

The Transformer of Zion

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Let's read Isaiah chapter 61 together. The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor.

! They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated. They will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

Aliens will shepherd your flocks. Foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. And you will be called priests of the Lord. You will be named ministers of our God.

You will feed on the wealth of nations. And in their riches you will boast. Instead of their shame, my people will receive a double portion.

[1:22] And instead of disgrace, they will rejoice in their inheritance. And so they will inherit a double portion in their land. And everlasting joy will be theirs.

For I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness, I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples.

All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed. 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 the sprout come up. And a garden causes seeds to grow. So the sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

[2:27] Last week we looked at the transformation of Zion. From the before picture in chapter 59. To the after picture of chapter 60.

From the most miserable darkness and despair. To the glorious light and joy of salvation. From the ugliness of sin and its consequences.

To the shining beauty of God's glory. Being the everlasting pride and joy of all generations. Now anytime you see a drastic difference in some transformation.

You want to know how it got that way. Who was the one that transformed it. From what it was to what it has become.

And that's the question that's being answered in chapter 61. This was no self-improvement course that Zion put herself through. It was no self-transformation.

[3:27] It was rather the work of another for them. And we meet this great transformer in chapter 61. In fact he's the one who's speaking to us as the chapter opens.

And he describes himself to us as the one anointed by Yahweh. By the Lord. So who is this anointed one?

That's the question we're asking and find answered before us. You remember last week we needed to know right up front who is Zion. Because the whole chapter was about Zion.

Now this week we need to know right up front who is this anointed one. Because this chapter is all about him. So we have first of all the transformer of Zion.

The anointed one. His identity. And I'm going to give you a clue first. And then conclusive proof.

Here's the clue. It's a Hebrew word.

[4:27] You say, oh I don't know Hebrew. So it won't be much a clue for me. Well just listen to the Hebrew word for the anointed one. Messiah. Messiah.

Alright. For you bright ones, that's the clue. Now for the rest of you, here's the conclusive evidence. 700 years after Isaiah wrote this, Israel is back in the land of Palestine.

She's under the rule of the Romans. It's the year 25 AD. Jesus of Nazareth has been baptized by John the Baptist. And at that baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove. He was tempted for 40 days and 40 nights without sin. And then he returns in the power of the Spirit to his hometown, Nazareth, where he had been brought up.

And as was his custom, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And chapter 4 of Luke's Gospel tells us what happened next.

[5:34] He stood up to read. A scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And he unrolls the scroll. Almost to the end.

To chapter 61, our very text today. And once he has it there, he reads it. The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind. To release the oppressed. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

And then he rolled it all up again, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were upon him.

And then he said, today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. There's the conclusive proof of who this anointed one is.

[6:41] It's none other than Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus, the Christ. Christos in Greek for Messiah, the anointed one. And he says to them, the Spirit of the Lord is on me.

Because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners. There's the conclusive evidence that the transformer of Zion is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Luke 4, in telling us that, not only helps us to come to the conclusion of who this transformer of Zion is, but he also gives us an interpretive check.

A check, a guide upon our interpretation of Isaiah 61. Some would like to say that this chapter is all about Israel's release from bondage in Babylon and restoration to the promised land.

And it's all about Israel and what is going to happen to Israel. Although Israel was indeed released from captivity and being a prisoner to Babylon, yet that is not what this chapter is really about.

[7:59] Because those events did not fulfill this chapter. They only further pointed to the fuller fulfillment of it that would come in Jesus Christ. Some 700 years later.

It was long after Israel had been let loose from Babylon and come back to her promised land. Some 500 years later.

That Jesus would stand and say, today. Today. This scripture is fulfilled in your sight. So we're meant to have help. If we come up with an interpretation of Isaiah 61 that is far distant from what Jesus was doing by his life and ministry, we know we've missed the boat.

