

SERVICE TRANSCRIPT JULY 12TH 2020

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Heavenly Father we offer you our worship of promise, your saving grace brought people from captivity into a land of promise, your enduring love still sets us free and leads us from places of captivity into a promise of peace, forgiveness and eternal life. We meet as your light in what sometimes seems like a dark world, and pray that through our words and our lives others might be drawn into your family, and accept you as their Saviour and Lord – Amen

"For this is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we should lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

1 John 3:16

Lord God almighty we carry your love and your word into this world.

May Your Holy Spirit inspire our words.

We have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.

May your true love empower our deeds.

Heavenly Father, in this short time together this morning, open our eyes and ears to see your Love and vision for this world and our place within it. Teach us to listen to your word, to receive your spirit of truth and love, to hear our prayers and enable us to serve you wherever you might take us, thank you that you are unchanging and that your love is always true, protect and guide our every footsteps during these times Lord, in your name be praise and glory. Amen

Intercessory Prayers

Lean on Me

Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28. We live in a time of much uncertainty that fills even God's people with concern and worry about the future. Our Lord says, "come to me, lean on me. Let me take the burden from you . I will give you rest.

Father, as we face a world of such uncertainty. Uncertainty about health, uncertainty about jobs, about how the world is changing, we lean on You. Father, move in our community, our nation and in our world, that men and women may turn to you afresh. As we personally face uncertainty, may we trust You; our times are in Your hands because we follow Jesus. We are Your people and You our God. Give us strength by Your Spirit to do Your will. We ask this in Jesus' name
Amen

Church

As you will know, the Government has set out guidelines that will enable us to begin worship at the church again. The rules are demanding and stringent and worship will be

very different to what we are used to: spaced out around the building, no singing, no after service refreshments, one way systems, possibly masks. All very strange. Let's pray for the Church Meeting on Tuesday as we make decisions necessary to re-open.

Father, thank you we now have an opportunity to start using our church building again. As we discuss this as a church on Tuesday, may You give us all clarity as to the way ahead in the short term. As we restart activities, help us to grow the ministries that will build the church, and be prepared to close others, and to use our experiences of lockdown to help shape the ministry and mission of the church.

May we be a people who place our trust wholly in You as we lean on You.

We ask this in Jesus' name

Amen.

Fellowship

Father, we lift the church fellowship before you. We know that there are many concerned by their health situation, whether it's because they need to protect themselves from coronavirus, or whether they have other underlying problems, we pray that You will help them to decide how much they need to get out and about and what they need to do to get the balance between staying healthy and living life.

Reminding ourselves of the current teaching series, we bring those before you in the church that have had their hearts broken, by the loss of a loved one, by family breakup or by losing something important to them. Be close to them we pray and turn their mourning into gladness; change their spirit of despair into gladness and praise. Give them the freedom to live as the people of God, exploring new and different things as Your Spirit directs.. Help them to lean on You.

We ask this in Jesus' name

Amen

Sermon: Get out of Jail free

Reading: Isaiah 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,

because the Lord has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,

to proclaim freedom for the captives

and release from darkness for the prisoners,

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour

and the day of vengeance of our God,

to comfort all who mourn,

3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion—

to bestow on them a crown of beauty

instead of ashes,

the oil of joy

instead of mourning,

and a garment of praise

instead of a spirit of despair.

GET OUT OF JAIL CARD

If you've ever played monopoly, you'll recognise this card. It entitles the holder to escape from jail without paying a large amount of monopoly money to do so. It's the famous get out of jail free card.

PRISON Imprisonment can be personally costly. It's intended to be. If you do the crime, you do the time. And it costs months, years of your life. Sadly there are those in many parts of the world who are falsely imprisoned, including those jailed because they are Christians.

Imprisonment involves a loss of liberty. The prisoner is no longer free: a captive under the power and control of another. In Britain, prisons are humane compared to what they are like in other countries. OVERSEAS PRISON In some countries, beatings and torture are commonplace, cells may be filthy and overcrowded, disease rife.

CAPTIVES TAKEN FROM JERUSALEM We have been exploring the impact of the destruction of Judah on the nation as everything the Jews held dear was removed from them and for many that included their liberty. They were victims of injustice and if that didn't involve slavery or imprisonment, the remaining people were trapped in poverty in the remains of the land. It was a case of systematic brutality by their conquerors. They were no longer free in the way they should be.

The Anointed One, the Messiah wasn't just going to be good news to the downtrodden and bind up the wounds of the broken hearted, he was going to be a liberator. We've already seen that in part when we looked at freeing captives from slavery a few weeks ago. We read in verse 1 how he will also bring the release from darkness for the prisoners – to bring them out of their dark cells or dungeons (NIV). VERSE

Although the Exiles got their freedom eventually, they realised that the prophecies in the OT also looked forward to the time in the future when the Messiah would come, establish His kingdom and not just draw the Jews to himself, but all nations too. It's very much the theme in the latter part of Isaiah.

