

The glories of salvation

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 April 2020

Preacher: Philip Wells

[0:00] Good morning everybody. This is the recording for 19th of April 2020.

! I'm Philip Wells. I work for Calvary Evangelical Church as one of the elders! And I'm going to be leading this morning on the subject of the glory of salvation from Isaiah chapter 61-62.

As you can see from the notices, my colleague Ben Alltimes is recording something for us to listen to at half past six this evening on Matthew's Gospel, continuing that series there.

On Wednesday, we are seeking to organise a joint prayer meeting. That's one of the quarterly prayer meetings that we have along with a number of other churches, including New Life Moolscum.

And that's been in process of being set up. So please look out for the information on that, which will come through to you as soon as possible. Note that the prayer time will be 7.30, a little bit earlier than usual, just to fit in with our brothers and sisters in other churches.

[1:18] So let's ask God bless us. Please come and help us in this reflection. So let's ask God to bless us. Please come and help us in this reflection.

And ministry and togetherness this morning. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. In a moment we're going to sing Psalm 121.

I've chosen this because it is a psalm that speaks about the help that God's people have.

It seems to me that at this time we need all the help we can get. And to look to the Lord is exactly the right place to look. Psalm 121 says, I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber.

[2:39] Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord, we're told, watches over us. And our help comes from the one who has made heaven and earth.

So that's the music we're going to have. I'm going to try and click the right sound for this. I, to the hills, lift up my eyes.

From where shall help begins? My help comes only from the Lord, who made the earth and death. He will not let your foot be moved. God over you he keeps. He watches over Israel and slumbers not your sleep.

God over you he keeps. Strong is the Lord, your shield and shape. Safe are you in his sight.

[4:05] Son shall not hurt your life by day. Nor shall the moon by night.

So shall the Lord keep you from harm. He will keep safe and sure. You're going out.

You're coming in. From out on and evermore. I lift my eyes to the hills.

Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

Let's come to him in prayer. Almighty maker, great creator, you are full of power and wisdom and glory.

We who are upon this earth, small creatures yet made in your image, we dare approach your footstool through the mediator, the saviour, the great high priest, the merciful and faithful high priest, Jesus Christ, who made purifications for sins and is now at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

[5:49] Through him we come and confess our sins, our many sins of omission and commission, the many things that go on in our hearts and minds that are not the sort of thing that went on in the heart and mind of

Jesus Christ.

We confess our sins and ask for forgiveness. Please grant us repentance that we should not love our sins and stick to them, but turn from them and hate them and see the ugliness of them and the beauty of your way.

We come to thank you that you have kept us. All of us who are able to watch and listen this morning, we thank you for the degree of health and strength that you've given us.

And we pray for those who don't have that health and strength. Particularly pray again for those who are vulnerable and needy and pray, as we shall no doubt do later, for those who serve our nation in various capacities and not least those who serve medically in the NHS.

We ask, Lord, that at this time the work of God would not come to a stop, but rather we pray that the work of your kingdom would go forward.

[7:08] We pray even that there would be a softening of hearts and a gathering in of men and women and boys and girls who have come to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Please equip us, your people, to be your ambassadors in this cause, in this venture and in this mission so that you will have the glory.

And we pray our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen. All my days I will sing this song of gladness, give my praise to the fountain of delights, for in my helplessness you heard my cry, and waves of mercy poured down on my life.

And thank you so much to Aaron for this very well-done accompaniment for us this morning.

Thank you. All my days I will sing this song of gladness, give my praise to the fountain of delights, for in my helplessness you heard my cry, A waves of mercy poured down on my life.

[9:03] I will trust in the cross of my redeemer. I will sing of the blood that never fails, all sins forgiven, all conscience cleansed, of death defeated and life without end.

Beautiful Savior, Wonderful Counselor, Lord of majesty, Lord of history, You're the way, the truth, the life, Style of the morning, Glorious and loneliness, You're the risen one, Heaven's champion, And you reign, You reign, Oh, I long to be Where the praise is never ending, You're too dull, Where the glory never fades, Where countless worshippers will share one song, And Christ all will honor the Lamb, You reign, Wonderful Savior, Wonderful Savior, Wonderful Counselor, Lord of majesty, Lord of history, You're the way, The truth, the life, Style of the morning, Glorious and holiness, You're the purpose of one, You're the purpose of one, Heaven's champion, And you reign, You reign, You reign, Oh Beautiful Saviour

Wonderful Counselor I long to be where the praise is never ending, yearn to dwell where the glory never fades. We're going to have a reading from Isaiah chapter 61 verse 10 to 62.12.

