

Appointed and Given

Book of Isaiah

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Bible Text: Isaiah 61:3

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Turn with me, once again, in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 61. This will be our third message taken right from these first three verses that we have here. So rich and so deep is the content of this particular portion and maybe even more so when we consider that this was the portion in Luke chapter four that our Lord read for the synagogue and that he interpreted as being fulfilled in their day, in their time. And so certainly a portion that pertains to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Let's read verses one through three and I want, particularly, us to consider verse three today and I want to speak with you on the subject of appointed and given. Think about what, what the Lord has appointed he gives, he accomplishes. In verse one of Isaiah 61 says:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.¹

We have heard that expression so said, so done. Sometimes we give that assurance to people when they ask us to do something and then something takes place out of control, then we have to go back and undo it. Say, "Well, I said, so said, but wasn't able to get it done." But the first thing I would have you to consider is how the God of the Bible the very one who has brought each of us here today and gathered us in this place, is the Lord. And what I can tell you without any uncertainty, without any shadow of doubt, based upon this Word that we hold in our hands is that what he purposes he accomplishes without fail. Were that not so there would have been no reason for us to even trust what Isaiah prophesied here with regard to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, because this was written many hundreds of years before Christ even came. And you think about those

¹ Isaiah 61:1-3.

years that came to pass between Isaiah prophesying this and the coming of Christ. Many kingdoms were raised and fell. In fact, many of the prophecies of this book had to do with Babylon and Israel being taken into Babylon even before Babylon became a world power. And from the time that Babylon was raised and fell to the next empire which was the Medes and the Persians and they were raised and fell, which gave way to the Greek Empire. Everybody hears about Alexander the Great. See, all of these things are written here in these prophets when we compare history looking back. And who would have ever thought that the Greek Empire, as strong as it was, certainly Alexander the Great never thought so. It says of him that after he had conquered all the places he could conquer he sat down and wept because there was no more place to conquer. And yet even his days were numbered and in the Lord's time he raised up the Roman Empire which was in power at the time that our Lord Jesus Christ was brought into this world and what we find here written in Isaiah 61:1-3, he is the anointed one. He is the one that was sent to preach good tidings unto the meek, sent to bind up the broken hearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives.

Natural minded Jews interpreted that to mean that when he came he would deliver them from the Roman Empire. But that kingdom that he came to establish was not an earthly kingdom. He said that. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight. So put it out of your mind that this kingdom that Christ came to establish was some sort of earthly kingdom. That has never been his purpose. But to save, to deliver, to claim liberty to captives and to bring them, translate them, as Paul writes to the Colossians into the kingdom of his dear Son, which is a spiritual kingdom... Earthly kingdoms come and go. We dare not put any confidence in any earthly kingdom. I have run into people all the time right now. Their whole view of the United States is being shaken. Well, it should have been shaken a long time ago. I don't know why they think that this nation was established to last forever. You know, when you think about the Roman Empire, when you think about Greece, who gives any consideration to these nations today?

And there is nothing that says that the Lord will refrain from returning for another thousand or a million years. Who knows. We are the ones that have created that in our minds, that somehow it is going to be in our {?} his elect for whom he paid the debt is brought into his true kingdom, that it go on forever until that time. I don't know whether we will live to see the total dismantling of the United States or not. We might in our lifetime. How long did it take for Rome to be brought down? And yet in all of that God is accomplishing his purpose. But one thing has never changed through it all is that he has had a people from eternity that he purposed to save for whom the Lord Jesus Christ did come and pay your debt and he is in the business right now by his Spirit of calling out every one of them wherever they are found in this world and this nation. Some, perhaps, yet to be born, that he will in his time draw to himself, because he said, "Of all that the Father has given me, I will not lose one. I will lose none."

That is the God that has gathered us here today to worship. You know, you wouldn't be here right now were it not for him directing and controlling all of this. And so such is the Lord. When he says here in verse three to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion and to give unto them beauty for ashes, that quite an undertaking. That is something that could

not have been said were it any sort of earthly ruler. Every earthly ruler, king, president, is set out to provide some sort of Utopia for the people and to make everybody happy and well. It hasn't happened yet. Nor will it.