They saw a spiritual narrative too in what the Messiah was going to do, in addition to the literal interpretation that the Exiles would have looked for, Isaiah is a poetic book and they realised that the Messiah was going to liberate people from spiritual darkness, spiritual poverty, as well as those trapped in despair, and to bring freedom to those who are controlled and abused by others.

Of course, we have applied the stuff to our generation in previous weeks. Why? Because we're followers of Jesus, the Messiah. What I've avoided up until now is reference to Luke chapter 4 where Jesus visits the synagogue and introduces himself as Messiah using Isaiah 61 verses 1 and 2. The time has come! So let's see what happened.

LUKE 4 from Jesus film

J F BACKGROUND The Jesus film reflects Luke's text reasonably accurately, but does leave one or two important bits out in the latter part of the story as it does not really go into why the citizens of Nazareth were so angry with Him that they wanted to murder Him! That's for another day.

What the filmmakers got almost right, was Jesus' rendition of the passage from Isaiah. Let's have a read of it from the NIV.

VERSES

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me
 to proclaim good news to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
 and recovery of sight for the blind,
 to set the oppressed free,
 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

At that point he stops reading the passage in full flight as it were, rolls up the scroll and gives it to the attendant. Jesus used this text to present Himself as the Messiah, the promised King. It's a key theme in Luke's Gospel; that Jesus was proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God which he spoke of in words and parables. And in Nazareth, Jesus uses OT prophecy to emphasise what the coming Kingdom was about. It did indeed involve the spiritual and the literal as the OT prophecies suggested.

SMASHED GLASS

You may remember this picture from last week. However the glass is broken, its origin is a single strike. All the things that cause injustice and brokenness in this world have their source in one thing; sin. Everything wrong in the world, in my life, in your life all comes down sin, our own sin and the sin of others. The Spirit anointed the Messiah and sent Him out to deal with it, not for the Jews alone, but for everyone, for the nation. That is the message of Jesus and of Luke and the rest of the NT.

Sin is at the root of poverty and the poverty trap – the Messiah is good news to the poor
 Sin is at the root of captivity to despair in our tragedies, losses, health problems – the Messiah frees us from the hold they have on us.

Sin is what imprisons us in bad relationships, gives us poor judgement, blinds us to spiritual realities – the Messiah brings truth.

Most of all the Messiah frees us from sin, heals us and sends us out in freedom to build His kingdom. He's our get out of jail free card.

By now, some of you will have heard Isaiah 61:1-3 so many times that you realise, what Jesus read in Nazareth is slightly different to our OT. Is it a misquote or mistake as some say? No. As we unpack it we see that Jesus is presenting here the freedom He brings through the Spirit – our get out of jail free card. So here's the differences:

Isaiah 61	Luke 4
The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me	The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor	to proclaim good news to the poor
He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted	
to proclaim freedom for the captives	He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and release from darkness for the prisoners	and recovery of sight for the blind
	to set the oppressed free
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour	to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour

No brokenhearted phrase in Luke

Release of the prisoners from darkness becomes recovery of sight for the blind

The addition of to set the oppressed free

Why?

Let's start with the recovery of sight to the blind. After the Exile there were few Jewish prisoners unjustly held by enemies in the centuries before Jesus. The Jews already were considering how the phrase proclaim freedom for the captives could be understood and they looked in Isaiah and found this said of the Messiah in chapter 42

"I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,
to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

The elements are here. The captives imprisoned being freed from darkness. But we can see from the context that the language is figurative – this is poetry. The Messiah is a light to the Gentiles, opening eyes that are spiritually blind and freeing them from the captivity of sin and the darkness of ignorance. That's how the Jews saw it. And that is of course what Jesus still does: he opens spiritual eyes so that people understand that they are in spiritual darkness and lost without Him.

There's more there but that's the gist. We also know from other Jewish writings of this period that there was an expectation that the Messiah would literally open the eyes of the blind which harked back to Isaiah 42. So if someone came along claiming to be the Messiah, then they expected Him to make the blind see. Read on in Luke's Gospel and we find Jesus could do that.

Let's look at the other change. The old pop song says "what became of the broken-hearted." What indeed in Luke 4! It is missing in the most reliable manuscripts and that bothered some manuscript producers so they put it back. Older translations like the Authorised/King James Version has it in but all modern translations don't. It doesn't belong. Jesus never said it.

