

The year of the Lord's favour

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[0 : 00] and then I'll come up and I'll speak to you about this. Just 11 beautiful verses, Isaiah 61. The title in my Bible is the year of the Lord's favor.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of prisons to those who are bound and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of the vengeance of our God.

To comfort all who mourn, to grant to those who mourn in Zion to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, oils of gladness instead of mourning, the garments of praise instead of a faint spirit, that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

They shall build up the ancient ruins. They shall rise up the former devastations. They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastation of many generations.

Verse 5. Strangers shall stand and tend their flocks. Foreigners shall be your plowmen and bindresses, but you shall be called the priests of the Lord.

[1 : 22] They shall speak of you as ministers of our God. You shall eat the wealth of nations, and in their glory you shall boast. Instead of shame, there shall be a double portion.

Instead of dishonor, they shall rejoice in their lot. Therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion. They shall have everlasting joy.

Verse 8. For I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery and wrong. I will faithfully give them their recompense. I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their offspring shall be known among the nations, their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them shall acknowledge them, and that they are the offspring of the Lord has blessed.

Verse 10. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robes of righteousness.

[2 : 28] As of the bridegroom decks himself out like a priest with the beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all nations.

Lord, how glorious a promise you have given us through the prophet Isaiah. I hope that as we reflect on it, we see the faithfulness of God, that God will never fail us.

He will never leave us nor forsake us. His mercies are new every morning. This is the truth of our God. This is your glory. Lord, I pray as we open up these words that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear the goodness of your Son, who makes all of this possible, the goodness of Jesus Christ.

Because he lives, all things are possible. Because he lives, our faith is purposeful. Because he lives, our future is assured. Let us praise the Lord for this, for it is well with our souls, because our God is faithful.

Amen. Amen. I'm not sure if you're a moviegoer, if you enjoy the odd movie.

[3 : 56] I'm not sure what kind of movie you enjoy, but I'm quite a big fan of superhero movies. I like the Marvel movies. They haven't been as good lately as they were a few years ago, if I'm honest. I haven't enjoyed them as much.

But a series that I've always enjoyed are the Thor movies, especially the last few, because they've got to be quite funny most of the time. You know, there's lots of jokes, and you can laugh the whole way through.

But the most recent one actually doesn't start with a very jolly, thoughtful mood. It starts with quite a serious message and quite a big problem, which I think our text actually addresses today.

And it's this problem that the very fancy philosophers and theologians call the theodicy, the problem of suffering in this world in the presence of a good God.

Where is God when the world is so broken? It's the question that the people who would have first read Isaiah 61 would have asked. Where is he? So let me tell you a little bit of a story.

[4 : 55] It's not a spoiler. Thor, Love and Thunder, you can go back and watch it. This is only the first two minutes. I'm going to small, just the very beginning for you. Maybe you go watch the movie. The rest of it's very positive and has some laughs.

But this part, not so much. See, the story begins with a character walking through a desert with his daughter. And you can see she's quite ill, and there's no water, and you can see they're thirsty and suffering.

And there's these just quiet ambiances. He's praying and hoping and walking and striving, and she's getting more and more ill, and his daughter actually dies. And he continues to walk and suffer in this desert place, but eventually there's this shimmer of green in front of him, a beautiful green oasis.

And he stumbles in, and he immediately begins to drink the water, and then he sees fruit, and he begins to see it. And in the midst of this, we see this large man standing there in beautiful golden armor.

He's enjoying himself. He's laughing with these friends, these spiritual beings around him. He's laughing, and he's enjoying himself, and Gore thinks, finally, I have sought my God, and here he is.

[6 : 05] He'll make it right. And he cries, I am your last living follower. We all died. We've all lost. We've been seeking you. We've been faithful to you.

And look at the state we're in. You must be feasting because I am here, and I'm ready to achieve the eternal reward. There is a great blessing for all my faithfulness.

Gore's God laughs in front of him and says, there's no such thing as eternal reward. I'm not that interested in you. You're just a worshiper. This is your job. You live, you worship, you die.

