

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “Joy in the Waiting” from the “Worth the Wait” Advent sermon series

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- This section of Isaiah is known as “The Coming of the Messiah” and “The Good News of Deliverance”. This section describes the ministry of the Messiah in both His first coming (vv. 1-2) and His second coming (vv. 2-3). This section highlights the promise of the Israelites’ redemption!
- In verses 1-4, we read “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim 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...They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.” In Luke 4:14-21, Jesus invokes these verses from Isaiah to announce Himself and His mission! The day the Messiah returns (Christ’s Second Coming) will be “The day of vengeance” and He will comfort those who mourn.
- In Verse 4, we see that when the Messiah returns, Israel “will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.” This section also speaks of “strangers’ or those foreign to Israel coming and joining them in the labor of farming and shepherding and doing the work.
- In verses 8-11, we see the Lord speak in vv. 8-9, and then the prophet resumes the narrative in vv. 10-11. The Lord blesses Israel with “...an everlasting covenant” and “Their descendants shall be known among the nations...and “all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.” Verses 10-11 speaks of Israel as the redeemed that rejoices in God’s blessing for them. Israel “will rejoice and praise in the Lord”.
- This section concludes with, “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.”

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- We can see all around us that “bad news” often sells more and seems to travel faster than good news. We have a propensity to focus more on “bad news”.
- The Jewish exiles were covered in bad news! For half a century they lived in Babylonian captivity, and the trail they were forced on (Jerusalem to Babylon) covered 1700 miles. For 50 years, all of the news was bad.
- However, in 539 BC, God moved through a Persian pagan king, named Cyrus the Great, who defeated the Babylonian troops and decreed the release and restoration of the Jewish refugees. Today’s scripture captures the prophetic announcement of restoration and redemption of the Jews.
- The word “gospel” in the Greek translates to “Good News”. The word comes from the battlefield, in which a messenger would come and tell the people the outcome of the battle. A watchman could sense the outcome by the “spring” in the step of the messenger!
- Anointed and Appointed: (1) *Anointed* in Hebrew translates to “paint” or to “smear”. For example, to anoint someone with oil was a sacred act and authorization; and (2) Sent in Hebrew means *appointed*. It is indicative of a particular task or mission that is assigned to those who are anointed!
- Jesus embodies the prophecy and speaks of His anointing and appointing, as well as that of His disciples in Luke 4:14-21.
- Two Dartmouth professors who have led discussion on the turmoil in the Middle East where people can gather to listen and have respectful discourse for the sake of restoration. It is in essence a matter of discernment: not teaching *what* to think but *how* to think.
- As a child of God, you are anointed and appointed to the ministry of reconciliation and restoration to build up the ancient ruins and repair the broken cities. When we do, there will always be joy...for those that both give it and receive it! The infallible proof of the presence of God is *joy*! In Advent, the color of the third candle is pink to signify joy.
- Today, let us recognize that we are covered in good news! When it gets in our hands, our feet and in our heart, there is a spring in our step! We cannot help to share it in word and in deed. The upshot is indescribable joy. It is worth the wait!

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- When did Jesus quote this section of Isaiah? Why and what was His purpose?
- Read Luke 4:14-21. What do you think those in the temple were thinking when Jesus said this passage from Isaiah was being fulfilled?
- Reflect on a time when God turned your “ashes” (v.3) into beauty?
- What is the “everlasting covenant” described in v. 8?
- What is the difference between a protester and a prophet?
- What is the meaning of *anointed* and *appointed*? How do these terms fit in with today’s sermon? What is our anointing and authorization in our faith?
- What does it mean to share the “Good News” in *word* and in *deed*?

