

Isaiah 61:10 – 62:12 The Joy Set Before Him

Verses 61:10 to 62:7 go together as a poem, or a song, which is clear in the Hebrew (Motyer). These verses are in reference to an anointed conqueror who will come one day. And the emphasis is on what this anointed ONE will accomplish, what will be achieved in his work. And in vv. 8-12 we see a great sense of joy as God affirms his promises. As Christians we know who this anointed One is in Isaiah. He is the Eternal King who sits on David's throne. He is the Suffering Servant. And it is his great JOY to come and fulfill ALL the promises of God. This is where I get the title. Heb. 12:1-3 says, **“let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”** This is exactly what we need this morning so that we may not grow weary or fainthearted with the cares of this world. With this in mind, I have 3 truths from this passage concerning the **“joy set before him.”**

1. **It is the joy of Christ to save his people.** I know we touched on this last week, but I will go into much more detail today. In eternity (unimaginable concept), God purposed to save a people for himself. And He knew what this would entail! And in eternal wisdom, I believe God says, *“Who will go? Who will accomplish this great work of salvation?”* And the Son says, *“I will go!”* And, *“it will be my greatest joy to accomplish your will!”* Such is the sending of the Son to be the savior of sinners, those who ***fall short of the glory of God*** (Rom. 3:23), those who because of their sin, are God's enemies (Rom. 5:8), and are by nature ***“children of wrath”*** (Eph. 2:3). Rarely does one give his life for a friend, much less an enemy. And then to add to this scenario, does one give his life for an enemy and do it with joy, and even love for such! **“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!”** (Rom. 11:33).

Look at 61:10-11 as we see this mind with the Anointed One. **“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 robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a 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 the nations.”**

Here we see the work of the Father in sending the Son as he dresses him with the garments of salvation. In the OT, God's priests were beautifully dressed with specific clothes and buttons and tassels and hats, etc. Why? So they would stand out as God's chosen intercessors, his representatives, those who handled the work of the tabernacle, the temple, the sacrifices, etc. I'm not a great dresser, never have been (though I am much better now with the help of Kristen). But, one time FOR SURE I dressed up was my wedding day! My tuxedo was nice. And it spoke volumes. And I've never been more excited to dress up. Why? She is sitting right over there! What I dressed for that day, I wanted everyone to know I was committed . . . to her. I wanted to be nice-looking . . . for her. Never have I wore a tuxedo with such joy! And such is the heart of the Lord Jesus for his people, the church.

But, as we consider the clothing of Jesus, we know he was an ordinary carpenter's son. We have no indication that he owned the clothing of a rich man. In fact, he was very ordinary. I'm not sure we could have picked him out if we had a normal picture of him with his disciples. And, at the end of his life he was stripped and laid on a cross. And Isaiah says in 52:14: **"his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind . . ."** And in 53:3, **"as one from whom men hide their faces."** With this in mind, how is Jesus dressed? He is dressed with the garments of salvation. He is dressed with the robe of righteousness. On the outside, He was just like us, and his clothing was humble. But who is HE? How is He really dressed?

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:15-17) **"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power"** (Heb. 1:3). In the same chapter it is interesting that God himself says of the Son: **"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions"** (vv. 8-9).

Brothers and sisters, there is nothing or no one more beautifully clothed with righteousness than the Son of God. This is why when He laid down his life on the cross as a substitute sacrifice for sinners, He can accomplish salvation. His life was one of complete obedience to the Father. And ONLY a holy sacrifice can accomplish salvation! This is why the Father can say at his baptism and at the transfiguration, **"This is my beloved Son, Listen to Him."** And this is why at his death the temple veil is torn completely in two. This is why those who come to him will never be cast out. This is why Jesus can say at his death, **"It is finished."** This is why Paul can say to us: **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"** (Rom. 8:1). This is why, NOW, God's people are justified before a holy God. What a beautiful savior we have! And ALL THIS WORK was his great joy!