That's all I care about. And he says, no, but you have no more worshipers. He says, don't worry, I'll get some more some other time. You don't mean much to me. Your suffering is pointless, for there is no eternal reward, and your God cares nothing for you.

That's the deep way the story starts. And in the midst of this brokenness and suffering, this great sword, this sword that can kill gods, comes into Gore's hand, and he shoves his sword straight through his hand, and he begins to say, well then, if this is it, I'll kill all gods.

[7 : 14] I'll get rid of them. And now we have the great enemy of Thor, and all the other mythical beings. And that seems to be the answer, is that the suffering of the world, the pain of the world, that there is actually no hope, there is no eternal reward.

So the world reacts in two ways. One, God doesn't exist, I don't care about him. You might as well just care about this world, this moment, this time. That is all you have. We call that secularism, which is simply to be focused on this world alone.

To say there's nothing more, there's not there. Think of the words of John Lennon in his famous song, imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. No hell below us, above us only sky.

Imagine all the people living for today. He says it sounds great, it sounds like the right thing. Give up on this idea of an eternal reward. Give up this idea of a God who cares about you, who isn't concerned with you or anything.

It doesn't matter. The opposite would be the reaction of someone like Stephen Fry or Job's wife. If you've ever read the story of Job, Job gets through a lot of suffering, a lot of pain.

[8 : 23] And the answer that Job's wife gives Job is a great encouragement. She says quite simply, curse God and die. Give up. Abandon God and die and give up in your life. That's the great advice she gives him.

Stephen Fry was asked, because he's quite a famous atheist. He rejects God. He rejects any idea of the God of the Bible being good or worthy of worship. They said, well, what happens if you die and you end up at the great pearly gates that someone always thinks there's pearly gates that you have to stand in front of?

And you met with God and it turns out he is real and he is there and they were right. And he says, well, I wouldn't want to go to his heaven. I wouldn't want to be there because he's the kind of God

that lets children die, that lets children starve.

I wouldn't go there on his turn. I'll be happy. I'll walk straight to hell. I don't care about suffering. I won't accept his. I reject him. I reject the world he made. God doesn't matter. Don't think about him. It's just an illusion. Or, you know, even if God's real, he's evil, he's terrible, reject him. Those are probably the two most common answers in the world. One sounds hopeful, the other one nihilistic. [9 : 28] It's given up all hope at all. Both of them say, well, well, we can't be certain about anything else. And I'm not really happy with the God you put forward. So why don't you live for the moment, live for today.

Imagine there's no heaven. Imagine there's no hell. Imagine nothing. Just move on. And it could sound joyful or hopeful or, you know, this moment where take charge of your own life. Make meaning for yourself. Find hope in the small things. It sounds great. But I think that is only a comfort if your life is quite comfortable and if you're getting through things because it's not a comfort to those who actually live and die in poverty.

They don't find any joy in this world. They have nothing. What about the great evil and atrocities that get done to people on the small scale or on the grand scale? On the grand scale, men like Hitler, they escaped any real justice for all that he had done.

Pol Pot as well. Mao Zedong. All of these great dictators that killed millions of people. No justice for them. What about the criminals who never get caught? The men who abuse women never get justice for it.

[10 : 35] If this is all we have, there is no God who judges the righteous and the unrighteous. There's no God who could offer true justice. Where is the hope? Where, in fact, is their joy?

And the people that Isaiah is speaking to, because his book, we're jumping into the very end of it. He's speaking at different moments about the suffering of the people of Israel. That they were going to suffer because they had rejected God, they had rebelled, they were going to be taken into exile by the Babylonians.

But now in this part of the book, the very last section, we begin to see the hope of a restoration of the people. That although God is punishing them now, he's punishing them to restore them, to turn them back, to make them move away from the things which are destroying them and breaking their society and bringing them back into relationship with him.

So he makes this promise that they'll be restored, that God will make it right, that there will be something here. But how does that work? How will it happen? We know why they were suffering for the people of Israel.