No. Isaiah 61 is talking about the works of Jesus, the Messiah, starting at his first coming and finishing at his second coming. So that's the identity of the anointed one.

Secondly, we see his equipping. God gave him a task to do and he gave him the equipment, the wherewithal to do it. The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me.

[9:09] For he has anointed me. And so it was that before Jesus' public ministry, he's baptized. And at his baptism, he received the Holy Spirit, came upon him in fullness to do the work of Messiah.

That was his equipping. The spirit of the Lord. Isaiah has prophesied that many times in his book. All that Jesus needs for his work as Messiah is provided by the Holy Spirit who fills him without measure.

His identity, his equipping. Thirdly, his mission. What was this Messiah to do that required being anointed by the Holy Spirit?

It takes seven infinitives to answer that question. I just want to point out three points about Messiah's mission. First of all, his mission is to preach.

That's the first thing said. And it's spoken often here in these first three verses. Verse one, the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

[10:14] He sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and the captives. Preaching, proclamation is a major aspect of Messiah's work.

Jesus transformed people by spirit-empowered preaching. The sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue to know the word that sustains the weary.

Isaiah 50 and verse 4 is what Jesus says. An instructed tongue. He's made my mouth like a sharpened sword. Chapter 49 and verse 2.

Now we know that preaching is not all that Messiah did. But it does receive a predominant role in this explanation of his ministry. His mission.

The primacy of preaching is seen early on in his ministry. In Mark chapter 1, we read of Jesus preaching and healing. And they brought their sick to him late at night.

[11:12] And after a hard day's work late into the evening of healing. The Bible says he got up early the next morning. And he went out to a private place to pray while it was still dark.

And Simon and his companions all came looking for Jesus. And finally they found him. And when they did, they said, come on. They said, everyone is looking for you. As if to say, come on.

Let's go work some more miracles. They're all coming to you and want you to heal them. And Jesus replied, let us go somewhere else.

To the nearby villages so I can preach there also. That is why I have come. That is why I have come.

He's well aware of his messianic work. He has been anointed to preach good news to the poor. And I would just say in a day when preaching has fallen upon hard times.

[12:16] Brothers and sisters, don't grow weary of preaching. It was by hearing Jesus preach that people came to believe and had everlasting life.

It was by preaching that the truth set men free. It was by preaching that men were made wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. And men and women, boys and girls continue to be set free as the Lord Jesus continues preaching through his spokesman.

His sheep still hear his voice and follow him. He speaks and listening to his voice, new life the dead receive. The mournful broken hearts rejoice.

The humble poor believe. Messiah virtually preached a new people into existence. As Zion was transformed by his preached word.

Yes, his mission is to preach. Secondly, his mission is to set prisoners free. For his preaching is to proclaim freedom for the captives.

[13:26] And release from darkness for the prisoners. At the end of World War II, victorious allied forces went into Nazi concentration camps.

And released these emaciated, half-starved prisoners. You're free to go. What joy, what amazing feelings must have come through these men who thought we would never see freedom.

You're free. The liberator declaring freedom. Now, it would be a cruel joke to announce that, to proclaim that, if it wasn't true.

But it was true. And that's why it's to be proclaimed. And that's why Jesus comes proclaiming freedom to the prisoners. Because it's not a cruel joke. There is freedom from bondage.

And he's not talking here. Isaiah's not talking here. And the Spirit of God is not referring to some freedom of Israel from captivity in Babylon. Where they're being held prisoners to the Babylonians.

[14:31] No, remember, today, this is being fulfilled in your hearing. Jesus is setting prisoners free, even as he preached that Sabbath morning in Nazareth.

What is the liberation spoken of? Well, again, our interpretive check would tell us, look for what Jesus did in his life and ministry.

Well, Jesus didn't set anyone free from the yoke of Roman bondage, did he? That's what they wanted him to do. We want a Savior who will deliver us from Rome.

