



## Sermon Notes

US N°. 56

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Title: Those to Whom the Messiah Ministers (Is. 61)

Series: #2 of "The Messiah's Ministry, and Ours"

1. The place and function of Isaiah 61 within the Jewish community.
  - a. Written by the prophet Isaiah around the year 690 BC during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Tradition has it that Heb. 11:37's clause, "sawn in two," is a reference to Isaiah who is believed to have been martyred during the reign of Manasseh, Hezekiah's son. Isaiah's ministry takes place during a time of increasing prosperity for the two kingdoms of Israel, but also during a time of growing pagan worship. It was clear to the prophet that the covenant recorded in Dt. 30:11-20 had been so flagrantly violated that judgment and captivity were inevitable. Thus Isaiah writes of God's impending judgment so that the people of God would turn and avert the approaching disaster. His writings are full of hope and promise for the faithful remnant, it's full of promises of restoration and redemption, of the certain advent of the Messiah, of salvation for all nations and of the final triumph of God's purposes in spite of times of suffering.
  - b. The Messiah is described as "Lord," "Branch of the Lord," "Immanuel," "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace," "Rod of Jesse," "Cornerstone," "King," "Shepherd," "Servant of Yahweh," "Elect One," "Lamb of God," "Leader and Commander," "Redeemer," and "Anointed One."
  - c. Israel's expectation of a Messiah was incredibly heightened, especially in the light of occupational forces in the form of the Romans. Consequently, Jesus' reading of the Isaiah scroll, just after His successful victory over Satan's temptation (*demonstrating His call as the true Israel*) in the desert, is a statement of His mandate and mission on earth. Jesus went beyond "reading" what was considered a prized prophetic promise, He went on to proclaim that the prophecy was fulfilled *this day* and then goes on to show how God rains blessings on the Gentiles. Luke 4:22-30, "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: *"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED; TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."* Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, *"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" He said to them, *"You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'*" Then He said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."* So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way."

- d. The text draws upon the year of Jubilee along with all of its promises and opportunities. (cf. Lev. 25)
2. The characteristics of those whom the Messiah pursues. Isaiah 61:1-3, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the **poor**; He has sent Me to heal the **brokenhearted**, to proclaim liberty to the **captives**, and the opening of the prison to **those who are bound**; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who **mourn**, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for **ashes**, the oil of joy for **mourning**, the garment of praise for the **spirit of heaviness**; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."
- a. The Poor. We must hold a transformed understanding of what poverty is and how it impacts a person's life. (slides 1-3) Poverty, or maybe better "impoverishment", is much more than the lack of material goods. It includes:
  - i. Inadequacy in worldview; knowledge, expectation, bondage, etc.
  - ii. God complexes by the non-poor; powerless through the lack of influence and social power
  - iii. Deception by spiritual powers; fear and bondage
  - iv. Marred identity; limited perspective and poor self-image
  - v. Weak mind & body; too many dependents
  - vi. Vulnerability through a lack of reserves & choices makes them easy to coerce
  - vii. Isolation through the lack of assets & education making them excluded from the system
  - viii. Spiritual poverty; broken relationships with neighbor and God

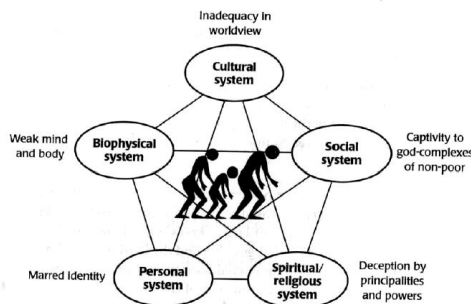


Figure 3-5: Poverty as disempowering systems.  
(Adapted from Christian 1994)<sup>1</sup>

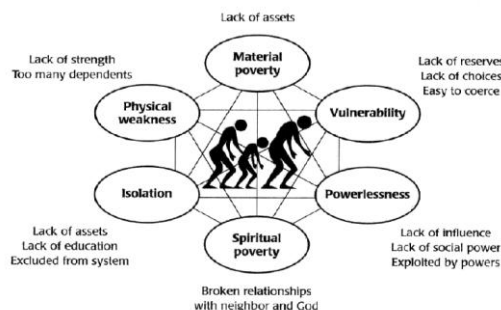


Figure 3-2: The poverty system of the household.  
(Adapted from Chambers 1983, 110)

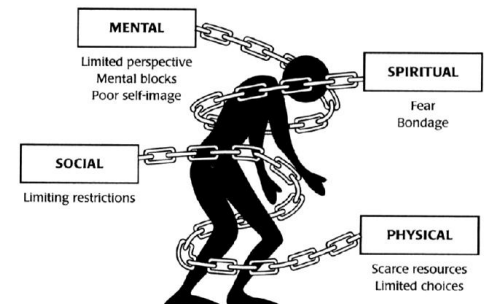


Figure 3-9: Poverty as a lack of freedom to grow.  
(Jayakaran 1996, 14)