But here the declaration is:

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise of the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD.”²

Christ said that to the Pharisees. He said, “Whatever the Lord has not planted shall be uprooted.”

Men put on a good front. They appear to be moral. They appear to be righteous in their own eyes. They promote themselves as being children of God. And yet they aren't. They only ones that are the Lord's are those that he has planted. The planting of the Lord, why? That he might be glorified. I dare say that the true people of God are more like those that, as you look out and you walk along you come across some off scour of society.

Do you ever sit and stare at some of these that walk up and down the street, see them out of their minds and you kind of in you mind, in you private think, boy, I am glad I am not them? And yet I stop and think spiritually, it is for such that the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to save. And the fact that I would even in my mind think that somehow I am better than that person shows the audacity of this depraved heart, that he would have to bring me low and cause me to see that those sinners that he came into this world to save, as Paul said, of whom I am chief, resembled what are described here as those that mourn, those that are ashes.

Think about ashes. Ashes giving them:

“...beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called the trees of righteousness.”³

In other words, a work that the Lord himself must do. Our problem is that we think that in our flesh that somehow we have got to fix ourselves up first in order to make ourselves acceptable to the Lord. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I told you the story before and I read this about a famous artist that saw one of these homeless men and wanted to capture what it was to be wretched, what it was to be in his state of poverty on a canvas. And so he invited him to come to his residence where he did his painting and he wanted him to come just as he was and so that he could paint him. And when the man showed up some while later and the artist answered the door, he didn't even recognize the individual. The individual thought, well, if he is going to paint

² Isaiah 61:3.

³ Ibid.

me, it must be that he wants me cleaned up. And so he shaved. He got a haircut. He went and borrowed a suit, a completely different man than the one that that artist had met walking down the street. And when he asked him who he was he said, “Well, I am the one that you asked to come here so that you could paint me. I figured I had better get myself fixed up.” And the man said, “No, that is now how I asked you to come, just as you are.” And I fear that in many ways that is... that describes the nature of our heart, those fig leaves. We still are about somehow coming to the Lord in some superficial manner trying to fix ourselves up and appear to him to be worth something.

The Lord describes here in verse three those that he saves. And it is not a pretty picture. When you see here of these that mourn, when you see them being described as nothing but ashes, who gives any thought to ashes? It is done. It is dead. There is no value. It is gone. Clean it up. And a spirit of heaviness, that reminds me of what our Lord said.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”⁴

Not the righteous, but sinners Jesus came to save. And so we see that it is just for such that the Lord has appointed not only salvation, but a Savior. And so I want us to consider this, the Lord’s appointments, what the Lord purposes he accomplishes without fail.

If you will just hold your finger here look in Isaiah 46. This is not something new. We have seen it throughout the Scripture. We have seen it here in this particular book of Isaiah. When you look at Isaiah chapter 46, beginning with verse eight.

“Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.”⁵

That is how we are before him, nothing but transgressors.

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.⁶

There are some today that have confused God’s purpose with the accomplishment of it. They say, “Well, if he purposed it, it was done in eternity.” No, he purposed it that it might be done in time. The salvation that we have in the Lord is yes a salvation that God purposed in eternity, but was accomplished in time. As we just read, what he purposed, it shall be done. And that is what we see here in verse three.

⁴ Matthew 11:28.

⁵ Isaiah 46:8.

⁶ Isaiah 46:9-11.

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes.”⁷

It is forward looking, just like this whole portion is forward looking in its context. It is in connection with the person of Christ and his work of salvation that he came to finish there at the cross. So the first thing I want you to see here is the significance of the Lord’s appointments. It says to appoint. That word means to set. It means to ordain. It means to establish. It means to found. It means to constitute, to make, to determine, to fix. All throughout Scripture this original word is used and translated in these various ways. The first time we find it in Scripture where it says to appoint is actually in Genesis chapter two. If you will just look back there with me.

