

# The Gospel According to Isaiah (Part 1)

Isaiah 61

Pastor Chris Coffman

## **Out With the Old...In With the New!**

Throughout the summer we've been studying the book of Isaiah to understand who God is and what He is up to in our world today. Whenever I read through the book of Isaiah, I am always reminded that the God who *made* everything in this world has the power to *remake* it as well! The way He does this is through sending His Son—The Messiah of Israel—Jesus Christ into our broken world. When Jesus Christ came He announced a message of grace, called the gospel (a Hebrew word meaning “good news” or “flesh”), to the spiritually and actually of poor of this world (Is 61:1-2). But when Christ announced this gospel-message He also inaugurated a gospel-mission to our world! Through the centuries those who have truly heard the gospel message have experienced two things. First, those who hear the gospel experience radical interior renovation. As the gospel of Jesus makes its home inside us it changes us from the inside out! Second, as Christ's gospel has its way in us, we lay down our lives to join God on His mission to radically renovate the world we live in as well!

## **The Gospel Reforms Our Image of God**

When Jesus preached His first sermon He went straight to our text today—Isaiah 61. Like most of Jesus' sermons, His first got Him in a heap of trouble. When the villagers heard what Jesus had to say they ran Him out of town and tried to kill Him! Which makes us wonder...what in the world did Jesus say about Isaiah 61? Oddly enough, the answer is grace. Through the stories of two non-Israelites—a wealthy leper named Naaman and the nameless, poor widow in Zarephath—Christ shows His audience that the God of Israel has come to save the pagans of this world. Jesus shows His audience that the Messiah came to bring mercy...not vengeance. Why did this news infuriate His audience in Nazareth? Because it meant admitting that they were just as leprous inside as the pagan Naaman. It meant that they were just as unrighteous and destitute as the widow in Zarephath. It meant admitting that they were unrighteous “oak(s) with fading leaves” (Is 1:30) and not majestic “oaks of righteousness” (Is 61:3)! Salvation has ONLY come for the spiritually poor (Luke 4:27). This is one of the interesting things about the gospel—it's only good news to those who have given up on their own goodness. The gospel of Jesus Christ is only beautiful to those who know deep down they are not.

## **The Gospel Renovates Our Broken Lives**

For those of us who abandon our own goodness for the gospel of Christ, God renovates our lives in a radical way! When you sit down and read through this chapter in Isaiah carefully you begin to notice that there is a whole lot of exchanging going on. *Instead of* ashes we are given beautiful crowns (Is 61:3). *Instead of* despair we are given delight (Is 61:3)! *Instead of* disgrace we are given dignified position in God's kingdom (Is 61:6-7)! *Instead of* shame we are given salvation (Is 61:6)! Instead of the filthy rags of our morality we find that God is waiting to clothe us with robes of His own righteousness (Is 61:10). As you read these verses you almost get the picture of someone renovating an old house—tearing out the old floors and faucets and replacing them with something completely new. Jesus isn't interested in simply repairing our lives—He want to renovate them completely! But how? The answer, according to Isaiah, is the Cross of Jesus Christ (Is 53). Through the Cross, Christ takes on the despair and shame we deserve. Christ is rejected so that our lives can be renovated and made new! Christ becomes ugly so that we can become beautiful! He gets our ashes of sin—we get His crown of salvation!

## **The Gospel Rebuilds Our Broken World**

As God renovates our lives through the Cross, He also commissions us to join Him in His mission to renovate and rebuild our broken world. The Cross of Jesus Christ

transforms pitiful sinners into “a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor” (Is 61:3). *The message of Christ always leads us to the mission of Christ.* If the message of Jesus Christ does not inspire the mission of Jesus Christ in our daily life then we need to ask ourselves if we’ve actually encountered the gospel.

Isaiah teaches us that when God’s people have been redeemed they begin to rebuild our broken world. Does the Cross of Jesus Christ inspire you toward His mission to our world? May the Cross inspire us to join God in His rebuilding work.

#### **Going Deeper...**

This week take some time to do the following simple exercise. Read through Isaiah 61 and Luke 4:17-30. As you read the texts ask Christ to do the following. First ask Him to renew your understanding of who He is and what He came to do. Secondly, ask Christ to renovate your old life with His new resurrected life. Like Naaman, the Lord wants to deal with the leprous effects of your sin and give you new life! Ask Him to take the ashes of your shame and despair. Receive His beauty and salvation. Lastly, ask God to show you how you can join in His work to rebuild our broken city. Like the widow in Zarephath, God wants to use you in a powerful way. Wherever He has placed you in life, know that you are planted for the display of His gospel at work in your life!

## **River West Happenings...**

### **Wednesday, July 30th • Global Missions Prayer Group 7:00pm**

This is the perfect opportunity to find out how God is reaching out to other parts of the world through River West Church. Join Pastor Chris at the Nave’s home on the last Wednesday of each month. Contact Pastor Chris at 699-2226 or [chris@riverwest.org](mailto:chris@riverwest.org)

### **Jr. High Summer Camp •**

Get your registration in! Camp dates are August 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, give Pastor Josh a call at 699.2226 or [josh@riverwest.com](mailto:josh@riverwest.com)

### **Wednesday, August 6th • Parent Prayer Group at River West @ 7-8pm]**

Come and join other parents of Jr. High or High School students on the first Wednesday of each month to pray for our students and the Student Ministries leaders. For more information contact Cynthia Weston @ 515-1464 or [cwweston@juno.com](mailto:cwweston@juno.com)

### **Saturday August 2<sup>nd</sup> •**

#### **All Church Blue Ribbon BBQ! Noon-4pm**

We’re having a cook-off at the year’s event! Sign up to show off your barbeque, culinary and/or pastry skills! Sign up by calling the office @ 699.2226. A-O Bring a side dish and P-Z bring dessert. Looking forward to seeing the whole family at River West Church!

### **Saturday August 16th • Men’s White Water Rafting**

Pick up registration and details in the foyer! For questions and more information contact Kris Dunning at 332.9437 cell or 620.6959 [blesd1@integrity.com](mailto:blesd1@integrity.com)

### **FYI**

For more information on what’s happening at River West Church, go to [www.riverwest.org](http://www.riverwest.org) and click on the calendar link.