He didn't free them from Rome. Oh, but he did free people from bondage to sin. He did go into the prison house of sin and set all sorts of men and women free from Satan's power, from sin's power, from the power of darkness and of hell forever.

You see, we had a far worse captivity than being locked up in any loathsome prison or being slaves to a foreign nation.

[15:49] It's spiritual bondage that we all have experienced. Jesus says everyone who sins is the slave of sin.

Now, that means we're all in bondage. We're all prisoners to sin because we all sin. And oh, the prisoner thinks, well, I'm free. And the sinner says, I'm free.

I'm free to do what I want. And you know, sin doesn't care if the prisoner thinks he's free. He's in bondage, even while he claims to be free.

And Jesus comes and he says, if the truth shall set you free, you shall be free indeed. Free from that bondage to sin.

And so he comes proclaiming truth that sets men free. That was Messiah's mission. The reason for his coming, the work to which he was anointed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God.

[16 : 52] What is this year of the Lord's favor? Well, it has to do with proclaiming freedom. It really takes us back to Leviticus chapter 25 and that jubilee year in Israel.

Every 50th year in Israel started out with the blasting of a trumpet and the proclamation of freedom in the land. It was the year of the Lord's favor, the year of freedom.

For you see, men would get so poor in the land that they would sell themselves as slaves, debtor slaves to another.

And they would become prisoners then. They would be held in bondage and slavery to another.

And they would sell their homes and everything that they had to another.

But every 50th year was to be the year of the Lord's favor, the year of freedom. And it would be pronounced. This is the year of freedom. And all the slaves who had sold themselves into slavery would be able to be set free and be able to go back to their homes and reclaim their homes and reclaim their old lives that they had lost.

[18 : 07] All their debts would be canceled. It was a wonderful, happy year, the year of the Lord's favor. And even so, Messiah comes to proclaim freedom for the prisoners to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

That by his cross, Jesus Christ paid the debts for his people and their debt has been canceled. They can return to the Lord.

They can return to their life. They are set free from sin and from the chains of their past, free to get on with a new life, free from sin as a master, free from its everlasting punishment.

And so Jesus is the one anointed to proclaim this year of the Lord's favor. It's here in me. Come and experience true freedom from sin. But notice he also came to proclaim the year of God's wrath, the day of vengeance of our God.

Hand in hand, the year of the Lord's favor, the day of vengeance of our God. No one spoke more about God's vengeance and God's wrath and God's hell than Jesus did.

[19 : 27] But he was different from many hellfire and brimstone preachers in that he preached with tears, didn't he? He preached with tears. No one knew how he knew the extent of God's wrath upon all who refused to believe and to repent.

He knew what was coming. And out of love for sinners, he preached and told them of that coming wrath of God and told them to flee it and to run into the arms of the Lord in the year of his favor. While it is yet today, while it is still the day of salvation. Before the swift day of his wrath will happen. You see, this applies to Jesus, what he has come to do.

He brings in the year of God's favor, the forgiveness of sins, the canceling of death, the proclaiming of liberty. And at his second coming, he will bring to pass the day of God's vengeance.

His mission to preach, to set prisoners free. Thirdly, his mission is to provide everlasting joy. To provide everlasting joy.

[20 : 48] Our world is sad. The most commonly prescribed medication in our nation is antidepressants.

One out of ten people are on them. Women in their forties and fifties are twice as likely to be on them. Many turn to alcohol, illegal drugs.

To dull the pain of sin and guilt. But the Lord Jesus is the real joy giver. And all these other things tend to be cheap substitutes for him.

He came to proclaim and provide an everlasting joy. When Adam and Eve sinned, instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable.

And Jesus, the transformer, has come to take sinful, miserable people and to make them everlastingly happy. That's his mission. That's why he's here.

[21 : 53] Into our sad world, Messiah comes on a mission of joy. And almost every line of his mission here in verses 1 to 3 sounds this predominant note of joy.

