

Jesus Is Good News

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[0 : 00] Let us turn again to, this time to Isaiah chapter 61. Isaiah, the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 61.

I'm just going to read the first verse there. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

The Lord has anointed me to bring good news. As we all know, this is quite an exciting time of year. And it's a time of year that I've always loved.

I suppose, although I'm getting old now, I still have, in quite a lot of things, still a kind of boyish enthusiasm. I just like the lights. I like the food.

I like, particularly, I like family time of this time of year at Christmas and New Year. And as I mentioned in the prayer, while it's a great time for many, it can also be a very difficult time for some.

[1 : 17] And we do remember those for whom this time of year is a particularly difficult time. But it is a great time of year.

It's a time where presents are given. It's not the only time of year when presents are given. When you're younger, you're at birthdays, you get presents. Weddings and such like, there are times when presents are given.

And we all know that the greatest gift that was ever given to this world was the gift that God the Father gave in giving his Son, the Lord Jesus.

Many people have been born into this world that have done great things in this world. And I'm sure we could find, if you were to say, list a hundred people who were born into this world who changed the world by what they did.

But they changed the world for good. We could easily make up a list of a hundred. But on top of whatever list, supposing it was a list of a hundred or a thousand or ten thousand, at the top of that list always would be Jesus.

[2 : 24] Because what Jesus did, what Jesus brought, has changed the world in a way that nobody else has ever changed it. And what Jesus has done for people, not just for thousands, but for millions and millions of people, he has changed their lives forever.

Not only for this world, but for eternity forever and ever and ever. Nobody else has ever done that. Nobody else will ever do that.

So that is why the coming of Jesus into this world is such a wonderful, wonderful thing. And here we have this prophecy that was made by Isaiah way, way back, hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

And you would think Isaiah was there at the time. And he's talking there about Jesus. And he tells us there that the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

And when people were set apart by God, supposing just for instance the kings, like King David, or a priest like Aaron, they were always anointed.

- [3 : 40] It was a special work. They were set apart by God for this special work. Samuel anointed David to be king. Aaron, before he became high priest, he was anointed as well.
- So it was a special thing that happened with oil in a horn, probably in a ram's horn, and poured out over their head, setting them apart for God.
- And Jesus is here showing how he was set apart. He was set apart as a prophet to speak only the truth and to live the truth.
- That was a wonderful thing. Jesus never, ever, ever said anything that wasn't true. Jesus didn't never try to deceive people. You know how some people, they call it putting a spin on something.
- They try and tell you something, but what they're telling you isn't exactly what they're meaning. They want you to think something other than what they're saying.
- [4 : 41] Well, that's a lie, really. It's not a spin, it's a lie. But Jesus never did that. Everything he said was absolutely true. So he was anointed, he was set apart by God to be this prophet, to be this priest.
- The priest was somebody who sacrificed. And of course, Jesus was the sacrifice where he became the sacrifice for us.
- And he was set apart as a king to rule over our lives. So this is what it has been spoken about here. And of course, not only did he, was he set apart, but he had the spirit in a way without measure.
- When Jesus, it's beautifully put how this Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary. Jesus was conceived by the spirit. So he was, when Jesus was born into this world, he was as exactly a human baby.
- Exactly. Exactly. But all the time he had been kept free from any sin, any defilement, so that he was absolutely sinless and perfect and pure.
- [5 : 56] But human. Absolutely human. In the same way as you and I, if you put your hand on something hot, he would go like that. He would feel it. He got hungry. He got thirsty. He got tired.
- He got all the things that you and I do and feel in this world. But he didn't have sin. He was and is the Son of God.
- And so, he was set apart by God. And of course, he came into this world. And as we said, nobody else will ever, ever do what the Lord Jesus Christ did.
- Now, we read in Luke of an amazing day, because remember how Jesus was born and he was brought up in the little town of Nazareth. And he, of course, was set apart again.
- There was a special day when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and when he began his public ministry. And on that, after that, he then came to the synagogue.
- [6 : 59] Now, the synagogues were kind of churches just like we have. Maybe not quite as elaborate, but they were churches just like we have. And at the top end, the pulpit end, what we would term the pulpit end, there was a chest, like an ark type of thing, where the scripture was kept.
- Now, they didn't have Bibles like we have with all the pages. It was a scroll, just like rolled round and round and round like that, a long scroll like that, that the scriptures were kept in.
- It was at the top end, there. And the top end was always built facing Jerusalem. So, Jesus went in there that day. And he took, he was given the scroll, and he opened it at this particular chapter.
- Chapter, what we have here, chapter 61 of Isaiah, which we also read in Luke chapter 4. And Jesus began to read it. And it was quite amazing, because he's reading about himself, what had been prophesied hundreds of years before.

