a type of prison. The anointed one doesn't ask why you were trapped or whether it was all your fault or not.

[17 : 55] He simply announces the jailbreak. He's here to announce the jailbreak. So, while this liberty train is really starting to get going, the end of verse 2 does pump the brakes just a little bit.

The anointed one announces the day of vengeance of our God. Jesus didn't quote this part to the synagogue in Nazareth.

I think that was because the vengeance part of his mission was years in the future. And his role at that moment was to be the master of the Jubilee.

God's anointed one does have a responsibility to avenge. I don't want to spend a lot of time on it because Isaiah didn't spend a lot of time on it. And Jesus purposefully stopped the quote before saying it.

So, who receives God's vengeance? I think it is those who won't mourn. He contrasts the day of the Lord's vengeance and to comfort those who mourn. People who won't mourn over their own sins.

[18 : 58] People who won't mourn over horrible situations that other people are in. And especially they won't mourn what they may have done to take advantage of other people. They refuse to believe that they need to be liberated from anything.

And if people are being set free from prisons and captivity and slavery, that causes harm to the person that had captured them, the person that had enslaved them. So I think that is part of the vengeance and view here too.

If you're profiting from having somebody enslaved to you, you're going to be harmed when they are released. But overall here, I think Isaiah is focused on the good brought by the anointed one and he gives a half of a sentence to vengeance and judgment.

Next, I want to talk about the great exchange. Let's look at Isaiah 61, verse 3. Verse 3 is grace, grace, grace from top to bottom.

What does God ask of his people in verse 3? Like nothing. He just gives. He just gives and gives. And he doesn't just give, he actually exchanges. So how do we start out?

[20 : 26] We have ashes smeared on us. What are ashes? Ashes are what's left when something is completely burned away or disintegrated. There's nothing valuable there. We are mourning.

Mourning can be because of a loss or a lost opportunity. Oh, if only I had done this different years ago. Everything could be good now. A mourning for a terrible situation that you don't have any power to change.

So we have ashes. We have mourning. We have a faint spirit. The Hebrew word for faint here is a word called kehe.

And if there's anybody who's done any Hebrew study here, I will instantly submit to you if I get any of this wrong. So kehe. And personally, I love how this word gets used in scripture.

We're going to look at it a little bit. It's usually translated with the word faded or fading when God is giving instructions to priests on how to evaluate skin disease. Which seems like a weird place to go in this message, but just follow with me.

[21 : 33] So Leviticus 13, 28. But if the spot remains in one place and does not spread in the skin, but has faded, that's kehe, it is a swelling from the burn and the priest shall pronounce him clean for it is a scar of the burn.

So that faded, kehe, it means it was there, it's a lot less there now. It's fading, it's going away, it's on the verge of vanishing. 1 Samuel 3, verse 2.

At that time, Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, kehe, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place.

So Eli's eyesight was fading and it was going to go away completely. It was kehe, it was on its way out. Isaiah 42, verses 1 through 3, another passage about Jesus.

This is where it gets good. Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, and whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations.

[22 : 35] He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break and a faintly kehe burning wick he will not quench.

He will faithfully bring forth justice. So a kehe burning wick. So what does that mean? Faintly burning. Other versions call it a smoldering wick, a smoking flax, a dimly burning wick.

The fire and the remnants of the fire are almost completely gone. God's servant, the anointed one, did not come to neglect anyone who has the smallest hope.

That smallest trail of smoke coming from that wick that's almost extinguished has his full attention. His eyes are on it. Do you ever wonder if God is real but you're hoping that he is?

Do you beat yourself up with regret over your sins? Are you a believer but you can't tell if God is really on your side sometimes or if he is helping you at all? Are you getting close to not hoping anymore?

[23 : 47] That little bit, that little trail of smoke coming up from your spirit, it could be on the verge of disappearing completely. But Jesus says, I didn't come to stomp that out.