So what I've got on the screen there isn't quite right. 61 verse 10. And thank you to Christopher for reading this.

[12:20] Let me try and click the right button. Isaiah chapter 61 starting at verse 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.

For as the soil makes a young plant come up and a garden causes seeds to grow. So the sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent. For Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet. Till her righteousness shines out like the dawn. Her salvation like a blazing torch.

The nations will see your righteousness and all kings your glory. You will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand.

[13:27] A royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you deserted or name your land desolate. But you will be called Hepzibah and your land Belula.

For the Lord will take delight in you and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden so will your sons marry you. As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride so will your God rejoice over you.

I have posted watchmen on your walls O Jerusalem. They will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord give yourselves no rest. And give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem. And makes her the praise of the earth. The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm. Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies. And never again will foreigners drink the new wine for which you have toiled. But those who harvest it will eat it and praise the Lord. And those who gather the grapes will drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.

[14:29] Pass through. Pass through the gates. Prepare the way for the people. Build up. Build up the highway. Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations. The Lord has made proclamation to the ends of the earth.

Say to the daughter of Zion. See your saviour comes. See his reward is with him as his recompense accompanies him. They will be called the holy people. The redeemed of the Lord. And you will be called sought after. The city no longer deserted. Amen. Thanks for that reading Christopher.

Let me just go back. Yep. The. Read about. The people of God being no longer deserted. Not dumped. But loved. Sought after. Woowed. Drawn. By the Lord. Because of his love for his people. And I chose this song.

[15:39] The church is one foundation. It has the first verse. From heaven he came and sought her. To be his holy bride. With his own blood he bought her.

And for her life he died. The saviour who. Loved his people. Came to seek his people. Because of his love.

It's number 577. If you've got a hymn book there. The church is one foundation.

Is Jesus Christ her Lord. She is his new creation. By water and the word.

From heaven he came and sought her. To be his holy bride. With his own blood he bought her.

[16:58] And for her life he died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died.

He died. He died. He died. He died. charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth.

One holy name she blesses and shares one holy food, as to one hope she presses with every grace endued.

We see her long delighted by heresy and set, yet she by God is guided, one people, one elect. Her vigil she is keeping, her cry goes up while long, and soon the night of weeping shall be the dawn of song.

[18:22] In toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war, she waits the consummation of peace forevermore, till with the vision glorious, her longing eyes are blessed.

At last the church victorious shall be the church at rest. Yet she on earth has union with those whose rest is won, and shares in sweet communion with God the three in one, whose love has made them holy.

Lord, grant to us your grace, with them the meek and lowly in heaven to see your face.

We may eventually, one day, see his face.

Mark's going to lead us in a prayer for our nation. So, let me bring Mark in. Thank you for bringing us this prayer, Mark.

[20:30] Lord, we come to you knowing that you are the maker of heaven and earth. You are the one our lives depend on.

Lord, we need you. Every day we need you. We cry to you that you would have mercy on us.

As a nation, Lord, we deserve judgment. We have sinned and erred and gone far from you in many ways. Many people do not have any respect for you.

Do not come to you. Do not pray to you, Lord. Do not know you. They live their lives as if you were not there, Lord.

And we are saddened by this and we pray that this would change. We pray that people in our nation would want to really pray to the living God.

[21:36] Lord, there have been so many idols. There are so many idols around us still. Thank you that during this coronavirus you are smashing some of those idols away.

That people cannot rely on them anymore. And we pray that they would rely on the Lord God. God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Lord, have mercy on us, Lord. Oh, Lord, flee with our Prime Minister the view of our governments as they make decisions.

Lord, help them. Give them wisdom, Lord, even though they may not ask of you. Lord, we pray for our Queen. Thank you for her Christian testimony.

Please bless her, Lord, at this time and the royal family, Lord. We pray for those in the NHS, Lord.

[22:36] Think of all these people that need care and we thank you so much for our health service. Well, we take it for granted sometimes, but we appreciate it when things are tough like now.

Oh, Lord, please, we pray for professional doctors and nurses. Particularly pray for Estelle, Lord.

