

The Year of the LORD's Favour

Isaiah 61:1-7; Luke 3:21-33; 4:14-21 and 2 Cor. 6:1-2

1. Happy New Year

Do you remember the episode in Seinfeld, 'Happy Festivus' ... 'The festivus for the rest of us'? Seinfeld was the show about nothing and often that's what the annual greetings are about. It's what you say—isn't it? It's not that we don't mean it, and a big 'Thank you' to those who greeted us, but surely we are wise enough to know that all the 'wishes' in the world cannot accomplish anything certain or eternal.

2. The Year of the LORD's favour: Isaiah 61:1-7

'This is almost certainly an allusion to the Year of Jubilee as described in the law of Moses. Every fiftieth year was to be proclaimed a year of release in which debts were cancelled, slaves were freed and people who had been forced to sell their family property because of poverty received it back again.' (Barry Webb)

This Jubilee, far from being just economic relief, will result in a massive transforming revival. **Isa 61:2c** 'to comfort all who mourn' to **v. 4** end, then **v. 7b** 'everlasting joy shall be theirs'.

But it is also 'a day of vengeance of our God'. There can be no revival without judgment. (This is the thrust of Isa 53 which Steven preached on a couple of weeks ago.) Whilever there is unforgiven sin there can be no revival; whilever evil is not judged there is no revival. There is no grace without the Cross. And where there is no response to grace we cannot know this revival: God's grace trains us, **Titus 2:11-14**.

3. *Today* this has been fulfilled in your hearing: Luke 3:21-33; 4:14-21

Jesus was the man of the Spirit. His baptism, then his temptation, then his action to redeem. His quote was not just knowing Bible verses, but a declaration! And as such it was now being done! Today! Now!

4. *Now* is the Day of Salvation: 2 Cor. 6:1-2

Because 'God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself'. 'You have been bought with a price.' It has all been accomplished! What love!

So I *urge* you, do not receive the grace of God in vain. I urge! I implore! Cry out! Shout! Some will complain if *I* shout, but let me ask you, 'What do *you* have to shout about?' Does God's grace not grip you and transform you?

Someone once asked George Whitfield why he wept when he preached; his reply was 'If you will not weep for your sins, I will!'

Transforming revival has come, and it has come through the blood of the Savior on the cross for you. Watch out lest you write down what the preacher says rather than cry out to God for his redeeming, reviving work to burn in your bones. Lest because we know the tune we know the reality!

Why should the great revival *not* be known by and spread through us?