They had rejected God, they had begun to abuse the poor, take advantage of the lowly and the oppressed. Now God has given them justice, but where is the hope in the picture?

[11 : 42] I would read the whole passage to you, but I just want to maybe give you a small tip on the front end. When we read these prophetic books, these books of the Bible where God is declaring something to a people in a particular place at a particular time, he's often also declaring a message that goes beyond them, a message that points to Jesus, Jesus who is the center of the whole Bible.

He's the reason we have an Old and New Testament because we have an Old and New Covenant. Testament's the Old English word for it. He sits at the center of the Bible. Everything in the Old Testament points to him.

Everything in the New Testament points back at him. But there's also a greater fulfillment where God will make this world truly right and it's not a secular fulfillment. It's not a fulfillment that could work in just this life, but in the world to come when God restores all things.

And God says, you can believe I'll do it because I've proven it through Jesus. Through his life, death, and resurrection, I've shown that death is not the end, but there's something more. So as we jump into the end of this great book and we look at this great chapter, Isaiah 61, more than that, I actually think we're jumping into a prophetic message that reached far beyond Isaiah.

It reached 700 years later to a man named Jesus in a town called Nazareth. And even more than that, it points forward to the future of the whole world for the hope of God's people.

[13 : 02] Because the God of Thor, the God of Gaul, who does not care about him, who's not interested in intervening in the world, is not the God of Isaiah 61.

It's not the God of Jesus Christ. It is not our Savior who came into this world. I would read the whole passage again, but we're going to do it in a moment with this big question.

At the very beginning, it says, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. This is the first question of Isaiah's people. They would have asked, who is this anointed one?

Who is the one who is anointed? The one who the Spirit of the Lord dwells upon. Now, they would know something about anointing. Anointing was quite a common thing to happen in the Old Testament. Kings were anointed. Priests were anointed.

Prophets were anointed. It was a way in which you mark out someone for service to God, but his eyes pointing towards something bigger. So for a moment, I would ask you to imagine yourself.

[14:01] Imagine yourself in the first century, in the middle of Israel, in a small little synagogue. It would be much smaller than this. There's a group of people, men and women. The men and women would have been divided by a curtain.

And you would have come in on a Saturday for the reading of the Old Testament, the scriptures. That's all you knew them as. There was no old to them yet. And there would be a reading done and an explanation.

And on this Sunday, you're invited in and you're told, oh, we're not having one of the local rabbis teach us, one of the men of the village, one of the men in Nazareth is going to come up. They're going to read and do it. And you say, who is it?

And they say, oh, a man named Jesus. And you say, Jesus? Joseph's son, the carpenter. Is that the guy who's doing it? And then another guy walks over and he says, yeah, yeah, the carpenter, Joseph's son.

And they say, oh, what's a carpenter's son going to tell us about scripture? He's not even one of the rabbis, not one of the teachers. And another one, another person maybe leans over to you and says, well, actually, I heard when he was a boy, he went to Jerusalem and he was so wise in scripture that he actually impressed even the priests.

[15:05] Now I've got a bit of trepidation. What will this Jesus, son of a carpenter, son of Joseph, have to say to us? And as you stand in there, you see Jesus standing in front of them.

He's standing in front of the seat. That was the seat of teaching. He would stand and read and then they would sit down and begin to teach what has the scriptures, what do the scriptures mean? And an attendant hands him a scroll.

He doesn't pick it. It's given to him on that day. And it's not like these modern Bibles where you have chapters and verses and it's very easy to work your way around it. It's just a long piece of paper with no space in between any single word and you have to just figure it out.

And somehow this guy, Jesus, he unrolls it. This is what it says in Luke chapter 4 verse 17 onwards. Don't have to scroll there because most of what you've heard you're going to hear again in Isaiah 61.

So he gets given the scroll of Isaiah, he unrolls it and he finds the place where it's written. He knows the whole of Isaiah and he finds this exact portion of Isaiah to read.

[16:07] And this is what Jesus reads. The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. You should be remembering something here.