- b. The Brokenhearted. Examples are: "bruised," "emasculated" (cf. Lev. 21:20); "to frustrate," "to break down" either by violence or by confusion and fear (cf. 1 Sam. 2:10; Jer. 48:20, Jer. 48:39); "to collapse" (cf. Ps. 44:19; Ps. 51:8); "to crack in pieces" "crush" (cf. Ecc. 12:6); "to bruise or violently strike," "break in pieces" (cf. Is. 30:14)
- c. The Captives [Strong's H7617 – A primitive root; to transport into captivity: - (bring away, carry, carry away, lead, lead away, take) captive (-s), drive (take) away.] People who've been carried off into a foreign nation; Israel in Babylon as well as sinners in general. A semblance of prosperity is possible for captives.
- d. Those who are bound [Strong's H631 – A primitive root; to yoke or hitch; by analogy to fasten in any sense, to join battle: - bind, fast, gird, harness, hold, keep, make ready, order, prepare, prison (-er), put in bonds, set in array, tie.] Stronger and more cruel than just being carried away, but describes people who've bound or imprisoned against their will. There is no prosperity or well being in bondage.

- e. Those who are mourning. Grief, heartache, disappointment, and frustration. Grief over loss of friends and family, but also a grief or heartache of unfulfilled dreams.
  - f. Spirit of Heaviness. Instead of a heavy, burdened, and oppressed spirit, the word used here usually means faint, feeble, or weak. (cf. Is. 42:3) It is applied to a lamp about to go out (cf. Is. 42:3) to eyes bedimmed, or dull (cf. 1 Sa 3:2) to a faint or pale color. (cf. Lev 13:39) Here it denotes those of a faint and desponding heart. These expressions are figurative, and are taken from the custom which prevailed more in Oriental countries than elsewhere - and which is founded in nature - of expressing the emotions of the mind by the manner of apparel.
3. The Messiah's ministry as a counter-offensive against the Deceiver and Accuser. Just the titles ascribed to the Messiah show how God counters the lies, deceptions, hurts and wounds of His people. The Beatitudes (cf. Mt. 5:2-12, Luke 6:20-49) are also filled with rich promises for us.
- a. Good tidings for the poor. Shalom! Our Gospel, the Good News, must be manifold and encompassing to envelop impoverishment and poverty. "*Jesus saves!*" is our cry but His salvation is much more than a heavenly home one day... His Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven!
    - i. Forgiven of much means greater gratitude and love. (cf. Luke 7:40-50)
  - b. Heal the brokenhearted.
    - i. God's indictment upon the bad shepherds of Israel, and how He Himself will shepherd Israel. Ez. 34:4-5, "*The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.*"
    - ii. Ps. 147:2-3, "*The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.*"
  - c. Proclaim liberty to the captives. Ps. 103:12, "*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*" From one scarred hand to the other. (*Casting Crowns*)
  - d. Freedom to the prisoners and those who are bound
  - e. Day of vengeance. Many take this to mean the eventual second return by Jesus. However, there is an original vision of what God expected His people to look like. It began with Adam (who failed), followed by the nation of Israel (who also failed) and was finally taken up by Jesus. The sense of "*vengeance*" is at least two-fold. One is the punishment and retribution associated with an angry God. The second is that of justification, that of proving oneself, which was accomplished in the resurrection of Jesus; the victory over death and thus sin. Jesus fulfilled all of the Father's will, which opens the door for us to also be justified and walk in victory and in power of the resurrection.
  - f. Consolation to those who mourn.
    - i. Mt. 5:4, "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*"
    - ii. 2 Cor. 1:3-5, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.*"
    - iii. 2 Thess. 2:16-17, "*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*"

- g. Beauty for ashes. In the Hebrew there is here a beautiful paronomasia (*a pun*), which cannot be transferred to our language. The word rendered “*beauty*” means properly a head-dress, turban, tiara, or diadem; and the idea is that the Redeemer would impart to his mourning people such an ornament instead of the ashes which in their grief they were accustomed to cast on their heads. It was common among the Orientals to cast dust and ashes upon their heads in time of mourning, and as expressive of their grief (*cf. Is. 57:5, 2 Sam. 13:19*). Diamonds are made up of carbon (*like ashes*) that has undergone extreme heat and pressure.
  - h. A garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.
    - i. *Is. 42:3, “A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.”*
    - ii. *Jn. 16:22, “Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”*
    - iii. *Rom. 15:13, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*
  - i. Trees (oaks) of righteousness or justice.
    - i. *Ps. 1:3, “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”*
    - ii. *Ps. 92:12-15, “The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”*
    - iii. *Mark 4:31-2, “It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.”*
4. The ultimate purpose is that God may be glorified through our weaknesses, our deliverance, and our ministry. God is doing it, we are invited to join with Him and walk in the fellowship of His suffering in the power of His resurrection. (*cf. Phil. 3:10*) Our Gospel must be manifold and encompassing to envelop impoverishment and poverty. “*Jesus saves!*” is our cry but His salvation is much more than a heavenly home one day... His Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven!
- a. *Micah 6:8, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”*
  - b. At times, God’s Kingdom offends, but we are to live our lives before an audience of One.
    - i. *Mt. 15:12-14, “Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”*
    - ii. *Gen. 17:1, “...the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.”*
  - c. The least of these. *Mat 25:40, 45, “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’... Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’”*