It must have been an amazing day for Jesus in different ways. Because this was the town that he grew up in. These were the people that he grew up amongst. And to go from growing up, you see, Jesus would have gone as a boy, and as a teenager, and as an adult, to that synagogue.

[8 : 26] And he would have heard others teach, and others read. But today, it was him. And it must have been an amazing day for Jesus.

A strange day. And any person who has grown up, or has been in a particular church or congregation growing up, always finds it a strange, quite a, I don't know, strange maybe isn't the word.

But it's quite an amazing experience when they come to actually preach. I remember as a little boy, though, I wasn't growing up in this congregation, but my granny and grandpa were in this congregation.

And every holiday used to come here. They used to sit just in the seat with Murdo and Alex Dan and Murdo. That used to be, back in the day, the man's seat.

And I used to sit with my gran and with my mum in that seat. And I remember I used to look up at the pulpit and I would think, oh, I wonder what goes on up there. I wonder how, when I was a wee boy, I wonder how well you can see up here.

[9 : 33] Well, let me tell you, you can see really, really, really well. I can see people when they're beginning to nod. I can see them having a wee sly look at the watch, all these things.

It's amazing because this pulpit is really, the church is incredible. I'm digressing here. It's really well constructed because you can see all round from here.

It's very, very well planned. But I remember the first time coming to preach here. And I found it just such an amazing experience. Scared stiff. But thinking back over all these years that you used to be in here and then finding yourself here.

Well, I'm sure Jesus would have felt, at one level, a little something of that. And so Jesus, he began to preach from these particular verses, telling them how it was.

And so the wonderful thing is that Jesus came into this world. He didn't come to condemn the world because the world is already condemned.

[10 : 41] He came to save the world. He didn't come to show God's wrath because God's wrath, we're told in Romans 1, is already being shown. He came to deal with God's wrath and to take God's wrath upon himself.

But Jesus came displaying God's love and his grace, his righteousness, his mercy, his love. He came displaying all these things.

And that's why it is so important for us to come to church so that we will hear the good news of Jesus. Because Jesus is good news.

He himself is the good news. He taught good news. He proclaimed good news. He preached it. But he is the good news. And of course, Jesus, this is quite the amazing thing about it all, is that Jesus came down from heaven to do what he has done, to bring us good news.

Very often, when you watch the news on the telly, you can actually feel quite down afterwards. Because one thing that leads to another.

[12 : 00] Sometimes when you, if it's a half hour news, and when you're finished watching it, you can feel quite down because it's one gloomy thing after another.

In fact, I remember one news reader actually saying, I wish that we were being given more good news to read. Because so often, it seems to be so gloomy and so down.

Well, here is good news. Here is the most wonderful news that the world has ever heard. And that is why the angel said to the shepherd when Jesus was born, And behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

I bring you good news of great joy. And that's the wonderful thing about this good news. It's called the gospel. And the gospel changes lives because the gospel is power.

Paul tells us that in Romans. He said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ because it is the power of God to salvation. The word power is, I've said this before, it's dynamite where we get the word dynamite.

[13 : 08] And you know what dynamite does? Dynamite blows up. If you're trying to blast through a rock, you would take ages if you were there with just a pick, a pick and a hammer and shovel and trying to hack away.

But when people who are skilled know how to put dynamite into a rock, it just blows it away in no time. And that's what the gospel does. Because you see, we don't want, this is a terrible thing, this is what sin does.

Sin does not want God to be in control of our lives. We don't want God to rule our lives. We want to rule our lives ourselves. We want to be boss. I want to be boss of my life.

And you want to be boss of your life. That's how it is. That's how we're born. And we don't want people interfering. And we're afraid that if we become Christians, that God, this is what we think, that God will muck up our plans.

That he will do things in our lives that we don't want him to do. And so, so many people say, as it's said in the Bible, we will not have this man rule over us.

[14 : 18] That's what they say about Jesus. He says, now leave me alone. Don't mind coming to church. Don't mind reading about the Bible. Don't mind listening. Oh, I enjoy sometimes the singing. I enjoy some of the, what I read in the Bible is amazing.

Quite sometimes I enjoy the preaching. But I want to leave it there because I want to be in control of my life. Well, what God does with the gospel is he blows your heart apart.

Or he blows your soul. He blows you apart inside. And he changes you. So that from saying no, you begin to say yes.

From saying leave me alone, you turn to saying, Lord, please come. Please save me. This is the change. And it's God who does that.