This sounds familiar. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners, to the recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and he sits in the seat of teaching and not a pin could be heard dropping. He goes, quiet. What is he going to say?

Why did he read that today? What is Jesus on about? And Jesus says this, very simple, a short sermon. I wish I could preach sermons this short. He sits down and it says this.

He says, today the scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. Dan dusted. An amazing sermon. An amazing explanation. It says they all actually spoke one of him.

[17:07] They marveled at his gracious words. They were shocked that he would say such a thing. Today the scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. See, Jesus is doing something quite revolutionary, quite marvelous.

He's saying what Isaiah said 700 years ago was not just fulfilled when we returned from Babylon, when we came back and we began to rebuild our city under Ezra and Nehemiah, but in fact he looked forward to my day.

And here I am to fulfill this word. Jesus is the anointed one, not only anointed with the spirit of God at his baptism, but he's anointed as the true prophet, priest, and king.

He fulfills all that scripture requires and here he declares it in his hometown. How amazing that Jesus on this day would be given that scroll by someone else by the providence of God. It was placed in his hand and he knew it was the moment that his father wanted him to declare his identity. He was the anointed one. But now what must the anointed one do?

[18 : 16] If Jesus is this one, what is he going to offer? Well, it sounds really good. He's going to help with poverty, he's going to free prisoners, he's going to help the oppressed. What does that look like? Well, I think here once again we have a difference between the world's simple answers to big problems and the answers that Jesus is going to present throughout his ministry.

If you go read through the rest of Luke's gospel, you'll see what Jesus does about poverty and oppression about the outcast. See, because what the world says is if you're poor, what's the solution?

Win the lottery, right? Just win a ton of money and all of your problems get dealt with. If you go read any article about someone who's won the lottery, it's often one of the worst things that could ever happen to a person.

They could fall into all kinds of depression, they begin to get taken advantage of by the people around them, they begin to lose control within 10 years. I think the average person who wins the lottery spends all the money, wastes it.

It all just goes away, it gets given to others, whatever. It solves their problem for now. And don't get me wrong, God cares about poverty, God wants to provide for it. Jesus says when you pray to God, you should ask him for your daily bread, you should ask him to provide for your needs.

[19 : 24] But in Scripture, there's a greater poverty than just simply a financial need. We have a poverty in our own hearts, in our own brokenness, we have a poverty in our relationships, we have a poverty that prevails around our lives.

You can find someone who has nothing to even put on their back and they have more joy than the richest billionaire in the world. I've seen the stark contrast of someone begging on the side of the road for just a little bit of food who has a bigger smile than 90% of the people I meet who have these high successful jobs that are praised by the world because they are actually blessed in their own spirit.

They might lack in the financial sense but they don't lack in their joy, in their comfort, in their knowledge that God loves them and cares for them. See, Jesus says blessed are the poor in spirit because it's a spiritual problem that we need to realize.

The external is financial, relational brokenness in our own lives but in fact the poor have a bigger problem and it's in their own hearts. It's in the fact that all of us are in fact poor in our spirits.

We do not live the way God calls us to live. We do not live the way we desire to live. We are broken and it's a similar thing with captives. If you're in prison, what do you want? You just want to escape prison.

[20 : 45] Well, I've ministered in prisons to men who had killed three, four people. They weren't there for the rest of their lives but they were free. They were free from the guilt, from the pain.

They had said sorry. They had reconciled with the people they hurt. They had changed their lives. They had got off of their drugs. They had left their gangs. They lived in a truer freedom than many people who walk outside every single day who can do whatever they want.

There's a better story than this. In fact, even with the oppressed, the answer for anyone who suffers oppression is to claim some kind of ism to help fix your problem.

We've got poverty as our problem. Let's get some communism, socialism, any kind of ism we'll find. Except in history, all of those get taken advantage of and the oppressed often become the oppressors of their own people.

They destroy their own people. We say that women are mistreating outside all sorts of places so let's get feminism to fix our problem but then no one agrees on that and they create problems with each other and reject it.