That's because he subbed it with the "extra" phrase in Luke 4. He substitutes *binds up the broken-hearted* with *set the oppressed free*. The substituted phrase actually comes from Isaiah 58:6 "*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?*"

It sounds different because most English translators keep the Isaiah 58 context. But we know this is a substitute phrase for he *binds up the broken-hearted* and when we look at it literally in Greek, it actually reads like this "*To send the wounded away in freedom.*" If you remember from last week, the broken-hearted are those who have suffered loss – for Jews in Isaiah's time it was loss of freedom, homes, Temple, land, but it's context then as now is personal loss – bereavement, family breakup, loss in love, loss of precious things, loss of our health. They break us, they bruise us, they wound us, they make us captive, they oppress us – and we may cease to function properly in society, emotionally, and spiritually.

The Greek word for the oppressed in Luke's Gospel is *thrauō* which means to crush or to bruise (which is the old Authorised Version translation) and can be used both in the context of oppression or also in the context of wounding.

The context in Isaiah 58 would be oppression, but the context Jesus uses it in Luke as a substitute for broken-hearted has to be in terms of bruising or wounding. In fact, that's how the Authorised/King James version translates it.

I find this a much more encouraging way of describing what Jesus brings to those damaged and broken by loss, whether that be a bereavement, family breakup, loss of something precious. His action in our lives isn't to put a few bandages on, give us a bit of first aid. He brings freedom. We often can't change the loss we have suffered, but we don't have to be shackled by it, because Jesus has new things for us to do in His kingdom. If you feel shackled by your loss this morning, ask the Spirit to release you and take you out of the darkness into the light. Leave your grief and despair with Him. Lean on Him as we considered earlier.

If you have been wounded by someone who is still around, again, ask the Spirit to release your shackles, give the situation to Him, lean on Him, rest in Him and allow Him to deal with it and guide you in it, and get on with what God wants you to do.

If you are shackled by anything else – debt, poverty, addiction, bad relationship – whatever you are captive to; allow the Spirit to free you. There is no spiritual prison that Jesus can't free you from. Just pray.

Finally, the interesting thing Jesus did when paraphrasing the broken-hearted phrase with the one from Isaiah 58 was that he dropped it down the list. In doing so, it reads in a different context too. Let me give you the phrase again, but this time with next one.

*To send the wounded away in freedom,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*

I don't know if you realise this, but there was no punctuation, paragraph brakes, sentences (or small letters) in NT Greek. Context helped the reader understand what was written.

So it's equivalent in English is this TO SEND THE WOUNDED AWAY IN FREEDOM TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOUR

Let's put the small letters in to make it readable.

To send the wounded away in freedom to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour

Jesus frees men and women from their prisons caused by sin, in order to complete His purpose – to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. Later in Luke's Gospel Jesus sent His disciples out to do just that, to proclaim the coming kingdom.

That's what we do too. How? By telling our story of How Jesus has freed us from sin, freed us from things that chained us up in life; things that chain others. How we've become free.

As I close, I'm going to pray. Jesus understands our weaknesses, our pain, our sense of despair, our being trapped. He is anointed as the One who brings freedom for those blinded by sin, wounded by life, broken and bruised by loss. Allow His Holy Spirit to free you from those chains, and to begin the process of leading you out to be the man and woman of God He wants you to be.

Prayer:

Thank you Jesus that you desire to work in my life. Thank you that You died for my sins, in order to bring freedom into my life, that I may be released from the damage that has been caused, from the prisons that I find myself in. Holy Spirit, please free me and start a work in my life that will take me from brokenness to freedom. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father thank you for meeting with us this morning, and for delivering your Word. Lord may each of us in this place have been touched by your love through the songs and the preaching and may we each take to heart the Word we have listened too. Lord we pray that those seeking an answer received it, and that those who needed a special touch were granted that touch. Bless each of us and keep us safe until we can safely come together again in your place of worship, In Jesus name- Amen.

For Reflection & Discussion*Read Isaiah 42:5-7*

1. These are addressed to the Servant (Messiah) mentioned in verse 1. How does this passage describe the scope of the Servant/Messiah's commission.
2. To what extent may this passage be literal or figurative? Light and darkness and the blind seeing, are important themes in the NT. Try and think of verses that illustrate this. Here are a few to ponder on. John 1:5, 8:12, 1 John 1:5, 7, Eph 5:8, 2 Cor 4:6, Matt:5-14-16, 2 Cor 4:4, John 9:1-5

Read Luke 4:18-19

3. Jesus substituted a phrase about healing the broken-hearted for one about making free those oppressed/wounded/bruised. Is freedom more important than healing?
4. "(Jesus) is anointed as the One who brings freedom for those blinded by sin, wounded by life, broken and bruised by loss." How might freedom make a difference to difficult situations we currently find ourselves in.