You would bless her at this time. Help her, give her strength, we ask.

Oh, Lord, there is so much to pray for, but we thank you we can pray for these things, our nation, and bless this day. Bless the ministry from your word, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, Mark, for leading us in that prayer.

We're going to be thinking about what's said in Isaiah 61 and 62, which Christopher read to us, and here's my introduction.

[23:50] talking to Annika about her sister in a German health service. Apparently, German hospitals too are short of protective equipment, and they also struggle at the moment to get people into isolation.

We thought it was just the UK, didn't we? we thought it was just us that were struggling, but actually everybody struggles. And that's without all thinking about climate change, and that's without mentioning crime, and that's without mentioning the world besetting sin, the world besetting problem of human sin.

Who's going to fix all this? Well, I hope we don't anticipate that human beings have the capacity to solve this all themselves.

We were made to depend on someone else. God has given us amazing abilities, but we were made to depend on someone else. Who can we turn to?

Well, the psalmists in Psalm 121 turn to the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. But in the book that we've been reading in Isaiah, the ancient prophet has been asking that same question.

[25:10] Who is going to fix the problems of the world? Who is going to fix the problems of our human race? And the answer has come through loud and clear, and it's an amazing answer, that the Lord God will fix it.

And he will fix it single handedly. So, just to recap some of the things that we've seen in this part of the Bible, Isaiah in his day saw the human problem in its full dimensions.

He could see the pagan nations, the pagan nations who, to cut a long story short, are completely lost in their spiritual ignorance, their moral ignorance, and their idolatry, sovereignty, and the nations aren't that much different nowadays.

He saw the condition of God's people, the ones chosen for his favour, Israel, who had received spiritual instruction and moral instruction, had been taught very clearly, that there were not many gods, but there were one God, here, O Israel, the Lord our God is one.

They'd received this instruction, but they too are blind, deaf, powerless, and unclean.

[26:35] Who is blind like my servant, says the Lord in Isaiah? And they themselves, in this part of Isaiah's prophecy, which seems to have the most intense reflection on the lostness of the human condition, in this in Isaiah 59, verse 12, he says, our offences are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us, our offences are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities.

They were very conscious of their sin, they weren't always conscious of it, but they are in Isaiah, in this part of Isaiah. It's the same summary that the Apostle Paul gives in the New Testament, in his letter to the Romans, where he says, Jew and Gentile are in the same boat, in their slightly different ways, they all have sinned, and all fall short of the glory of God, and all need salvation.

And who will do it? This part of Isaiah tells us that the Lord God is so full of passion and indignation, he himself will step in.

In 59, verse 15 and around there, you might remember, the Lord says, the Lord looked and was displeased, it was evil in his eyes that there was no justice, that there was no man, that there was no one to intervene, so his own arm worked salvation for him, his own righteousness sustained him, he put on righteousness as his breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head. he gets down to business saving people on his own single-handedly, his own arm worked salvation, his own righteousness sustained him, and just as in creation, it is very clear God asked no advice, he took no counsel from anybody, he didn't get any help from anybody, he didn't contract out salvation, he did it himself.

[28:46] So in redemption, as in creation, the glory is his, and so in redemption, the glory is his, he has done it.

Praise to his holy name. And that's why it's rather mind blowing that as we read these passages, another person, and I've deliberately put a capital A and a capital P there, another person pops up in the text, who is the worker of salvation.

We find this person in 59:20, the Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins, as for me this is my covenant with them says the Lord, my spirit who is on you and my words that I put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth or the mouths of your children.

God seems to have in mind this other person who is can't be a third party and yet is not the same as the one speaking.

The Redeemer will come. 59:21 says my spirit is upon you. 61:1 this other person speaks the spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

[30:12] He sent me to bind up the broken hearted to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

The Lord has anointed me this other person says and you might remember a few weeks ago for Easter. We ask the identity of this agent who does the Lord's work who is distinct from the Lord and yet is not a third party and the answer came from Jesus this is what he said he read this text in the synagogue in Luke 4 verse 18 and he said today as he stands there in front of them this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing and that propels us inescapably to the most mind-blowing estimate of the magnitude of Jesus.

So having focused the spotlight on the anointed redeemer and before the spotlight goes to him again which is what's going to happen in chapter 63 the prophet is occupied with an appreciative response and just thinking about responding to what this redeemer has done.

