

Why Jesus came: Meditations on the Incarnation

Isaiah 61:1-3

“To bind up the brokenhearted” – December 6, 2020



Introduction

Hope deferred makes the heart sick wisdom reminds us ([Prov. 13:12](#)). Having wrong expectations as to why Jesus came can lead us to frustration or disappointment because He's not doing what we assumed. Rather than guessing, God tells us why Jesus came. As we hear His reasons, adjust our life to His word, and trust Him, the more we'll come to know the great joy God announced through angels in [Luke 2:10](#).

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. He came to bind up the brokenhearted (61:1-2a)
- II. He came to transform our plight (61:2b-3)

Read & Discuss

Read [Isaiah 61:1-3](#)

In [Luke 4:16-21](#) Jesus entered the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth, read Isaiah 61:1-3 then sat down. With all eyes on Him, He told them, “Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” His point was that this prophecy made 700 years before Jesus was about Him. He is the Christ (Hebrew ‘Messiah’), the anointed one who would crush the head of Satan and begin to make all things new. No wonder Jesus comes as a preacher with good news!

Jesus preaches this good news to ‘the poor’. The poor are not just the financially broke, it includes those who are in trouble, in over their heads, and broken by the world they have no heart left to try. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught ‘blessed are the poor in spirit’ ([Matt. 5:3](#)). How is that different than the way the world assesses the poor? How is it that our poverty, as painful as it is, can be a good thing (see [Mark 2:17](#)).

As Jesus preaches good news to the poor, one of the results is that He binds up the brokenhearted. Can you recall a time when you felt brokenhearted (perhaps you are as you read this now)? God's word is different than ours – when He speaks, things happen – what He declares, comes to be ([Isa. 55:11](#)). What do we do with our broken hearts? We come to Jesus ([Matt. 11:28](#)) by pouring our hearts in prayer, feasting on His word, and leaning on friends to help carry our burdens.

Jesus also comes to give liberty to the captives. Isaiah's original audience would likely have heard it as a promise of God's future, gracious deliverance from exile. When Jesus picks this up and preaches it, He declares a redemption that comes from paying a debt we owe for our sins ([Rom. 6:23](#)) – a debt we cannot afford. How is it that God can forgive sin and remain a righteous judge? Not by sweeping sin under the carpet, but taking the punishment for sin Himself. Take a moment to read [Isaiah 53:3-6](#). Much of the Christian life is learning to live out the realities that God has declared and made true of us already. As Paul says in Romans 6:11, we are to reckon, count, or consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to Christ. In that sense, the Christian is not only saved by grace through faith, we live out our day-to-day obedience by grace through faith (see [Col. 2:6](#)).

This side of heaven, we can respond to disappointment and pain either by trying to escape through amusement and temporary pleasure – or we can go deep with God. Notice the threefold repetition of 'instead of' in Isaiah 61:3. As we go to Jesus again and again in our need, leaning on Him, and trusting His promises God brings about a transformation in our lives as we are satisfied in Him. Have you known this satisfaction? What would it look like for you to go to Him again *today*? To help a struggling brother or sister in Christ go to Him again?

Additional Reading: Luke 18:18-30, Ezekiel 34:16

Prayer of Response

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

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***Next week's sermon text: we turn to Hebrews 2:14-17 "He Came to Destroy the Devil"**