



good news
crown of beauty
oil of joy
garment of praise

Isaiah 61:1-3

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.

Luke 4:14-21

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Great griefs choke us

▲ Consider the broken and the hurting

Isaiah 61:1 the poor — the brokenhearted — 2 — all who mourn — 3 — those who grieve — mourning

▲ Consider the bound and the hopeless

Isaiah 61:1 the captives — darkness — prisoners — 3 — ashes — a spirit of despair

God's gospel chases us

▲ God's Messenger is anointed and appointed

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

▲ God's Messenger is advancing and approaching

Isaiah 61:1 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.

▲ God's Messenger is arising and announcing

▼ Jesus comes with a powerful authority

Luke 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

▼ Jesus comes with a prophetic assignment

Luke 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

▼ Jesus comes with a preaching anointing

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

▼ Jesus comes with a passionate ambition

Luke 4:20 Then Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Good gifts cheer us

▲ A commutation for prisoners

Isaiah 61:1 to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

▲ A comfort and cure for pain

Isaiah 61:1 He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, — 2 — to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion — 3 — the oil of gladness instead of mourning,

▲ A crown of privilege and prestige

Isaiah 61:3 to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,

▲ A cloak of praise

Isaiah 61:3 and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

God's grace changes us

▲ We become strong, sturdy trees

Isaiah 61:3 They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD

▲ We become shining testimonies

Isaiah 61:3 a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

1. Will you draw near to relinquish your griefs to the Lord?
2. Will you draw near to receive your gifts from the Lord?

Sunday School Picnic

Laughter in the Walls – Bob Benson – 1969

You remember when they had old fashioned Sunday school picnics? It was before air conditioning. They said, "We'll all meet at Sycamore Lodge in Shelby Park at 4:30 Saturday. You bring your supper and we'll furnish the tea."

You came home at the last minute, and when you got ready to pack your lunch, all you could find in the refrigerator was one dried up piece of bologna and just enough mustard in the bottom of the jar so that you got it all over your knuckles when you tried to get it out. And there were just two stale pieces of bread. So you made your bologna sandwich and wrapped it in a brown bag and went to the picnic.

When it came time to eat, you sat down at the end of the table, and spread out your bologna sandwich. But the folks next to you--the lady was a good cook--and she had worked all day, and she had fried chicken, and baked beans, home made rolls and potato salad, and sliced tomatoes, and pickles and olives, and celery, and to top it off, two great big homemade chocolate pies. And they spread it all out beside you. And there you were with your bologna sandwich. But they said to you, "Why don't we put it all together?" "No, no, I couldn't do that! I couldn't even think of it," you murmured, embarrassed. "Ah, come on, there's plenty of chicken, plenty of pie, plenty of everything, and we just love bologna sandwiches. Let's just put it all together." So you did, and there you sat, eating like a king, when you came like a pauper.

And I get to thinking, I think of me, sharing in the very being of God. When I think of how little I bring, and how much He brings, and that He invites me to share, I know I should be shouting to the house tops, but I'm so filled with awe and wonder that I can hardly be heard. I know I don't have enough love or faith or grace or mercy or wisdom. But He has. He has all those things in abundance. And He says, "Let's just put it all together. Everything that I possess is available to you. Everything that I am and can be to a person, I'll be to you."

And when I think about it like that, it really amuses me to see somebody running around through life hanging on to their dumb bag and their stale bologna sandwich, saying, "God's not gonna get my sandwich, no sirree, not mine!" Did you ever see anybody like that, just so needy, just about half starved to death, hanging on for dear life. It's not that He needs your sandwich. Fact is, you need His chicken.