I came to nurture it. I came to give it my attention and protect it. And it says, a faintly burning wick he will not quench.

He did not come to scold you for not having enough faith. He came to defend it and rescue it and nurse it back to health. So back to Isaiah 61, verse 3.

So to grant them 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.

This idea, this fainting spirit, it reminds me of what Bilbo said to Gandalf when he had had the ring on for way too long and his life had been prolonged.

[24 : 54] But not in a good way. He says, why I feel all thin, sort of stretched, if you know what I mean. Like butter that has been scraped over too much bread. And spread thin, the whole thing is about to break.

That is that fainting spirit, that faintly smoking wick. So these are the things that we start with in verse 3. We start, we're smeared with ashes. We're mourning what we've done, what others have done to us.

We're mourning what could have been. And we have a spirit that is on the verge of dying. We've got nothing left. We have no strength left. So what does the master of the Jubilee ask us to do?

Nothing. We ask the master of the Jubilee to free us and he gives us a beautiful headdress. He doesn't just give it to us, so he takes our ashes away.

He gives us a beautiful headdress. Ashes would be smeared on the head. Your head is gone from ugly to beautiful. He anoints us with the oil of gladness and he takes away our mourning.

[26 : 05] He doesn't just add the oil. He takes away the bad and gives the good. He covers us with a garment of praise so that our spread to thin spirit can be protected and rest.

He doesn't ask us for anything. It's all grace. It's all grace. That they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

The Lord wants it known that he has rescued his people, that they have been built up by him, that he planted them, and that there is a new, bold, God-honoring family that's being built.

So, when do we get to the good part? God has saved and transformed his people, so what's the plan?

I said earlier in Isaiah 61, I said that Isaiah 61 might be the most concentrated expression of everything Israel was hoping for. In verses 1 through 3, we see how we're rescued and transformed, and now we see the plan.

[27 : 09] So, let's take a quick walk through it. Verse 4. They shall build up the ancient ruins. They shall raise up the former devastations. They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

So, the people that the anointed one has redeemed will rebuild the world, repair cities, reconstruct devastated places that nobody thought could be recovered. Verse 5.

Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks. Foreigners shall be your plowmen and vine dressers. So, people from all over the world will come to you, work with you, and grow wealth alongside you.

And this verse, at first glance, it can look like God's people get to enslave the foreigners. It can be read that way. Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks.

Foreigners shall be your plowmen and vine dressers. They're just going to be our servants and we can boss them around. But I don't think that's what it means. from the little bit of digging into it that I've looked at.

[28 : 12] When it says, the strangers shall stand and tend your flocks. That word stand is a strong word. And it means that you are taking authority, responsibility, and oversight.

So, I think these are to be understood to be voluntary workers, working alongside, also becoming prosperous in God's kingdom. And again, if there's anyone who knows Hebrew better than I do, which is most people, I'll give in to your argument immediately.

Verse 6, But you shall be called the priests of the Lord. They shall speak of you as the ministers of our God. You shall eat the wealth of the nations and in their glory you shall boast.

So, the people of the nations will call us priests. This reminds me of verse 3. What did God give us in verse 3? A headdress, a covering, and an anointing with oil. That's what they did to priests.

He's already given us the marks of priests. The people of the world will be grateful that we ministered to them, that we brought the word to them, and the wealth and glory of the nations will belong to us as we belong to God's kingdom.

[29 : 24] Verse 7, Instead of your shame, there shall be a double portion. Instead of dishonor, they shall rejoice in their lot. Therefore, in their land, they shall possess a double portion.

They shall have everlasting joy. Your shame and dishonor are gone. They've been taken away. They've been replaced with a double portion and everlasting rejoicing. That could be an entire message on its own, but not where I'm focusing.

Verse 8, For I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery and wrong. I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Does anybody have a version where it says, I hate robbery in burnt offering? Does anybody have that? Okay. Excellent.