[21 : 47] All sorts of issues we think could be solved through politics, through economics, through winning lots of money, by getting more freedom, by making ourselves more happy. Maybe we should be famous.

Every young kid I speak to now, their goal is to be an influencer, their goal is to be famous in the world because that's what will make you happy. Except all the influencers I follow post videos about their daily struggles with their mental health.

The great pain they feel in being so isolated and having people spew hatred at them at all times, it doesn't seem like the right kind of fix. If Jesus is here to preach good news, it's got to be a better news than what the world's peddling.

Because the world's been peddling the same good news. In every generation, they're doing it now. We're coming up to elections soon. Everyone's peddling their story of how they're going to fix it. One guy's going to send all the young people to our national service, another guy's going to give you tax breaks, whatever you want. Are they actually going to make any difference? I come from a country where politics doesn't make any difference except make us all poorer.

[22 : 52] They steal everything that we have. But Jesus comes to preach a better poverty. Sorry, better poverty. That's funny. Jesus comes to preach a better news.

A news which actually restores you in your heart that regardless of what happens in the world outside, regardless of what's done to you, there is a peace, a joy, a comfort that no one can steal from you.

You can have the nicest things and someone can take it. You can base your identity on your title, your job, and you can lose them. But Paul, one of Jesus' early followers, what does he say?

He says, I've known riches and I've known poverty. I've known much and I've known lack. But in all things in Christ Jesus, I have known contentment more than all because none of them dictate who I am.

But there's this other interesting factor. Do you notice Jesus stopped in the middle of a sentence? Right? What happened here?

[23 : 49] To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of the vengeance of our God. That's what it says in verse 2 in Isaiah 61. But Jesus stops right here. He says, To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, done dusted.

And says, That's fulfilled in your hearing. What's happening here? Is Jesus kind of a judgment guy? Is he not interested in wrath? Is he this happy-go-lovly moral teacher who doesn't believe in any punishment, any hell or anything?

Is that what it is? Some people know that's what they say. They say these Christians are obsessed with hell and judgment and all these problems, but Jesus, he was about love and acceptance.

That's all it was. Well, I'm sorry to inform you if you actually go and read your New Testament, the person who speaks about hell more than anyone else in the Bible is Jesus.

He says it all the time. He says it's a real thing. The judgment of God is coming. Jesus says, Hell is such a big deal that if your right eye caused you to sin, you should pull it out because it's better to go in half blind to heaven than to spend eternity under God's judgment.

He says, if your right arm called you, you should cut it off. Now, he's being hyperbolic. He's not actually calling you to self-mutilate, but he's trying to make you understand how big of a deal it is to stand under the judgment of God, that it would be better to have any kind of temporary pain or suffering or impediment in this life than to live life eternally separated from God because the true root of our joy and our peace and our contentment is found in God alone.

[25 : 22] And the reality of hell, the most simple definition you can give for it is to be separated from God and to be, rather than under his love, to be under his judgment. So why does Jesus stop here?

If he's not scared of God's judgment, if in fact Jesus is the one who's going to come back and judge the world, he's going to come back and make it right, what's happening here? Well, when you read the prophets, I find it's often sometimes confusing because there's moments in their prophecies that would be fulfilled in ten years, in a few hundred years, and then maybe in thousands of years, but they don't seem to get the picture.

I think of it like this. When you're driving up to a mountain range, all of the mountain peaks look just so close together. It almost looks like you could jump from one mountain to another because they're just right on top of one another.

You can't see any gap or difference. But then as you actually drive through a mountain range, you begin to see that these mountains that are so close to one another are in fact very far apart.

And I think this is an image of when God is showing people these words to give, these prophetic visions of this is my plan, they get this perspective of the mountain range from afar, where it all looks truncated, it all looks pushed together.

[26 : 37] But then as we experience in history, we see the gaps in moments. And here Jesus stops because Jesus doesn't lie. He says, today this is fulfilled in your hearing.

Was that day the day of judgment? Was that day the day when God would make all things right, when God would deal with the sin problem of this world, when God would deal with every tear that has been shed?