And that is why it is so important that we go and that we seek the Lord. So what is the good news that Jesus brings us? Well, there's lots of things that he has done for us.

[15 : 21] One of the things he has done is he has redeemed us. It's a big word, but very simply to redeem means to buy back. I've told this story before, way back.

Some of the, maybe the younger people haven't heard it, but the older people will. And I think it describes very well what it is to redeem. There was a boy who was really, really good at making things.

He was really good with his hands. And he got this big block of wood and he worked away and he carved it and he chiseled it and he sandpapered it until he had made a boat.

But about this size. And his mom helped him to make all the rigging on it and the sails on it so that it was a lovely sailing ship.

It took him months of building it. And he was so proud of it. And people used to come into the house and look at it and they would say, what, did you make that? Yeah, he said, I made that. And he was so, so proud of it and rightly so.

[16 : 23] And then one day he said to him, you know, I'm going to take this boat out and I'm going to go down just past the canal. There's a wee place there. And I'm going to take a wee bit of string. And it was a nice sunny day with a wee breeze.

And I'm going to play with a boat out in the water. And of course, that's what he did. And he found this wee spot. And he was really enjoying himself as the boat was going out.

And it looked beautiful. The wee breeze would catch the tiny wee sails that it made. And out it would go. And all of a sudden, where he was, three big boys, far older than him, came.

He didn't know them. They were from somewhere else. And they said, oh, what have you got there? Oh. And they shoved him out of the way. He fell half into the water and into the mud that was at the side.

And they pulled the boat in and they went away with it. And he was so sad. After all the time that he had taken. And he went home and he was so down.

[17 : 25] A few weeks later, he was in the town. And he had cycled in on his bike. And in the back, one of the back streets of the town, there were wee, wee, wee shops.

And there was a junk shop in there. One of these shops where you could, one of these stores where you'd get all kinds of things. Just sometimes it would only be 50p or a pound to buy.

And in the window of that shop, as he was passing, he said, that's my boat. And it was the price tag on it, two pounds.

He said, that's my boat. And he went into the shop and he said to the owner of the shop, excuse me, he said, could I get my boat out of the window please? That's my boat. The man looked down at him.

He said, no, it's my boat. Oh, no, the boy said, it's my boat. I made it. No, no, the man said, it is my boat. I bought that boat from a boy who came in here.

[18 : 24] And the boy said, and how much is it? Oh, he said, it's two pounds. So he cycled home as fast as he could. And he found two pounds and he cycled back and he gave it to the man.

And he took the boat back. And when he came home, he said to himself, you know, this boat is mine twice. I made it and I bought it.

And you know, that's exactly what God has done with us. He made us, but he had to buy us back. Because we sinned with Adam.

When Adam and Eve sinned, we sinned as well. And we ran away from God. When Adam and Eve were put out of the garden, they were forevermore running away. And that's where I say, we didn't want God.

We were lost. And this is the amazing thing, is that God, in eternity, away, way back, said to his son, the son of God, you know what's going to happen in this world?

[19 : 33] And of course, they all knew what was going to happen. Will you go into the world? It's going to be difficult. You're going to have to live a perfect life.

You're going to have to die an awful death as a sacrifice. But you're going to go in the place of all the men and women and boys and girls who cannot do anything for themselves to save them.

And Jesus said, yes, I will. I delight to do your will. And that's the amazing thing. That's what Jesus Christ has done.

He came into this world to buy back. You know, sometimes it's an awful thing. People sometimes kidnap people. Sometimes it, you would, it quite often used to happen.

Don't see it maybe so much now, but, or maybe it doesn't make the news the same way. But say our family are very, very, very rich. And these people decide, they say, do you know what we're going to do?

[20 : 37] We're going to pinch. We're going to steal. We're going to kidnap the son, the daughter from that home. And we're going to leave them a note saying, you will get your son, your daughter back alive if you pay us 10 million pounds.

If not, they're going to be dead. It's a fearful thing. It happens, happens all over the world, kidnapping. So they're going to have to pay, it's called a ransom. We have to pay this huge amount of money.

Well, that is exactly what Jesus did. He didn't pay with money, but Jesus came into this world and he paid what we couldn't pay.

None of us could pay. None of us could do what God wants us to do. We cannot do it. Even if we want to, we can't do it. But Jesus came and he paid the price with his own life on the cross.

And that's why the offer of the gospel is, as it's further back in Isaiah, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, come by without money and without price.

[21 : 45] In other words, the price has all been paid. It's like, supposing you went into a shop and you decided, for some reason, you decided to buy the most expensive watch.

