

What the People Need

Isa. 61:1-3

Introduction:

1. It shocks me; the pain that we are willing to inflict on one another.
2. Often in our anger we draw our verbal swords and begin slashing. Hearts are torn open. Spirits crushed.
3. Under the influence of Satan we emotionally destroy. We rape the innocent and powerless, repeatedly.
4. The death and destruction of generations lie in our wake. And all the while we are screaming "Crucify him! Crucify him!"
5. Grief and mourning engulf us in the darkness of the pit as we spend our life in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another!
6. BUT Isaiah wrote . . . (Isa. 61:1-3).
7. I believe the Lord knew what people needed. They needed good news, healing, freedom and comfort. Isaiah said, "The Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted."

Discussion:

I. The situation of Isaiah's day.

- A. Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
 1. The people were idolatrous and while there were some reforms it was not near enough. Ultimately they would be overcome by Babylon. Many would die and those that would survive would be preserved under the captivity of Babylon.
 2. Isaiah had described them in his first chapter as sons that had revolted in rebellion against God. He described them as sick in head and heart, the descendants of evildoers, as having abandoned the Lord and despised Him (1:2ff).
- B. How then can he say, "The Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted?"
- C. Sin brings affliction on the guilty and the innocent, but it is the God of heaven who brings relief. Sin takes us to places that we do not want to go. It keeps us there longer than we want to stay and it costs us more than we want to pay.
 1. Isaiah's message is both a message of condemnation on sin and a call to repentance.
 2. God knew what hurt people needed and he sent Isaiah to answer their need.

II. This text describes four things that God anointed Isaiah to do.

- A. To bring good news to the afflicted (1c).
 1. The nation of Israel was suffering under the affliction of their sins.
 2. Although Isaiah condemned their sin there was a call to repentance in order to receive the forgiveness of God.
 3. The blessed result of the good news is described in Isa. 9.
- B. To bring healing to the brokenhearted (1d).
 1. See in this statement those broken because of sin (Isa. 1:5b-6).
 2. Perhaps you have been there and felt the hopelessness as you have been crushed under

its burden. Maybe it was as a result of your own sins or maybe it was the result of others sin against you.

3. In the destruction of Judah and the captivity the people would experience brokenheartedness. Isaiah was sent by God to “bind up the brokenhearted.”
- C. To proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners (1e).
 1. It would seem that they were powerless under their captures.
 2. That worldly power, Babylon, would overpower them leaving little but destruction and death in their wake. Those taken into captivity had lost their home, their family, their pride. They were humiliated. There was nothing left.
 3. Isaiah was sent to proclaim liberty and freedom.
- D. To comfort all who mourn (2-3). The vengeance of God referenced here is to His destruction of the enemies of His people and that brings comfort to them (cf. 2 Thess. 1:6ff).
 1. They would receive a garland instead of ashes. Celebration of victory instead of the deprivation of a wildfire. Cf. Those in Smoky Mountains grieving.
 2. The oil of gladness instead of mourning. 4th of July vs. a funeral.
 3. The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. Celebration of graduation rather than the exhaustion of being bombed. Cf. Pictures of Syria.
 4. God had sent Isaiah to bring comfort to a hurting people.

II. Many of us may recognize Isa. 61:1-3 from its reference in Lk. 4:16-22.

- A. There Jesus interpreted the passage saying, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”
- B. Jesus came to seek and save the lost.
 1. Indeed, He was sent by God to bring relief to all those oppressed by sin and its consequences.
 2. Learn here what it means for “The Spirit of the Lord” to be upon one.
 - a. It is not about the performance of miracles.
 - b. It is about God bringing relief to those plagued with the consequences of sin. In Syria radical Muslims destroy and kill. Motivated by fear and hatred people destroy one another. Others motivated by fear and hatred and anger respond in kind. The devil has us by the tail in a down-hill drag. All of it is sin gone to seed! We do the same thing in our marriages, our families, in the church. It is not “The Spirit of the Lord” at work in such destruction.
 - c. Healing the blind and the lame is only a manifestation of God’s power to bring greater relief than this. Cf. Matt. 9:2ff.
 - d. Oh, ladies and gentlemen, I hope we recognize that God has greater objectives than the mere relief of our physical infirmities.
 3. Great power is available to bring healing.
- C. When Jesus quoted Isa. 61 of himself the people responded by speaking well of Him and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips (Lk. 4:22).
 1. The Spirit of God brings gracious words!
 2. The Spirit of God sends His servants to bring good news, healing, freedom and comfort.
 3. That is what Jesus brought!

III. Is the Spirit of the Lord upon us?

- A. For Isaiah the Spirit of the Lord brought good news, healing, freedom and comfort.
- B. For Jesus the Spirit of the Lord brought good news, healing, freedom and comfort.
- C. Is the Spirit of the Lord upon you in your relationship to your spouse? Your children? Your father/mother/sister/brother? Is the Spirit of the Lord upon you in your relationship with your brothers and sisters in Christ? Do your words and actions bring grace to those who hear? Do you give a garland or do you burn down to ashes? Do you anoint with the oil of gladness or do you bring mourning? Do you adorn people with a mantle of praise or fainting?
- D. When the Spirit of God is upon us it will be reflected in our actions. Reading of Isa. 58:3-10.
- E. People need what the Spirit of God would bring them. Don't you need it? Others do too.

Conclusion:

1. When the Spirit of God is upon us we will bring good news, healing, freedom and comfort.
2. Those we bring it to will be "oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord" (Isa. 61:e)
3. And He will be glorified. He created the transformation in us and now we communicate it to others.
4. This is what the people need. This is what God gives us. He has anointed us to communicate it!