No, it wasn't. It was the beginning of God's good news which brings jubilee, which brings the year of the Lord's favor. So see this difference.

The year of the Lord's favor is what he's declaring. He's declaring the time in which the gospel would be preached when it was no longer a requirement to follow the laws of the Old Testament, to belong to the Jewish ethnic people, but in fact now anyone under the new covenant could come to believe in God, could come to be called a child of God simply by faith, by believing the message, by believing that in fact Jesus could pay the penalty for every shame you have, every hidden thing that you keep from your heart, everything that you believe.

If someone knew it they would think something different of you. Jesus knew all of those things and he bore them on the cross and he offered you his perfect life so that when God looks at you he sees you only as a perfect child who has never done any wrong rather than all the things that we think identify ourselves.

[28 : 04] This is what he's preaching but you must realize the year of the Lord's favor is in fact followed by the day of vengeance, the day of judgment would be another way to do it.

What Jesus is doing here is he's preaching the good news, the gospel, which is the same news that the church is called to preach today until Christ returns. Today you can be saved.

Today you can repent. Today you can trust in God and he will make it right. Today God can deal with your shame and brokenness, your life can be changed but when Christ returns, when judgment comes, when all is made right, when God restores the world perfect, sin and brokenness and all those who perpetrate sin and brokenness and would distort and break his new creation have to be separated from it.

They have no place in a world that is meant to be good and peaceful and joyous because they bring destruction and pain. Sometimes we find it difficult to think of God judging people if he truly loves but I think if God truly loves us he must bring judgment because if you say you love someone but you allow them to constantly be hurt and put in danger and to be destroyed that's not love at all. We need justice for the love of people. If someone has wronged you greatly if they present a danger to you loving people separate you from that danger. They protect you from that danger.

[29 : 31] If God is loving he must deal with injustice. But the good news is that that is the time we're living in. We're living in a year of favor in a place where God has made a way for salvation where the church has been given this great message.

Believe in Jesus. Your life will be changed. Your future will be made. All suffering will be dealt with. God will come back and judge you can't escape him.

There's no good reason to say for now I'm going to live my life the way I want it and maybe one day I'll make it right with God. For you never know which day is your last day and we're told that each person is to die and then judgment.

Those are your options. So although Jesus might not come back for many thousands of years as the gospel is being preached as the good news goes out to all people because he does not want to leave anyone behind. He desires all people to be saved so we wait for him and for his gospel to go out but when your days are ended you've met into the day of judgment and too many people I tell you get right with God today.

Make sure that you are right with God not be might be the last day. Tomorrow is not guaranteed. That is the big challenge that Jesus presents is that God has made a new covenant he's made a new way found in Jesus.

[30 : 57] He's the one who preached this good news and he's the one who made it possible in his life God's kingdom he's made us the children of God and if you go towards the end of Isaiah 60 verses 10 and 11 this is the good news hope that people can proclaim in light of loving God and having this restored relationship.

It says this I will greatly rejoice in the Lord my soul shall exult in my God for he has clothed me with the garments of righteousness he has covered me with the garments of salvation he has covered me with the robes of righteousness as the bridegroom decks himself out like a priest with beautiful head dress and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels verse 11 for as the earth as the earth brings forth sprouts you can tell I've had a long weekend and as a garden causes what is sown to be sprout up so the Lord God will cause the righteousness and praise to sprout up among all

nations in this whole passage of Isaiah 61 it begins with the anointed one with Jesus Christ declaring his identity declaring his message declaring his mission in the middle actually the Lord God the Father speaks to the nation about what will happen but here in the end is the praise of the people who believe in the

Messiah the people who believe in the anointed one all those who believe by faith that the good news can be their news and it says they will rejoice that their soul will exalt God and it's for this reason that God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout that God will change us that God will make us right that God will restore all things but this is the challenge if you don't know the Lord if you don't have a relationship with everyone out there in your family who has not responded to the Lord who has not heard the gospel right now they live in this moment in history where the good news is here it's available where grace is sufficient where anyone can turn by faith by trusting in God when the open and free call of the gospel is this come and believe God will make all things right there's nothing you have to do there's no long list of 600 laws you must follow like in the Old Testament there is but one thing declare