It is good to take words and run them through the Scriptures. And here in Genesis chapter two in verse eight. And notice the paradox. Because here it speaks of those that might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. And he is speaking there spiritually, but there is a parallel physical comparison here in verse eight.

“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”⁸

That word put is the same word that we have here appointed in Isaiah 61:3. Adam did not just evolve. He did not just appear in this garden, but he was put there by the Lord. He was formed of the Lord. He was made of the dust of the ground and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life it says in verse seven and he became, therefore, a living soul.

But just as Bob read for us in John 15 Christ said, “Without me you can do nothing. I am the vine. Ye are the branches.” A branch is passive. It only is dependent upon how it is attached to that vine. All of the sap, all of the juice, everything flows from that vine through that branch. Even the fruit is passive. The fruit doesn’t just decide I am going to become fruit.

When preachers wail on people they ought to be bearing fruit. Well, that is not our determining. Our determining is according to what God himself has determined and where he has placed us, where he has put us. So that is the sense here of this word.

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes.”⁹

In other words, if the Lord hadn't appointed there wouldn't be a one saved. Let us never forget that. And all of this, as it says at the end of verse three:

“... that he might be glorified.”¹⁰

⁷ Isaiah 61:3.

⁸ Genesis 2:8.

⁹ Isaiah 61:3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

This corresponds to what we find over in 1 Corinthians chapter one and verses 30 and 31. Just look there with me. And my mind always comes back to this portion, because this was a catalyst message that the Lord directed me to preach back in 1985, 86 up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. And the Lord had been pleased to arrest my heart not just a year or two earlier while I was still in Africa, showed me I was lost and revealed Christ in me. And when the congregation that had sent me out brought me back for a little furlough and gave me the opportunity to preach, I was burdened to stand and declare unto them the Christ that had been revealed to me and it didn't take a month for people to realize something had happened. And the chafing began. People began to take up sides. I say, not against me, but against God. And I can remember particularly as the Lord directed me to preach this message from 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 that afterward the pastor's wife ran down. I could hardly have even closed the meeting, went down and she came and stood in my face and said, "You did not preach the gospel."

And I said, "What do you mean I did not preach the gospel?"

And she said, "You did not preach man's part."

Isn't that amazing that people like to put that argument up there whenever they hear a strong message that is designed to give all the glory to God? They still want man to have his little wiggle room. But the Lord enabled me to answer. I said, "Well, you must not have been listening then, because in 1 Corinthians one and verse 31 it says,"

"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."¹¹

That is man's part. That is what those do in whom the Lord has shown something of his glory. Just like Isaiah said that he might be glorified. His appointing without no one will be saved. And that is what 1 Corinthians 1:30 declares.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus."¹²

You cannot claim to be in Christ Jesus apart from him having appointed it, him having done the work.

"...who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."¹³

That is foundational. Like one man said to me, "You are saying to me I can't be saved unless I believe in the sovereignty of God?"

Well, I don't know what god you profess to believe in, but there is only one God who is sovereign. And even the fact that you would question calls into question your profession. I don't mind telling people that. There is no one sinner that the Lord has ever appointed

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 1:31.

¹² 1 Corinthians 1:30.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.

to salvation and taught that is not brought flat on his face before a holy and sovereign God and his mouth shut, stopped before the Lord, shown that he is lost. That is the only way to get beauty out of ashes and that is the only way to point to them that mourn in Zion. See, that is contrary to religion that says all you have to do is walk an aisle and you see these people walking down there, blowing their bubble gum and smiling and carrying on. That is man's profession. But the Lord's is to bring us low at Christ's feet and to teach us of him. Made unto us wisdom, to see that I have no wisdom that he is all God's wisdom, made unto us righteousness to see that I have no righteousness but his. And made unto us sanctification. People walk around today talking about how sanctified they feel. And if you will just do this or that, you can be sanctified like I am. Well, all that is vanity. He is our sanctification. He sanctified himself that we might be sanctified in him. And redemption. You know, there is no redemption apart from what he accomplished and he set forth. And so that is what it is to be a point. And given back here in Isaiah 61.