2. It is the joy of Christ to make his people beautiful. We've seen this truth already in reference to God's commitment to Zion in 60:7: **"I will beautify my beautiful house."** 60:15: **"I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age."** 61:3: **"to give them a beautiful headdress . . . and a garment of praise."** In 61:11, He will give his people a **"robe of righteousness."**

Now, look at vv. 1-5 as the focus is on the work of the Messiah: **"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch."** He is saying, *"I will not stop. I will do whatever the will of the Lord requires."* And in v. 2: **"The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory . . ."** **"and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give."** I love this verse. The Lord Himself will give you a name that ONLY He can give. Then in v. 3: **"You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God."** Notice here it doesn't say we will "wear a crown." Instead, we ARE the crown. And it doesn't sit upon the head of the King, but instead, the crown

is in his hand! This crown is SO PRECIOUS that it is held in the King's hand. If you could make a special crown to wear and choose anything in the world, what would you put in it? Gold, silver, precious stones, diamonds, etc. Brothers and sisters, God choose NONE of these for his crown. He chooses his people. And this crown is the most beautiful possession to Him! And his crown is the most beautiful because He is the ONE who gives EVERY piece of beauty. We add nothing to our beauty! I can hardly imagine this truth!

Then in vv. 4-5: **You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her (Hephibah), and your land Married (Beulah); for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.** God's people are no longer forsaken, but instead a delight to the Lord of the Universe. God's people are no longer desolate, but married to the King, the Lord of all Lords, the maker of heaven and earth. And all of these things are spoken by the Messiah. And this is his joy!

This is really the doctrine of sanctification. By the Spirit, God will beautify his church through the person and work of Christ. Eph. 1:22: **“And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church . . .”** Eph. 5:23: **“For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”** Eph. 5:29: **“For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church . . .”** Brothers and sisters, from this perspective, EVERYTHING Christ did, he did so that you might be acceptable to God. And God will not accept anything but holiness. And this was his joy! He took on flesh . . . just like ours. He lived a perfectly obedient life. He died on the cross to bear your shame and your guilt. And his crown of righteousness, he gives to us. And in return, we give him our crown of sin. And God receives this sacrifice in our place. And He rises from the dead and ascends to the Father, taking his rightful place. And then, He pours out the Holy Spirit upon earthen vessels: US, all of this to make us beautiful.

Think of what this entails. By the Spirit, He calls us with an effectual powerful call. Rom. 8:30: **“And those whom he predestined he also called . . .”** He quickens our dead hearts. Eph. 2:5-6: **“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus . . .”** He changes our nature, makes us alive to righteousness, and dead to sin. Rom. 6:6: **“We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.”** Gal. 2:20: **“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”** And now, because of the person and work of Christ, the Spirit of God lives in us! And He is our guarantee. He is our life. He is the One who convicts of sin. He is the One who gives us power to live. He is the One who will raise us up on the last day. 1 Thess. 4:3: **“This is the will of God, your sanctification.”**

Brothers and sisters, He wore a crown of thorns, was despised and rejected by men, laid down his life, became a curse for us. Why? So that we might be the most beautiful, precious, crown in the hand of God! And this was his joy.

Notice for just a moment, these things are sure! Look at vv. 6-9: **“On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: “I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored; but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.”** God has promised to make us beautiful. And all this beauty is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. For all his promises are YES in him.”

Application: A visible life of righteousness is the proof of sanctification. Jesus says, **“You will know a tree by its fruit.”** Brothers and sisters, God’s people are different, whether they’ve been saved one week or 50 years.

Application: The love of Christ compels us!

Application: Elders, as under shepherds we do the same for the flock. Acts 20:28 says, **“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”**

3. **The Joy of Christ to Receive His Reward.** Very quickly, notice the joy of Christ to receive his reward. Look at vv. 11-12: **“Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.” And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.”** Not only is it the great joy of Christ to save his people and make them beautiful, He also finds great joy to receive his reward. And as we’ve seen with the Father, it is to be with his people, his bride, the church.

I think of Is. 53:10-12: **“Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong . . .”**

Rev. 21:1-5 describes this scene. **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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 God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new . . .”**

Let me close with Heb. 12:1-3, “**let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.**”

Oh, the beauty of Christ! He saves us! He makes us beautiful, giving us to the Father as a crown. He receives his reward! For the joy set before Him!