Jesus as Lord and believe he died for your sins and he'll deal with the greater poverty than this world can deal with he'll deal with a greater repression than this world will deal with he won't just give you an identity of equal to this person as rich as that person as valuable as that person as smart as this person but in fact he'll give you a new identity that in fact Jesus is my brother that I am a co-heir to the greatest king the king of all kings the God of gods the Lord of all creation but even more so I think this is an encouragement to those who have put their faith in Jesus that just as the people who heard Isaiah's message were suffering under the oppression of the Babylonians they were ripped out of their land by war and suffering they were exploited they were in pain they were suffering they were crying out God when will you make this right when will I return to my homeland when is enough enough and the people in Jesus's day were crying out here we are oppressed by the

Romans here we are suffering under a yoke of taxation and pain we want God to do something well God did something when he sent Jesus but that was only the beginning of the story the inauguration of God's plan to restore the world but John one of Jesus's disciples the end of your Bibles if you go to Revelation 21 he sees the fulfillment of this message the fulfillment of the good news after the year of jubilee the time when the gospel is preached when all can come and the day of judgment where God will make right that every sin will be paid for that every injustice will be dealt with either paid for by Christ and his suffering on the cross or paid by those who committed the atrocities this is the word of encouragement that God gives us Revelation 21 verse 3 and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold the dwelling place of God is with man he will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their

[35 : 31] God remember the story at the beginning the story of Gaul a God who is distant far and unconcerned the promise of scripture is not only that God is concerned and interested but God is powerful enough to save he stepped into history he stepped into the story he made it right but even more so than that he'll dwell with us forever he'll be with us and he will be our joy he is not a God who is distant far off unconcerned he is a father Jesus is a brother as much as he is a king and he wants a relationship with us but we will be he will be our God and we will be his people verse 4 he will wipe away he God himself the one who holds the universe together the one who made every star who planned everything who creates every single person we're told that God is intimate he knows you even in your mother's womb he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more there shall neither be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away the story the world wants to give is there is no eternal reward so live for now because YOLO is the best you got you only live once that's all you have but what scripture says is if this world's all we have it's not a good deal for most of us and then

God really would be evil but if God does love if he does care for us he offers us a greater world a fixed world sin wasn't his problem he didn't make it happen we broke this world and we continue to break this world every single day we break people with our words we break people with our actions we break our societies as a collective but God will make it right God wipes away every tear he didn't cause every tear but he'll deal with every tear he'll deal with death he'll deal with mourning he'll deal with crying he'll deal with pain God says I have a bank account that can pay any debt my check will clear I will make it right the former things will pass away in eternal joy that is a better news than Job's wife could offer than Stephen Fryer could offer than Gore could offer is actually something

that lasts beyond us because God has set eternity in our hearts so it says in Ecclesiastes and nothing will satisfy us but the eternal reward which is eternity with God and with all those who love him without pain without suffering without disease that is the good news and it comes because the prophet Isaiah 700 years before Jesus got given a word on a day

Jesus got given a scroll that he didn't pick and he found this and he declared this is who I am and he proved it in his life death and resurrection if you go look you read the scriptures it proves it at every moment every part of his life fulfilled the promises of God throughout the whole Old Testament and then he rose again conquered death and he offers us much greater than money than wealth than power he offers us eternal joy and a new identity that's if you believe in him that's if you trust in him that's if you put your faith in him it's a worthwhile offer I'm going to ask the ladies to join me while we do the final song the final song is great is thy faithfulness God was faithful to Isaiah and his people God was faithful to the people of Jesus his day he's faithful to us now he's faithful to us because he will make all things right he paid a bill with a debt that he didn't rung up he paid the cost and the penalty of death which he should not know our God stepped into the story and he's made it right and he offers to make your life right today he offers to continue to restore you if you put your trust in him many years ago this is the good news that frees us amen