It talks about the glory of salvation and it's actually very healthy for us just for a few moments to stop worrying about all the bad news all the statistics to stop worrying about our problems and to think about the glory of the salvation that God has provided for us who believe and that's what I'd like us to do to enumerate the blessings we have in Christ to count our blessings and that's what we're going to try and do for these next however many minutes 20 minutes or so.

So what I'd like to do first is just to go through the text in a little detail and then to draw out some general points across the text. So if you have the Bible in front of me you're at chapter 61 verse 10 and following the analysis of dear Alec Mateer in his commentary we have now a poem of four verses each with ten lines and if you're inclined to press the pause button and just to look in your Bible to see whether you've got ten lines going down verses 10 and 11 and then another ten lines chapter 62 1 to 3 and then another ten lines chapter 62 verses 4 and 5 and then another ten lines 6 and 7.

[33:04] Well you can check it out. But that's a I'm going to go with that analysis we have a poem of four verses. It is poetry and this text is meant to be strong on atmosphere and vision actually on emotion.

response and I hope as I take us through it some of that will come out of it. Some of that will be drawn out. So just looking at it in a little bit more detail I'm not going to go through every single word of it but chapter 61 verses 10 and 11 is about rejoicing.

I delight greatly in the Lord. My soul rejoices in my God for he has clothed me with garments of salvation. He's arrayed me in a robe of righteousness. It talks about the clothing like a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest and like a bride adorns herself with jewels.

It talks about plant life as the soil makes the young plant come up and so on. It actually talks about sprouting three times.

The plants sprout. The garden causes seeds I think to sprout. So the Lord will make righteousness and praise sprout up from before all the nations.

[34:25] It's bursting out. Then at 62 verses 1 to 3 the speaker is this the anointed one speaking?

Is it the prophets speaking? It doesn't seem to be Zion does it? For Zion's sake I will not keep silent. For Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet. He's got something that he's not going to shut up about. And he talks about Zion's righteousness shining out like the dawn and the nations seeing that righteousness and all the kings seeing the glory and this is going to be a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.

So Zion's brilliant glory and a turnaround you'll be a new name which we'll find out about in a moment. And then the next verse is about Zion not being deserted or dumped but sought after, loved, cherished.

No long will they call you deserted or name your land desolate but you will be called Hephzibah which means my delight is in her and your land Beulah meaning married so that the land won't be empty and desolate but will be in union with her husband.

[35:44] There'll be relationship restored, love, a home. As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride so your God will rejoice over you.

Verse 5, 6 and 7. I, we've gone on to go back to I, I have posted watchmen on your walls O Jerusalem.

They will never be silent day or night. And these watchmen are there to, strangely enough, to give the Lord no rest. Verse 6. And to call on the Lord and to give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of all the land or the praise of all the earth.

So we've got those four verses. Then we have an oath. Verse 8 and 9. The Lord has sworn by his right hand and mighty arm.

And what he's saying is you'll never be in that position where I have to discipline you, hand your land and your goods over to a foreign nation. That will never happen again. Your fruit will be for the Lord.

[36:52] That's how it ought to be. Never again to be handed over to the exploitation of the nations. And then we move on in verses 10 and 11 and 12 to the matter of a highway.

Build up the highway. Verse 10. And this highway is a highway that people travel on. It's also a highway that the Lord travels on. Verse 11 say to the daughter of Zion, see your saviour comes. This whole idea of reuniting people back in the place where God is, God back in the place where the people are. And there's a highway between them.

We'll come to that in a moment. Several words aren't quite translated. We'll say behold. Behold, the Lord has made a proclamation.

See to the daughter of Zion, behold your saviour come. Behold, his reward is with him. There's a song, Zion, behold your saviour come.

[37:54] sung by Maddie Pryor. And there's a promise in this restoration of these people being holy, verse 12, and redeemed and loved.

So that's just quickly going through the text. And what I'd like to draw from it is six, I hope it's six, glories of salvation.

And based on the text, but drawing across it, number one, an amazing input of grace and favour. An amazing input of grace and favour.

I put amazing because some of you know there's a song which says amazing grace. So I think there's something amazing here. Grace, meaning undeserved favour, is not merited by the recipient.

And in these verses we have a huge and unexpected change of fortune, an unexpected input of grace and favour. So you have things like in verse 2, you will be called by a new name.