It cost thousands in the shop. You don't know why you bought it, but you bought it and you didn't have the money, but you decided you were going to pay it up. And what you were going to pay up every month was a huge amount.

And all of a sudden, you realized, you got your watch, I don't have the money to pay it. You would feel terrible. And you would try and avoid the shopkeeper.

But imagine if one day you went into the shop and your head was down and you said, oh, he doesn't see me. Oh, I'm just so embarrassed. And the shopkeeper comes over and he says, oh, by the way, remember all that money you owe?

Yes, I do. Well, don't worry. It's all been paid. And you'd say, how? Oh, he said, a friend of yours came in and he paid it all. So I don't have to pay anything.

[22 : 44] No, it's all paid. That's what Jesus has done. He's paid everything that God has required. And so we are free. Not only has he redeemed us, bought us back, but he's also pardoned, forgiven all our sins.

In a sense, to forgive is to lift up and carry away. And that's what God did on Jesus. He lifted our sins and placed them all upon Jesus so that now our sins, although we still sin, our sins are all pardoned.

They're all forgiven. Jesus was also the great physician or the great doctor. We read about that and we read right throughout. He made those who were blind able to see, those who were deaf able to hear, those who couldn't walk.

He made them able to walk. The lepers he cleansed. Those who couldn't speak, he enabled them to speak. And although he can still do that today, when he was doing that, these signs were proving who he was.

But today, it's spiritual healing. We're blind and we cannot see him. Maybe you're here today and you're like that. You say, you know, I can't understand how you get excited about Jesus.

[24 : 06] Well, you know why that is? It's because your eye, your eye of faith isn't open. You say to the Lord, Lord, open my eyes just to see really what's happening.

And the Lord will. And that's what Jesus has done. He's opened our eyes to see him, to want him. He's opened our ears to hear the gospel.

You know, sometimes I'll hear people say, who have sat, who have been in church for years and years and years, and then they come to faith. And some of them will say, you know, I can't understand.

I heard the gospel for years and years and years, but it never really went in. I was hearing the words and I was hearing bits and bobs here and there, but, you know, all of a sudden, things began to make sense.

I began to hear, I began to understand, actually began to enjoy. And I was saying, I want to hear more of this. I want to know this Jesus.

[25 : 09] So this is what Jesus does when we cannot, and this is the wonderful thing, he helps us to see him, he helps us to hear what he says, and then he helps us to speak.

Because, once we come to believe in him, do you know this, we want to tell others as well. We don't want to just keep it to ourselves. We want to tell other people about Jesus.

We want to sing his praise. We want to walk with him. So, it's all good news. And the question we leave with you today is this, do you know yourself, this Jesus, who is good news?

Do you know him as your Lord? Are you able to say, Lord, I want you more than I want anybody else.

My life might not be right, I might have all kinds of things going on, but the one thing is this, Lord, I want to follow you. I want to be a Christian.

[26 : 18] Don't even understand altogether what being a Christian is. But the one thing I know is this, I need Jesus. Will you ask him today, please, will you ask him today, Lord Jesus, have mercy about me.

Lord Jesus, help me today to believe in you. Help me today to see you as the savior of sinners. Help me, Lord.

and you know this, if you really pray that and you mean that, he will. He's promised it. That's what his word tells us. Let us pray. Oh Lord, our God, we pray that you will bless us.

Bless us with all spiritual blessings. Help us to hear and to understand. Help us to see and to believe. Help us to speak and to share your word.

Help us to walk in your paths. Help us, oh Lord, as we journey through life to follow you with all our hearts. Forgive us when we don't. We pray that you will part us with your blessing.

[27 : 23] Bless a cup of tea, coffee in the hall afterwards. Pray to bless the evening service and the fellowship afterwards and that we might all know your presence and your peace.

Grant us your grace, we pray, and take away sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Our concluding psalm is Psalm 23, the 23rd psalm.

And it's from the Sing Psalms version. And I must say, it's lovely to see the families here today. It's a lovely sight.

Psalm 23. Sing the whole psalm. The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow.

He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. The whole psalm, the Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know. The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know.

[28 : 34] He makes me lie down He makes me lie down where the green pastures glow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow.

My wandering steps He brings back to His way. His great hearts of righteousness may He stay.

And this He has done this great name to display. Though I walk in this body where darkness is near, Because you are with me, O evil I fear, Your road and your suffering bring me comfort and cheer.

In the sight of my enemies a table You spread. The oil of rejoicing You pour on my head I come over close and I'm graciously fed.

So surely Your covenant mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.

[30 : 20] I will dwell in the hands of the Lord all my days. I'll go to the front door. Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.