The predominant note of Christianity is joy. First of all, he's anointed to preach good news to the poor. I have good news for you, he says, to miserable, sad sinners.

He's got good news for the downtrodden. He binds up the brokenhearted. He frees sinners who could not free themselves. It's all part of his joy-restoring mission, you see.

To comfort all who mourn. To provide for those who grieve in Zion. What are they grieving over? They're grieving over all that causes sadness, but especially sin, which is at the very root of it. Indeed, Jesus would later say, Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. And what does the anointed one provide for those who grieve in Zion?

[22:57] Well, a crown of beauty instead of ashes. That's what you did when you were sad. You smeared ashes on your face. A crown of beauty instead of ashes of sorrow.

The oil of gladness instead of mourning. A garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. Now, here's our transformer, you see. He's making over Zion.

From sadness to gladness. From despair to joyful praise. That's why he's come. I wonder, are you experiencing the liberating joy of Messiah?

Messiah. And what does he have then? What is he creating? Well, he's creating a righteous people. Verse 3. Here we come to his purpose. His purpose. Why has Messiah come? Why is he doing these things?

[23:59] Well, it's for the display of God's splendor, we're told. The display of his splendor. To have a liberated, joyful, righteous people. Displays his splendor.

Here, he says at the end of verse 3. They will be called oaks of righteousness. A planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. That's what he's making out of Zion.

A righteous people that display how wonderful God is. You ever been under a mighty oak tree?

Kids. You stand and you look up and you can hardly see the top of this mighty oak tree.

And maybe you're stepping on something under your shoe and you pick it up and you say, Oh, it's a little acorn. Well, hold that acorn beside that tree. And marvel at the splendor of the divine gardener. All the genetic makeup of that tree is in that little acorn. What a marvelous creator. What a marvelous gardener God is.

[25:08] But do you know that the marvels of this divine gardener are even greater in the spiritual garden?

Notice what he starts with and what he takes. He takes miserable sinners, slaves to sin, sad, despairing. And notice what he makes them. Liberated, joyful, righteous people.

And why does he do it? For the display of his splendor. If you stand in awe at what God does in making that acorn into that magnificent oak, you should stand in double awe at seeing God make oaks of righteousness out of miserable sinners.

Because that's what he does. And he does it for the display of his splendor. So that everyone will see just how wonderful and glorious he is. We were in England in a little coin village.

A wonderful little coin street. And we popped into this designer shop with all the beautiful fabrics and bedspreads and pillows. I was obviously tagging along for the day.

[26:20] And I was interested in other things. And there at the cash register, there was a whole stack of postcards that this establishment had printed. It was a picture of what their store looked like out front in the summertime.

You could hardly see the store. It was covered in flowers. They'd won first prize for the city. They were proud of it. They had printed postcards to show it off to any who would come in.

God is showing off. God is displaying the splendor, the wonderfulness, the brilliance, the majesty, the glory that he is.

And how is he doing? He's making oaks of righteousness. This divine gardener is making oaks of righteousness. Set free from sin and rejoicing in the Lord.

All for the display of his splendor. Oh, then, Lord Jesus, make me like a well-watered garden. Make me full of the works of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

[27:32] Philippians 1.11. So that's the anointed one. His identity, his equipping, his mission and his purpose. Secondly, we see that the restored become restorers.

Verse 4. They, that's these oaks of righteousness who were once slaves to sin and sadness. Now, here they are remade. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated.

They will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for centuries. The most unlikely of people to be restoring others. They themselves needed to be restored.

But once restored, they become restorers in the hands of the great transformer, Jesus Christ. And that is what we see in Zion. What are we?

We have been restored, haven't we? And so now we become instruments of Messiah to restore others. That's, that's our calling in life.

[28 : 36] That's why we're not taken to glory. That's why we're left here. And yes, Israel returned from Babylon to the destroyed cities of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas.