[39:04] Now the name is the character. It's your character and status. This is going to be new. You're going to have a new status and a new character. And it looks pretty much like verse 4 tells us what the new name is.

Your old name was deserted and desolate, lost, forsaken, forgotten, but your new name is delighted in, treasured, rejoiced over.

What a wonderful thing. You could imagine the land here like a woman who's been dumped and she's on her own and nobody loves her. And all of a sudden in comes this phone call. I've been trying to link up with you. How have you been? Let's go out together. Let's see one another. I'd long to spend time with you. And this is the Lord speaking to his people. There's something out of the blue about this. It's like Abraham, Abraham as he was, being told by the Lord, go to a land I will show you and I'm going to do wonderful things for you.

[40:18] It's not as though Abraham had put an advert, you know, I'd like to do something for some God or other. I'm looking for this. There's something that comes to him out of the blue. That's what grace does.

It's an input which we're not expecting. Like David, you remember when David said to the Lord, I'll build a house for you and God says, no, actually, I'll build a house for you.

And David says, is this your usual way of dealing with people? That you should be so gracious to them? And it comes in a very personal sense, doesn't it?

I do for you something that you never deserved, that you could never have claimed as a right, that you had no legitimate expectation of.

I'm going to love you, draw you to myself, and crown you and beautify you. That's what Israel was told in Deuteronomy 7.7, I love you because I love you.

[41:18] That's the reason, not about deserving. And this is an amazing input of grace and favour. The Apostle Paul takes this in the New Testament, and he puts it in these very stark terms to all his readers, whether they're Jews or Gentiles.

You were dead in transgressions and sins, that's what you were, dead, lost, unresponsive. But, because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in our sins.

He made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in our sins. That's an intervention of grace and favour.

Second glory of salvation, I put here that it's portrayed as a definite accomplished fact. That's not all the ways it's portrayed, but it is portrayed here as a definite accomplished fact.

None of it is described as dubious or wishful thinking, but as something that's either accomplished or as good as accomplished.

[42:38] So, 61 verse 10, He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.

It's something accomplished. 62 verse 2, The nations will see your righteousness, all kings will see your glory.

you will be called by a new name. You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand. Well, it is future, but there's a certain definiteness to it, isn't it?

62 verse 8, Already accomplished, the Lord has sworn by his right hand and his mighty arm.

There's an oath there, a solemn binding promise.

61 11, The Lord has made a proclamation or caused it to be heard. Say to the daughter of Zion, see, your saviour comes.

[43:36] Something definite, something accomplished. This is characteristic of the biblical description of salvation.

It isn't something that God's iffy about. It isn't something that God says, well, I hope this is all going to work out. You know, tried my best, but I'm not too sure.

Biblical salvation never has that ifiness about it. There's something sovereign, something that God says, I'm going to do it. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

I'm not going to leave it to chance. And I'm not going to leave it up to you guys. I'm going to make sure it happens. When Christ died on the cross, he said, it is finished. He didn't say, well, I've done my bit and let's see what happens.

He says, done it, achieved it, finished it. And salvation in the Bible isn't something that ultimately rests on unreliable human beings.

[44:39] It doesn't rely as a part of the chain of causation that people will be people with sufficient insight to take God up on his promises or that somebody at least will find some faith somewhere or somebody will be devoted enough to turn to the Lord or people will be good enough to

contribute their good works.

That is not the character of salvation in the Bible. It's to the glory of God from start to finish. Human beings are incapable of saving themselves and God says, well, in that case, I'll step in.

I'll do it. And that's why it's treated here, number two, as a definite accomplished fact. Number three, glories of salvation, number three, a process that God wants to be reminded of.

Chapter 62, verse 6, I've posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, they'll never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, give him no rest, till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of all the earth.

So here's a different dimension to it. It's a process that in a sense is not yet finished. That along through the process, God says, I'd like you to remind me of this.

[46:05] He puts the watchman there and he tells them to remind him. Well, he knows, of course, all along, but he wants to involve the watchman in this to give him no rest.

Give him no rest. Why haven't you done it yet? Give him no rest. He wants to nag God to chase him up. Why haven't you yet made Jerusalem the praise of all the earth?

And surely we're to understand this as being constant prayer to the Lord, that God has put in this earth, this factor, this ministry of prayer.

prayer. And just straying the text a little bit, I don't think he's saying there are certain people only whose job it is to pray. I think it's the whole church's job, watchman-like, to be praying to the Lord, how long, O Lord?

