**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; 2To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3To 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.”**

Tonight, we’re back in Isaiah. 700 years before Jesus, Isaiah prophesied with incredible accuracy the coming of our Savior. But I don’t want us to think that Isaiah is the only Old Testament book prophesying the Savior. From Genesis to Malachi and every book in between, studying the Old Testament gives us insights and confirmations, grows our confidence that Jesus is exactly Who He claims to be. We can be confident in His identity and we can be confident in our identity in Him. How exciting that we have no doubts! We can throw our full faith on the Son of God… not blind faith, but with our eyes wide open with thousands of years of evidence in God’s Word.

In our scripture tonight, Isaiah gives us three verses describing the coming Messiah. Jesus Himself confirms that He is the fulfillment of this scripture in Luke 4:16-22 when we read - **16**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. **17**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: **18**“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; **19**To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” 20 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. 21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” 22 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?” It doesn’t get any clearer than that. When Jesus confirms His identity using the very verses of Isaiah that we are studying tonight, we can believe! In verse 21, He says – Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. Verse 20 tells us that all eyes were fixed on Him – the people were mesmerized – Jesus spoke with an authority that was not like any they’d heard. Mark 1:22 says - And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Can’t you imagine that they are astonished here as well, hearing that He is the fulfillment, but then in verse 22, we see that they marveled at His gracious words, but then the doubts come - isn’t this Joseph’s son? We see later in Luke 4 that this doubt causes them to seek to kill Him.

But, let’s go back to verse 1 - we read - “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. Notice that the Trinity is in full view here – The Holy Spirit of the Lord God is upon the Son – three in One. Matthew 3:16 confirms the Holy Spirit is upon Jesus - When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. In the Beatitudes, Jesus proclaims the poor in Spirit blessed – theirs is the Kingdom of God, blessed are those who hunger, they shall be filled. We know Jesus to be a healer of the brokenhearted. He sets those in slavery to sin free and opens the prisons we’ve built for ourselves through our sin and rebellion. He tore the veil of the Temple and ended the separation from God for all people who will call upon Jesus Name and Believe.

Verse 2 says - To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn. Jesus opened the age of salvation with His coming. The gates of Heaven were not open until Jesus opened them. In the Beatitudes, found in Luke 6, Jesus blesses those who weep, who mourn, for they shall laugh and He continues that those who laugh now will mourn. We have no reason to weep now. Our reward awaits. The woes of this world will not affect us when we reach our eternal Home. Peter says, in 1 Peter 1:6, In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials. Our short sufferings are nothing when compared with the eternity of worship to come. Notice in Luke 4, Jesus reads only through the part that says “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Jesus is bringing the Gospel, He’s opening the door, He’s extending the opportunity for our salvation. There is a time this will be open and then it will close… for eternity. Those who refuse, who turn their back on God, who refuse the Son, will face the day of vengeance. In Revelation 19:11 we see Jesus coming and in Verse 20 we see the beast and those who support him cast into the lake of fire. No one knows when the judgement will come, not even the Son, but we can rest assured, the day of vengeance will come as surely as Christ came.

In verse 3, 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. Ashes on the head was a sign of mourning for the sin you committed. Through Christ’s offer of Grace to Salvation, we need not mourn in ashes. We need only accept the free gift of His forgiveness. He took our sin that we might have righteousness… He didn’t take some of our sin… He took all of it… forever. Giving us joy in exchange for mourning. When we grasp the depth of the gift He’s given us, we have no choice but to rejoice in the forgiveness He’s given. He’s given the garment of praise for our spirit of heaviness… this is a beautiful description! What a beautiful description. That we may be called trees of righteousness - we have been grafted into the Tree that springs from the Root of Jesse. We will one day stand in God’s presence because of Jesus’ work. And, in all of this, everything must lead us to glorify God with all our heart, mind, and soul.

Isaiah provided us another glorious glimpse of our Savior long before He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem. How wonderful that His Grace makes our presence with God possible. How awesome that our God sent His love letter to His children long before Jesus came, and He has sustained that love letter to us so we might read and believe even tonight.