And they rebuilt those cities and the ruins. But again, I tell you, we look in vain there for the fulfillment of these words. That's just another picture. It's Jesus and his work, his ministry that we are to see.

What has Jesus come to do to restore? What things have been ruined by sin for a long time? Why lay there in destruction and the Lord Jesus and then through his people?

Restoration comes. Restoration comes. Bob Dylan noticed the brokenness of our world and sang this song.

Broken hands on broken plows. Broken treaties. Broken vows. Broken pipes. Broken tools. People bending. Broken rules.

[29 : 43] Broken bottles. Broken plates. Broken switches. Broken gates. Broken dishes. Broken parts. Streets are filled with broken hearts. Broken words never meant to be spoken.

Everything is broken. broken. You don't have to be a Christian to know that everything is broken. People are living in a broken world.

They're living with broken hearts. They're living with broken relationships. And they're experiencing the sadness and despair of the brokenness of it all.

And most of all, a broken relationship with God. That's where it all started. That's everything else that's broken is simply the result of man's relationship with God.

Broken by sin. Broken by our self-love. But Messiah comes to bind up the broken hearted.

[30 : 47] He mends broken relationships with God. Broken lives. Broken families. Broken marriages. Broken workplaces. Broken environment. Broken environment.

He restores things that sin had ruined and left devastated for a long, long time. Today. This scripture is being fulfilled.

In your hearing. Even in his preaching. He is restoring. Ruined. Broken lives. And Zion is heading for such a transformation.

In which everything broken and ruined will be rebuilt, restored, and renewed. For he who is seated upon the throne said, Revelation 21, behold, I am making everything new.

That's where Zion is headed. He who was seated. He who was seated. And in Acts chapter 3 and verse 21, Peter says, he, Christ, must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

[31 : 55] You talk about things lying in devastation and ruin for a long time. When Jesus comes back. There will be a new heavens and a new earth and the broken things will be renewed, rebuilt, restored.

And even now, Jesus is mending and restoring and rebuilding. Broken things. Broken families. Broken homes. Broken homes. And then those Messiah restores and heals are working to see others restored. And these restored people will include the Gentiles.

We saw it last week. We see it again here in verse 5. Aliens and foreigners join in on this work. And at last, Zion will fulfill her role as priests. And she will serve the nations.

She will serve others. You will be called priests of the Lord. You will be named ministers of our God. That's why they were called in the first place to minister blessing to the nations.

[33 : 04] But that was not fulfilled. She failed. And Jesus comes. And he is the great high priest. And he brings saving blessings to the nations. And through his church, those blessings are still being poured out upon the nations.

What a restoration. Instead of their shame, my people will receive a double portion. Instead of disgrace, they will rejoice in their inheritance.

And so they will inherit a double portion in the land and everlasting joy will be theirs. The restored become the restores. Those transformed by Jesus are his instruments of transformation.

So rejoice in the Lord and become more and more involved in broken lives and broken people and broken situations with the remedy of the great transforming gospel of Christ.

Now, these things are so out there. They're so other than what we see now. We can say, what in the world? We're so used to broken things. And how do I know for sure that this is going to happen?

[34:15] Well, how can Messiah's people be sure of such amazing promises of restoration coming to pass? Everything being made new.

Verse 8. For I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness, I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them.

You see, Messiah's blessings are guaranteed. And they're guaranteed by the Lord's own character and the Lord's own covenant. First, his character stands as the guarantee of these promises.

Well, I, the Lord, love justice. He's just. And that stands as the reason God is going to renew the whole earth one day.

Just. I like things done right. In a way that is right with me. The way it was meant to be. The way things are supposed to be. That's just. And, you see, he is so committed in his justice to the way things ought to be that one day it will be done.

[35:21] He will not sit by and see his creation ruined and broken without doing something about it. I love justice. And therefore, I hate every injustice, robbery and iniquity and everything else wrong in the world.

