

The Preacher of the Covenant

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INI – SDG

Isaiah 61:1-3 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, ³ To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

Our kids usually learn at a young age how to identify Jesus in any given picture. Even if the physical depiction of Jesus is different from the classic European with a beard and long hair, still there are certain clues they pick up on. Jesus is the one holding the lamb. Jesus is the one in white. Jesus is the one who is teaching.

This is easy to do because they know the stories and the parables. Despite how his physical appearance is depicted, it is clear it is him from the things that he is doing.

Before the Gospels were written the people had the prophet Isaiah. Through Isaiah God gave a description of Jesus, so that they would know him when he came. This description had nothing to do with his physical appearance. It had everything to do with his work and his words.

Isaiah 40, which we looked at last week, described the "voice" which would come before him and "prepare the way."

Isaiah 53 is the suffering servant. Jesus is the high priest who sacrificed himself for the sins of the world. There we see Jesus "wounded," "stripped" and "cut off from the land of the living."

Isaiah 42 describes the anointed King, who will be exalted and bring righteousness to Israel.

Here in Isaiah 61, we have the description of Jesus as the prophet who is "anointed to preach good tidings to the poor." This is the chapter that Jesus himself points to as the ultimate description of who he was.

When Jesus was in Nazareth, he quotes these words and says to the people "today this is fulfilled in your hearing." He wasn't simply telling the people that he was the Messiah, he was telling them what type of a Messiah he was to be. He had come to preach to the poor.

When John was in prison and sent the messengers to Jesus asking if he was the coming one, he sent the messengers back to John with these words from the prophet Isaiah. "The poor have the gospel preached to them."

Isaiah chapter 60 is a description of what God's kingdom will be like. Isaiah 61 is a description of how that kingdom will come and what the Messiah who will bring it will be like.

As we draw near to the celebration of his coming, eight days from now, it is good to be reminded of what type of Messiah he is. In this way we like the children can easily recognize him. We can recognize him not only laying in the manger but when he comes to us in word and power as well.

Isaiah 61:1-4 NKJ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

Jesus is the Lord of the covenant who comes with grace and mercy.

One of the clues that identifies Jesus in any picture is the look of tender mercy and compassion. If our kids were to see a picture of a man with a scowl, wagging his finger with his hand on his hip, they would know that is not Jesus.

He is the one "anointed to preach good news to the poor."

The translation "Lord GOD," that we see here in the NKJ might be misleading. The Hebrew term Elohim which means, almighty, and is usually translated God is not used here. Rather what we have here is Adonai Jahveh, that is the Lord Jehovah. Thus, it is not the God of power but the Lord of the covenant who has anointed and sent His only begotten Son.

The term Elohim, the almighty God does appear in verse two in the context of the day of God's judgement. But it is distinct in nature from the usage of Yahweh.

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God;

"Yahweh's acceptable year" and "God's vengeful day" are not two separate times. They are one and the same thing. The coming of the Messiah is the fulfillment of the jubilee to those who are of the covenant. To those who reject Yahweh's promises it is a day of God's almighty wrath.

Isaiah proclaimed also that at the coming of the Messiah "every valley would be exalted, and every hill brought low." To those who puff themselves up the coming is the day of God's judgment. To those who humble themselves before the Lord, the coming is the year of jubilee.

To us who are of the covenant and have received forgiveness through Jesus, His coming the year of jubilee. To us he comes not as the God of might, but as the Lord of the covenant.

This is Yahweh the Lord of grace and mercy, of tender compassion who preaches the good news to "the poor," "the broken," "the captive," "those bound." The gospel comes to those who are suffering.

Jesus comes with grace and every mercy to those who are broken in spirit.

Jesus is anointed with the Spirit.

Secondly, he is identified by the Spirit of Yahweh which rests upon him.

In the Gospel of John, John presents the evidence that Jesus is the "Son of God." John the Baptist gives testimony that he saw the Spirit descend upon him. By this he knows him to be the Messiah.

Because the anointed comes with the Spirit of Yahweh, the same Spirit who hovered over the face of the earth, therefore life returns to God's people.

Isaiah 61:11 11 For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations

In Gen 6:3 the Lord promised that his Spirit would not strive with man. Because of man's wickedness the Spirit was taken from men.

Now in the person of Jesus Christ that same Spirit returns to men. In the person of Jesus that Spirit does strive again with men through the preaching of the gospel. Jesus after his ascension gave that same Spirit to the church, so that, that Spirit which left because of wickedness at the time of the flood, came again through Jesus to the church.

He was anointed not with oil but with the Spirit of Yahweh.

Jesus Preaches

Another of the clues that allow children to easily identify Jesus in any picture, is that he is often the one preaching. In the famous picture of the Emmaus Disciples, he is speaking, the other two figures are listening. He is the one standing in the boat to preach, while the disciples sit in the boat and the crowd stands on the shore. In the feeding of the 5,000 he is looking to heaven to bless the bread.

He is the great prophet. The one who came to **preach** good news to the poor.

The job of Christ is to preach, and the job of the Spirit is to preach, and the kingdom comes through preaching, and the poor are comforted, and those who mourn receive joy, through the preaching. All of this is done through the preaching of the Gospel.

But what do men say and think? They say what is preaching? It is nothing but talk, we need more than that. And so, the pope wants power, and the charismatics want special powers and miracles, and the anabaptists want to prove their spiritual wisdom and good works, and others want numbers and money and prestige and fame and many other things. But none of these things are included in this description of the Christ, but only the preaching of the Gospel.

We so easily get bored and tired of the preaching of the Gospel. We want something new and exciting. But this is who Christ is and what he came to do.

All the gifts of God come to us through the preaching of the gospel, and without it we receive nothing from God.

Look down at verse three "**that they may be called the trees of righteousness.**"

This is a reference to the very first Psalm which describes the godly as trees planted by the "rivers of water." This was a very important Psalm both in the Old Testament and the early church. Here Isaiah opens our eyes to understand that the key to being that tree is not our ability to follow God's law but the gift of God that is ours through the preaching of the Gospel.

God told Adam to name all the animals, so that Adam would learn that he also needed a partner and that this wasn't something that he could find on his own. So it is that God often allows people to attempt to become trees on their own so that they can learn that they cannot do it on their own but instead that they need Jesus. Jesus came to preach the gospel to the poor so that we might become the trees of righteousness.

In all of this we learn to recognize our Savior even before we see him. He is the Lord of the covenant who was anointed to preach to the broken, so that we may receive the righteousness of God. Amen