Did we not read that? Their cry goes up, how long? And soon the night of weeping will be the morn of song. And here we are living in this tension between the things that will certainly happen and the current state of things, and we resolve that tension by prayer.

[47:22] We come to him in prayer. Hopefully in the next few days we will be able to, as churches together, to pray these sorts of prayers. And the amazing thing is that God has put that thing in the Christian life.

God uses our prayers to do what he's already said he will do, to make his city, his kingdom, his cause, indeed his son, respected, honoured, worshipped, wondered at.

And without going off too far into the subject of prayer, this is a privilege, isn't it? It's almost drawing us into the Godhead. As God consults within himself, like he did, let us make man in our image, he involves us in this consultation.

that we are privileged as his children to speak to our Father. Will you do this that you promised to do? Well, number three, a process that God wants to be reminded of, the glories of salvation.

Number four, glories of salvation, beauty, a beautiful thing, and I'd like to pick up on the many references to things that are beautiful. 61 verse 10.

[48:39] The speaker says, I've been clothed in garments of salvation and arrayed in a robe of righteousness as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest.

What he's meaning to say, this is very beautiful, very splendid, very special clothing. And as the bride is adorned, he adorns herself with jewels, well in our culture the adornment is, I guess, more on the bride, so we can identify with that part of it.

The bridegroom is very splendid, the bride adorns herself with her knockout beauty as the bride, and there's something beautiful in store here. And verse 11 talks about sprouting, as I've said.

The soil makes the young plants sprout up, and a garden causes seeds to sprout. The sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise sprout before all nations. Something like the green shoots of spring.

They're beautiful, aren't they? Lovely green shoots and springing, sprouting. I'm reminded of the idea of the branch sprouting out.

[49:57] Didn't look up whether the words are similar. They're certainly not the same words, but this idea of the branching, the growing out, it's a beautiful thing, isn't it? Can't we put that under the heading of beauty?

And if we go on to the next descriptions of Jerusalem, in chapter 62, verse 1, he says, I'm not going to shut up about this. Righteousness, I want the righteousness of Jerusalem to shine out like the dawn and her salvation like a blazing torch.

And people will see that. They will see that your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify the Father in heaven.

Something beautiful here, it's depicted here as brightness as distinct from darkness. Brilliant sunshine, not dark clouds. Haven't we appreciated recently the blue skies and the bright sunshine? Whatever else, that cheers our spirits, doesn't it? And there is here this idea of beauty. New Testament picks this up on as the bride of Christ being presented.

[51:06] He works to present the bride to himself as a radiant church, a beautiful church, not spotty and ugly like we are by nature, spiritually speaking, but beautiful, radiant.

And it's a sort of call to us really, isn't it, to see sin in its true colours. It's ugly. If we've been made beautiful by a beautiful saviour, wonderful counsellor as we were singing, think of all those ugly things that attach themselves to us, come naturally to us from the old nature, selfishness and competitiveness and uncleanness and bitterness and bad language and malicious thoughts, these are all ugly things and surely they have no place in a salvation that is glorious because it's beautiful. And Paul will say that sort of thing in Ephesians, clothe yourself with the new man, put off the old ugly stuff and put on the beautiful new stuff. But here in Isaiah, he talks about delighting.

I delight greatly in the Lord, my soul rejoices in God for he has clothed me. He says this beauty is a reason for delight. The joy is in what he has done for me.

This new covenant, which is what he's speaking of, is delightful. It is, isn't it? It's not an ugly thing, it's not something that we would turn away from because of its ugliness or blandness or indifference, but rather something surely that we should see as being delightful and beautiful.

[52:59] Glories of salvation, number four, a beautiful thing. Noticing my headings wrong because I've got six, I put five. Number five, a highway for travel.

Here is one of the glorious things about salvation, a highway for travel. It's in verse 10. Pass through, pass through the gates, prepare the way for the people, build up, build up the highway, remove the stones, raise a banner for the nations.

So here's a highway, get it already, the nations are going to come down it. Put up a sign to say this way please. Pass along, move along, it says.

It reminds us that salvation as it's depicted here is not an inert thing, it's not a static thing, it's not spirituality isn't simply waiting passively for God to do stuff to us, while we're inactive.