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them...”¹⁴

So the second thing I want you to see here is the quality of those who have been appointed to this salvation which we see here. We see the significance of it. It is all of the Lord. But what of the quality of those? Well, they are described here as mourners in Zion. Zion here, as you read in the book of Hebrews is really a picture of the Church, those that the Lord came to save. And they are described here as mourning. Now, some of the commentators that you read talk about mourning over the declension of Zion at the time, mourning over the lack of love for God, et cetera, but I don't believe that the mourning that is described here has to do with those who look outside themselves and see what is going on out here and mourn. What this has to do with is a, as Christ described in Matthew chapter five:

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”¹⁵

Mourn in a sense of what I know and understand in here, mourn my own depravity, mourn my own sin, mourn my own worthlessness. And that is the difference, I believe, when God is pleased to do a work of grace between what he has revealed concerning me in here and what is going on out there. I hear people all the time talking about how bad the world is. I never hear them talking about how evil their own heart is. But when a man begins to talk about {?} shown it to be so, he doesn't have a whole lot to say about what is going on out there, because the intention is within here. And so I believe this is a description of those that the Lord has brought low. And when I describe how it is that the Lord arrested my heart, I use that term with purpose. It was like having a heart attack. It was like you are going along as if nothing is wrong, climbing the ladder and all of the sudden the Lord stops you in your tracks. And I tell people all the time. I had downed so-called doctrines of grace. I had that. In fact, I had been preaching them for seven years. I made a transformation in my mind from what I had been taught to what they called Calvinism or the doctrines of grace. I could define TULIP, total depravity, unlimited election, limited atonement, what they gave there, irresistible grace and perseverance of

¹⁴ Isaiah 61:3.

¹⁵ Matthew 5:4.

the saints. All of those things I had been preaching. But that is not salvation.

I will tell you the difference that it made and what it is to mourn was when the Lord taught me the depravity of my own heart, because it had been covered with the fig leaves of religion and professionalism. I will tell you the difference that it made was when the Lord showed me that it wasn't a doctrine of election, but it is the one in whose hands this poor sinner from eternity past had been put in the hands of a Savior. And suddenly as he taught me, it wasn't just trying to make sure that other people understood the design of Christ's death, that it was only for the elect. I used to just hammer home on that. You know, find somebody to argue with. But then to realize why me. Why should the Lord even shed his blood for a sinner such as I am? That is where the Lord brought it home and that is where the mourning in this heart began, when I began to see whether he died for anybody else or not. I was that sinner for whom he died. I was that sinner who needed his death. I was that sinner who needed his righteousness.

And I will tell you. When the Lord ever teaches you that you are lost, there is no darker hole, because to be lost... we talk about being lost, but eventually we find our way and we think, ok, I made it out. But to be lost to such a degree... and that is the appointing here. This is the appoint of which we are reading here. This is the quality of those that the Lord has appointed to salvation when he causes them to see what are ashes. I mean, that is something that has been completely destroyed. Nothing left. But that is who we are before him. And to see that it is for such that the Lord paid the debt.

I will tell you. If the Lord ever teaches that of you, you {?}. And I run into people that want to sit down and debate about these things, I kindly just say, "You know, that is now how the Lord has taught me," and walk away. It is better than to take things that are precious and as the Scripture say and pearls cast before the swine. That is all that you are doing. You are taking thing that we don't even know even pertain to anybody else. All I can testify to is how it pertains to this heart, this soul.

And so these are the ones that were appointed to salvation.

But what are the effects? Let's just look at that here. What are the effects of this appointing? Well, we see that in Isaiah 61 and verse three. And I have listed here 10. He speaks there of the giving them that mourn beauty for ashes. Again, you stop and think: What beauty is he describing there? Well, again, it is a spiritual beauty. When the Lord is pleased to do a work you wake up the next day and look in the mirror, you are the same old person. And it doesn't take long to figure that out. Just go through the day a little bit and you find out there isn't really a whole lot about Ken Wimer that has changed here, but the beauty is in how God himself looks upon such a sinner. And there, again, we see the beauty of what it is to be redeemed. We see the beauty of what it is to be one of these that the Lord has appointed to salvation. All the beauty is in him. It is in Christ. He is the beauty.