I don't have to explain it then. Okay. Okay. But there is a satisfying explanation for that. Okay. So, verse 8 is kind of a mind blower when you really think about it.

[30 : 27] So, the Lord loves justice and hates robbery. We already knew that. And therefore, because he hates robbery, he promises to be faithful to give us everything that he owes us.

He's not going to withhold anything. He's going to give us our full recognition. recompense, our full wages, our full reward. There's something wrong with this.

God's going to give us everything he owes us. How much does he owe us? Big fat zero. But recompense, that word is also translated as wages and rewards, like something that ought not to be held back from somebody.

So, the anointed one comes to you of his own free will and announces to you that you're now free and that you don't have to stay stuck in prison. Your sins are forgiven.

Maybe somebody else built the prison. Maybe you built the prison yourself. Master of the Jubilee doesn't care. You're free. Then in verse 8, he says, oh yeah, about those things I owe you.

[31 : 33] It's like, what are you talking about? He says, I hate robbery. I hate robbery so much that I'm going to pledge here that I will faithfully give them everything I owe them. I won't hold back any of it from them.

I owe it to them. That's crazy. He doesn't owe us anything. But he has established this everlasting covenant. This covenant that requires nothing of us, but he's already bound himself to it.

He's like, I'm not going to let any of this fall to the ground. You're going to get everything I promised. And he uses language that indicates, yeah, I owe it to you. That's crazy. That he's put himself in that position for us.

This isn't charity. It's not a gift. It's not a donation. God sees it as the wages of the people he's redeemed. He says it would be robbery if he held it back.

Verse 9. Their offspring shall be known among the nations and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them shall acknowledge them that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed.

[32 : 41] So our children and grandchildren will be blessed. They will be well known around the world for being blessed by God. So, when do we get to the good part?

When is all this happening? Because this all hasn't happened yet. I'd like to get it on my calendar, maybe take a few days off of work to celebrate. So the first people who read this prophecy were probably Israelites in exile in Babylon.

Isaiah tells them that they will be set free. They were set free. They were released to go back to Zion and rebuild the kingdom. Little bits of this prophecy came true, kind of, sort of.

But for the next few hundred years, Israel was mostly kicked around by larger empires and it was a struggle to be prosperous and faithful. This hasn't all been fulfilled.

Then Jesus shows up. He said, I'm letting the match. It's for real this time. This stuff is all going to come true. Then, he died and he was resurrected and by his resurrection he proved that he was who he said he was.

[33 : 48] So here we go. He gave us the Holy Spirit to help us understand and to minister to others and to teach others. So, this is it. It's going to happen. But this golden age that we're reading about never materialized.

There have been bright spots for sure. For example, now we get into history. This is the part I love. The Byzantine Empire was Christian. They were powerful.

There was a lot of peace in their land. They conquered new territory. They honored Christ. The wealth of nations flowed to them. Like verse 6 says, but it was all tainted by greed and corruption and ambition and eventually they were conquered by a Muslim army.

This was not fulfillment of Isaiah 61. Europe was Christian, almost entirely Christian. Europe became wealthier and more powerful than anybody could have imagined hundreds of years before.

They honored Christ at least with their mouths. the wealth of nations flowed into Europe but that was tainted as well. It was tainted by ethnic pride.

[34 : 56] They didn't respect the people that they were conquering overseas. They stole the wealth of the weaker nations that they had conquered. They didn't stand shoulder to shoulder with them to share in prosperity like verse 5 says.

They didn't announce the jubilee to the natives. Largely, they conquered and abused them. And the wars. Europe has been about the most war-torn part of the world for the last 500 years.

The most destructive wars in human history were between Christian European nations. Isaiah 61 hasn't come to pass yet. And America, similar story with America.

We've done a lot of things right. We've honored Christ in a lot of ways but it's all tainted. The slavery, the ethnic hatred, the economic oppression, the utterly wicked way we dealt with the Native Americans.

