

Isaiah 61:1-11 (NIV)

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. 4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. 5 Aliens will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. 6 And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. 7 Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs. 8 "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. 9 Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed." 10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

23-61-01-SENT--The Coming Messenger
Advent, Messiah, messenger, message, good news
Isaiah 61:1-4
Jesus is SENT to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION: (Isaiah 61:1-11 as Scripture Reading)

–Mary rejoiced with praise, when she heard the angel’s announcement that she would be the mother of the Messiah (Luke 1:46-47): “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...” (*Advent is a time of Christian praise and rejoicing because of the coming of the Messiah!*)
–So far, in this series of sermons, we’ve seen Jesus as SENT to be Deliverer (to reclaim His people from exile), and as Lord (to claim His crown as rightful King). Today we look at Jesus as *the coming Messenger, SENT to proclaim the arrival of the Kingdom of God.*

I. The Messenger is the Messiah– v.1a, *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*

- A. [Preachers often pray for an *anointing* before they preach a message from God’s Word. To *anoint* means to *pour oil on*, and in Bible times they did it to ordain prophets, priests and kings. But the act of *anointing* was symbolic of a more profound ordination, that of *the Holy Spirit*.] This is what we see in Isaiah’s announcement of God’s *coming Messiah, the Messenger of the New Covenant* (or New Testament).
- B. Isaiah told of a coming Messenger who would speak with power and authority, because of this Holy Spirit anointing. This is why Jesus is called “the *Christ*,” “the *Messiah*” [Heb.: “Anointed One”].
- C. Jesus was greater than any prophet, priest or king anointed before Him: He wasn’t just One Who taught about the Kingdom. He was the One who brought it; He was *the Singer and the Song!*

TRANS: Ultimately, the Messiah’s 2nd Advent will completely fulfill God’s Kingdom reign. But in His *1st Advent*, Jesus was SENT not just to proclaim the Kingdom, but to *show us what it’s like....*

II. The Messenger Binds the Broken– v.1b, *He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...*

- A. What happens when God’s Kingdom breaks into a broken world?

The wounded are healed, the mourning find comfort, the chains of captives are broken, and the light freedom shines on the prisoner!

1. Jesus brings “good news to the poor”: God has heard our cries for help and healing! (Who’s not excited about that?)
 2. But it’s not just an announcement: Jesus came to mend broken hearts. (He came to walk beside us through our pain, taking it upon Himself and staying with us on our journeys of healing.)
 3. People chained to bad habits or imprisoned in addictions often feel helpless and hopeless.... the Kingdom Jesus brings is one of freedom, where chains come off and prison doors open.
- B. One of the most painful forms of brokenness is the grief humans experience from losses.... Jesus meets us in these needs as well:
1. We’ve all mourned at the loss of loved ones (whether it happens by death, divorce, or dementia); Jesus is the Messenger SENT– v.2b-3a, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve...
 2. People get depressed at losing beloved treasures, such homes or keepsakes that echo dear memories; to them Jesus is SENT– v.3b, 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.
 3. Some lose their accustomed lifestyles (moving into unfamiliar situations, losing mobility or other abilities, feeling uprooted and cut off); Jesus was SENT to announce– v.3c, They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.
- C. More than individual lives are touched by this brokenness....
1. We hear bad news daily of devastation by political upheaval and corruption, by poverty and disaster, by crime and injustice.
 2. Is there hope for social and global evil to cease? Yes! Jesus is SENT to proclaim that message of hope– v.4, They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

TRANS: Hope for worldwide brokenness begins in the broken world of each human heart. **Jesus is SENT** to bring healing, liberation and restoration. The good news of Advent is that this hope has already materialized. We don’t have to wait for the Messiah’s 2nd Advent to see what this Kingdom looks like. We can find out now in our personal lives by opening our hearts to the Advent Message.... Finally,

III. The Messenger is the Message

- A. One day, Jesus stood reading this passage from Isaiah to those in a Jewish synagogue, then He said (Luke 4:21), “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (In other words, He claimed to be the Messiah, the Anointed One they were waiting for.)
1. Advent was standing right in front of them, incarnate, no longer as a written word of promise, but the Word made flesh!
 2. No more need for prophets preaching God’s coming Kingdom: the Messiah had arrived, and He was the Message.
- B. Immediately following Advent and Christmastide is Epiphany, the season that stands for “the manifestation of Christ to the world”–
1. Everything from Epiphany to Good Friday is about how Jesus lived out the Message of God’s Kingdom during His ministry.
 2. Jesus translated Isaiah’s future prophecy into a present reality, and He’s still doing this in people’s lives today!
 3. Jesus didn’t just bring God’s Message down to earth: He lived it out on earth. (By proclaiming, “The Kingdom has come,” He was inviting us to come to Him.)

CONCLUSION:

–**Jesus is SENT to proclaim the Kingdom of God.** What was once a distant hope is now a present reality, fulfilled in the arrival of Jesus.
 –Are there broken places that need mending in your life? Are their ruins that need restoration? Jesus is the Messenger and the Message. Advent calls us to place our hope and trust in Him for the healing we need.
 –But also, as we await His Return, Jesus calls us to follow Him, to live out Advent hope, to become His message in both word and deed. Let’s keep asking ourselves: “What can I do make the message of Christ real to others in tangible, creative ways?” – “How can I communicate the Kingdom living in a visible way to my neighbors?” – “How can Jesus use me to bind up broken hearts, to bring comfort to the grieving, and to liberate those who are bound?” Let’s turn these questions into Advent prayers....