And so these promises of renewal and restoration rest upon God's own commitment to justice. It's who he is. But not only his justice.

There's also his faithfulness. He's faithful. In faithfulness, I will reward them. He who promised is faithful.

It's what he is. He cannot lie. He has to keep his covenant commitments. And our assurance, then, of this great transformation rests on his being just and his being faithful.

Christians, you know other promises that are guaranteed by his being just and faithful. 1 John 1, 9.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[36:37] How do we know if we come and confess? How do we know for sure? How can we have assurance that those sins are forgiven, remembered no more? Because of who he is.

He is just. He is faithful. And so this great transformation is guaranteed by the character of God. But it's also guaranteed by his covenant.

I will make an everlasting covenant with them. His oath-bound commitment to his people. Often sealed in blood. With an oath. Promise.

It's also not only called here the everlasting covenant. It's also called the eternal, the new covenant, the covenant of peace. And one day Jesus said to his disciples, this blood is the blood of the new covenant.

Which is shed for you. You see, these promises are guaranteed by the blood of Jesus. This covenant, these commitments that God made to Zion.

[37:40] And they must happen because of his character and because of his covenant sealed with the blood of Christ. Assurance is spelled C-O-V-E-N-A-N-T.

God makes covenant. Covenants. Covenant commitments. To assure us that these things, these promises, will surely come to pass.

The chapter ends with Zion singing for joy. Number four. We've seen the anointed one. We've seen the restored being restorers.

And we've seen the guarantee of it all. Messiah's blessings guaranteed. And the chapter ends with Zion singing for joy. Now we were told.

We were told that's why Messiah is coming. To transform these people from sadness to joy. And now we get to see them singing for joy. He transports us into the future.

[38:54] Isaiah is standing. And he sees Zion singing for joy. And what are they singing about? Well, they tell us, don't they? Verse 10. I delight greatly in the Lord.

My soul rejoices in my God. For, here's the reason for their joy. 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. The cause of their great joy is the clothes that God gives them to wear. Clothing's a big deal to people.

Just go to the mall. What is appropriate to wear in different situations? Several years ago, the women's NCAA championship lacrosse team from Northwestern was invited to go to the White House to meet the president.

And you remember that many were aghast at the lack of social etiquette of four of those on the team who were wearing flip-flops. They went to see the president in flip-flops.

[40:07] Well, whatever you think about that, I want to ask you, what are you going to wear for your personal appointment with God? What will you be wearing on that day?

Do you realize that there's a day coming when what you are wearing will mean the difference between everlasting joy and everlasting torment?

If you don't understand that, you won't understand why Zion's singing. A day is coming when what you are wearing will be the difference between heaven and hell.

Everlasting joy and everlasting torment. What you are wearing? Some will be clothed in sin and iniquity as they stand before him who hates iniquity.

Others will be clothed in righteousness and salvation before him who loves righteousness. Now, we're not to think in terms of literal clothing here.

[41:19] But he's using that to make an important point. That in the day of judgment, we must stand before God clothed, covered in his righteousness, just like clothing covers our skin.

We've got to be covered, hidden, concealed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

Now, how do we get this perfect righteousness? We're sinners. We're defiled. We're sinful. With stains. Remember how this book of Isaiah began?

With stains. Chapter 1 and verse 8. Though your sins are like scarlet. And as crimson. Red like crimson. We couldn't get those stains off.

Zion couldn't clean herself up. We don't make our own robe of righteousness. All we do is tainted by sin and come short of the glory of God. How in the world do we get the righteous robe that alone brings us into heaven?

[42:28] Do you know the Bible's all about that, answering that question? How do sinners get in a right relationship with a holy God?

How can they get righteous when they're sinful? How can they come and live with a God who is so righteous he can't stand sin in his presence? How can they have a perfect righteousness to stand with this God?