That's the flip side, isn't it, of the sovereignty of God here. Pass through, pass through the gates, prepare the way for the people as activity called for.

[54:07] Christians, that's for us, isn't it? It's a call to pilgrimage. Get off your backside, get on walking. And more than your statutory one hour walk, we're walking 24 hours a day to Zion.

We're pilgrims on the way to Zion. As John Bunyan was so perceptive to say in his book, pilgrims, progress, walking.

as the song got added or as the chorus got added to Isaac Watts song, we're marching to Zion.

Pass along, move along. It's a word to us, isn't it, to move along, to progress.

And it's also a word to people who would like to be Christians but aren't yet Christians. There are steps to take. Just wait around for God to drop something on you, as it were, but rather to take the steps.

Jesus says, seek and you will find. He says, knock and the door will be opened. He says, ask and you will receive. And that's surely applicable to people who are not yet confident that they've got salvation.

[55:21] Keep pressing on. Don't rest until Christ has made himself known to you. And you know that you're his and that he's yours.

A highway for travel. Just think a little bit more about that highway for a moment, which we had in verse 10. This highway crops up in various places. 35 verse 8 it is.

Chapter 35 verse 8. A highway will be there. It will be called the way of holiness.

The unclean will not journey on it. It will be for those who walk in that way. Wicked fools won't go on it. It's the highway in which the redeemed of the Lord shall return and enter Zion with singing and everlasting joy will crown their heads.

Gladness and joy will overtake them. Sorrow and sighing will flee away. That's the route that the pilgrims travel. In verse 11 of our chapter, chapter 62, it's the route that the Lord travels.

[56:27] Behold, your Saviour comes. His reward is with him. His recompense accompanies them. It was the same that we had in Isaiah 40. Make ready in the desert.

Make, I'm sorry, 40 verse 3, a voice of one calling in the desert. Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

So, this is the route on which the youths, the young men who might stumble and fall, as they hope in the Lord, they soar with wings like eagles.

You can imagine it being thought of as the pilgrims returning, sorry, the exiles returning from Babylon. They come down the highway and God returning to his city, coming down the highway. And in 49.11, the highway will be raised up. 49.11, I will turn my mountains into roads, my highways will be raised up, and they will come from afar, from the north, from the west, from the region of Aswan.

[57:32] This is the people being gathered in from the nations coming along that highway. And so, a highway. Yeah, lots of things to think about with the highway.

Get on the highway. Sixthly, and finally, glories of salvation. There is a highway to travel, but there is a saviour to see.

And I'm just going to come to 61.11, where these beholds. Behold, the Lord has made a proclamation to the ends of the earth. Say to the daughter of Zion, behold, your saviour comes. Behold, his reward is with him. His recompense accompanies them. Look at all these goodies that he's got under his arm. Amazing. Presents and gifts to distribute.

Look at the bounty with which he approaches. I'm reminded of another place where it's a very similar wording in Zechariah.

[58:33] Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey.

Do you think it's possible to focus down on this coming of the saviour more than a sort of a generalised coming of God to the presence of his people?

Do you think when John the Baptist said make way, make the road level in the desert for the coming of God?

Do you think it was possible to focus it down even more specifically? Do you think John the Baptist, when he said prepare in the desert a highway for our God and the next person who comes is Jesus to be baptised?

Do you think when it was that fateful day in Jerusalem, the Jewish national day when everybody was full of excitement and a prophet from Galilee deliberately got onto a donkey and rode into Jerusalem?

[59:46] Do you not think that Jesus was very deliberately picking up on these prophecies? Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Your saviour comes to you.

Jesus deliberately picked up on this and to be perfectly frank, if it was good enough for Jesus, that's good enough for me. Do we see him at that event?

Do we see who he truly is? Do we see the magnitude? The crowd just said he's a prophet from Galilee, but he was more than that, wasn't he?

And can we think of his coming in an even bigger sense, as he himself saw it, that there was a sense in which his coming was split over two events separated across time.

His final and conclusive coming, Jesus spoke of this, didn't he? the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him and he will sit on his throne in heavenly splendour.

[60:59] The final coming of the Lord. We can trust him on the things he said in his earthly ministry. Can we not trust him in this?

Every eye will see him. There's a look of faith, isn't there? To see him and to trust him, to look to him, all the ends of the earth and be saved.

That look brings light and refreshment into the soul. There will be another look on that day when he comes.