This is not the fulfillment of Isaiah 61. America is enjoying lots of God's blessings but this isn't it. This isn't what we're waiting for.

[36 : 03] So don't get me wrong, there have been some high points. Christians in Great Britain took on the task of abolishing slavery in their empire and they did it. And at the same time that European countries were exploiting weaker nations, there were also believers going to those places and making disciples and planting Christian communities all over the world.

American Christians have been doing the same thing. Using the blessings that God has given us to bring the news of the Jubilee all over the world. So good things are happening here and there but overall Isaiah 61 has not come true.

It's confused and patchy at best. And if you disagree with me about this or that the way I analyze the history, that's fine. But I think we can all agree that this is confused and patchy at best.

So some Christians think that over the centuries the gospel is going to be so successful worldwide that we will have a golden age like Isaiah 61 before Jesus returns and we'll only get better when he returns.

Others believe that the world is so broken that Jesus has to come first, destroy his enemies, become the king on the earth and rule and that's when Isaiah 61 can really be fulfilled.

[37 : 23] There are other opinions in between those. I'm not sure which view is right but I do know that the people in this room are not able to push that timeline one way or the other.

That's up to God. So, what are we supposed to do? Verse 10, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.

My soul shall exalt in my God for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

So, task number one is rejoice. Whether it happens during your life or after the resurrection, the blessings of this chapter will be yours one day.

It's guaranteed. We aren't worthy of these blessings. That's why he covers us with a garment of salvation and a robe of righteousness. That's why he took our ashes and our mourning and our despairing spirit into the grave for us.

[38 : 25] So, trust him and rejoice that he will be faithful even if it's in a way that you don't expect. And with verse 11, I want to talk about God's garden.

Let's look at verse 11. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

So, this verse uses the picture of planting a garden. But this garden is not powered by the sun and rain and compost and earthworms and dirty fingernails and half earthworms that you find when you dig up a carrot.

But this garden is raised up by the will and power of God. And this garden doesn't grow carrots. It grows righteousness and praise.

They sprout up before all the nations. God is doing this for our good and for his glory. He wants it known what he's doing. Jesus took our ashes and our mourning and our despairing spirit into the grave.

[39 : 30] Earlier I said that the master of the jubilee doesn't ask us for anything. There's no exchange of favors. You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. That's true.

He doesn't need anything from us. But he does require faith. Do you trust that he is the master of the jubilee? Remember what he said to the woman at the well.

Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink. You would have asked him and he would have given you living water. The identity of the master of the jubilee is what you need to submit to.

Like, yes, it's him. He's like, he says, If you knew who I was, you would ask and I would give. You need to believe who he is. He's the only one that has these gifts to offer her.

She will ask and he will give. When you believe who he is and ask him to free you in the jubilee, he graciously, patiently, gently kills you and buries you in his garden.

[40 : 38] Let me explain. Romans 6.

So when you confess that he is the master of the jubilee, that he has these gifts to offer you, he kills you.

You die on the cross with him. You're dead. You're buried. You are also resurrected. Then, and only then, can we grow in his garden.

We're dead to sin and we're alive to God. And we're free now. We're free to offer the jubilee to others. We're free to forgive quickly. We're free to repent of sin quickly and without fear.

We're free to walk beside and encourage other believers who maybe have shackles and hardships and prisons, visible or invisible, that aren't completely going away until Jesus comes back.

[42 : 15] All this freedom that's been proclaimed, it hasn't all been realized yet. You've been freed from your sins, but you may have things that are still reigning you in for the rest of your life.

We can walk beside people that have those struggles. We're free to grow in righteousness and the praise of God that the nations can see.

So let's close in prayer. Father, bless this time we've spent together. Increase our understanding and our love and gratitude for you and for one another.

Give us a greater appreciation for the freedom, the freeness of the blessings and the jailbreak that you offer to us. Help us to be grateful for it.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Abend Nab Nab