And Paul puts it so plainly in Romans 3.22. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

This righteousness. It's not your own. It's from God. And it comes by faith in Jesus Christ. It's his righteousness put to the account of the sinner.

To all who believe on him. You give him your sins and trusting him to save you and he gives you his righteousness.

[43:32] For God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. And so we have no righteousness of our own to be accepted before God.

But by faith we look away from self to another. We look to Christ. His perfect life. His atoning death. And in looking we receive his righteousness.

God puts it on our account in heaven. All of our sins put to Jesus' account. And all of his righteousness transferred to our account. So that now we stand righteous, faultless before the throne.

Even as we sang earlier. Naked come to thee for dress. Helpless look to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly.

Wash me, Savior, or I die. No wonder they're singing. He has clothed them with the garments of salvation. With the robe of righteousness.

[44:36] With that which will receive entrance into everlasting joy. And so he puts the righteousness of Jesus to the account of the one who believes in Jesus.

And then he puts his Holy Spirit in them. And causes them to want to obey his righteous commandments. And he's progressively sanctifying them.

Making them more righteous. From one stage of glory to another. Until when we see Jesus. We'll be transformed completely into his righteous likeness. Without any sin.

A righteous record in heaven. A righteous heart on earth. They're both the gifts. Of God. To the one who believes in Jesus.

Jesus. Now do you see why God's people are greatly rejoicing in the Lord. Do you see my dear friend. Why this people week by week gather together and sing for joy to the Lord.

[45:37] He has made us glad. He has clothed us in garments of righteousness. He's given us the very clothing that we need. To stand faultless before the throne.

And so dressed in Christ's righteousness. We're ready for the day of judgment. Should it be today. We're ready.

To face our maker. Should it be right now. And we're ready to receive everlasting joy. But show up wearing anything else. And it will be everlasting torments.

And you see Messiah has come. To tell you that. He's come to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And the day of vengeance of our God. And he's wanting you to flee the coming wrath. To trust in him and be covered in his righteousness. Do some of you need a new wardrobe?

[46:36] Bring your sins to Jesus. And he'll give you his perfect righteousness. And then too you will join Zion. And trade in your sadness for gladness.

And rejoice greatly in the Lord. And will give him all the praise. And why giving him all the praise? Because it's all his work. For as the soil makes the sprout come up.

And a garden causes seeds to grow. So the sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. Why do any of us have righteousness?

It's because of him. Only he can do this. Only he can make us oaks of righteousness. In this last verse he's compared to the soil.

Or to the garden dirt. The dirt of garden soil may not look like much. But it has in it all the things needed to make the seed to grow. You buy the seed in the package at the store.

[47:37] You bring it home. That seed will not grow in the package. It's got to be put into the soil, doesn't it? And there it finds all that it needs to grow.

And that's what God is saying. In the same way that the seed can't grow without the soil or without the garden dirt. So righteousness and praise will never grow up to me in any nation, on any place on this planet, apart from me, the sovereign Lord.

I'm the one who causes righteousness and praise to spring up. So come and put your trust in Christ to make you righteous by his perfect life and atoning blood and his spirit.

And then rejoice and give him the praise. He alone can do such things. And he does it to display his splendor.

Well, we can rejoice and give him praise in singing number 439. Jesus, thy blood and righteousness. My beauty are my glorious dress.

[48:47] Let's pray. Our great Messiah, Jesus, we thank you for coming into this. The sin saddened world. God, slaves of sin and setting us free by your great work of salvation, taking the punishment we deserve, canceling our debts, giving us a righteousness that makes us right before the judge of the universe.

Do fill our hearts with gladness and singing. Do go on restoring us and using us to restore others until Jesus comes again and restores everything that sin has made such a mess of.

Oh, how we thank you for coming. We thank you for the love that brought you near us and that sought us out when we didn't care to have you. So receive our thanks and we rejoice together then in what you have accomplished and what you will accomplish.

So we pray in your name. Amen. Amen.