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes."¹⁶

¹⁶ Ibid.

That is substitution. When you use the word for in the place of, ashes describe to what? Beauty describes who he is. And so it is Christ in my place. That is the beauty. But then, secondly, you see here the oil of joy for mourning. What is the oil in Scripture? Well, that is the Spirit of God. If the Lord has ever shown you that you are lost, it is in order that you might see the one who finds lost sinners. That is Christ. He is the shepherd. And so the oil of joy, the spirit of joy, you know, where the Spirit of God reveals Christ in the heart there is a joy. There is a rejoicing. It is like in the parable of the lost coin, the parable of the lost sheep and the parable of the lost son in Luke 15. The common denominator in all three of those parables is the joy of having been found or finding that which was lost. It wasn't the son that found the father. It wasn't the coin that found the owner. It wasn't the sheep that found the shepherd. They were found of their owner.

And so the appointing here, the oil of joy is that rejoicing when in that appointed time the Lord was pleased by his Spirit, the oil representing the Spirit revealing Christ in the heart.

And then, thirdly, you see here the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. There is a garment which is given unto those that the Lord has appointed to salvation. Herein is the effect of this salvation appointed. The clothing and there is a garment with which he clothes our nakedness and that garment is none other than that righteousness which the Lord Jesus Christ worked out. And God imputed, once for all, to the account, the spiritual account of everyone for whom he died. And it is a garment of praise. Not self praise. If you are the Lord, you have no reason to give yourself any glory. You don't have any righteousness in yourself. But this righteousness is of the Lord. So it is a garment of praise. It is what we wear, the putting on of Christ, which is to the praise and honor and glory of God alone. Such is the testimony of those that the Lord has saved.

You know, the Scriptures say that out of the mouth, out of the heart the mouth speaks. I think we give people far too much room whenever they begin to speak of their profession and it all begins with I. I this and I that and I did this and I did that and I stop them at that particular point. I say, "Something is not right about the way you are describing as compared to what I find here in the Scriptures, because the garment of praise doesn't take any credit. That gathering that the Lord delivered when they came and found him sitting fully clothed and in his right mind, we don't find him telling people how he came to Jesus and how he was able to work this thing out and how he did what he was supposed to. No. All the praise and honor and glory went to Christ alone. That is the garment of praise and that is the testimony of those that have been appointed to salvation.

Then you see, again, here in verse three it says:

"...that they might be called trees of righteousness."¹⁷

Trees that have life, trees that have been planted, trees whose root is in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, trees whose sap, as I mentioned the branches, the sap is the Spirit. The sap is the grace of God that enlivens these trees. The fruit is the fruit of his work. Do you

¹⁷ Ibid.

realize that when Christ paid the debt he paid the debt in order to give? Because that is the sense here, to appoint unto them and to give unto them. I can't even claim repentance is coming from me.

I have heard that kind of preaching before. Well, God does his part, but your part is to repent. Your part is to believe. I couldn't repent. I couldn't believe except that even that were appointed to me and given unto me. And that is what Christ died in order to give.

I remember reading some time again a preacher who said, "Even if you were to take a lost, dead sinner and lay him right at salvation's door with nothing else to do but to enter in, he couldn't do it. He has to be carried all the way."

That is what we see here that they might be called trees of righteousness, not any righteousness of their own, but righteousness given, appointed to them and given to them, imputed to them because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, lest there be any doubt it says:

"...the planting of the LORD."¹⁸

That is whose planting it is. The planting of the Lord. And the sum of it is right there.

"... that he might be glorified."¹⁹

In every way he gets the glory. He has appointed me to salvation that all the glory belongs unto him. He has purposed to glorify himself and this work and he does if he get all the glory.

Well, Lord willing, we will continue down through this portion. I pray that the Lord will bless this to our hearing today.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.