

## Articles and Sermons :: Three Powerful Exhortations from Isaiah by Zac Poonen

### Three Powerful Exhortations from Isaiah by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2018/1/5 15:35

Be more ready to bless the others than judge them: Isaiah 61:1-2 is a prophetic reference to Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel of deliverance to others. This is the passage of Scripture that Jesus turned to when He preached His first sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth. Notice that Jesus stopped with proclaiming "the favourable year of the Lord" and did not proclaim "the day of vengeance of God" for that day had not yet come (compare v.2 with Luke.4:19). Notice also the proportion of God's favour in relation to His judgment. It is a whole year of favour as opposed to just a single day of judgment. That is a proportion of 365:1 in favour of grace. God is trying to show us here that He would much rather show us favour than judge us. Our attitude to others should also be the same. We should be 365 times more ready to bless others and to be gracious to them than to judge them. God has come to take away all heaviness from our lives and to replace it with a spirit of praise (v.3). Verse 10 speaks of God clothing us with the righteousness of Christ and making us the bride of Christ. What a blessed way to live.

Exchange your strength with Divine strength: Isaiah 40:29-31 teaches that Almighty God Whom we worship and serve will give us strength when we are weak. When we lack might, He will give us power. He will give us health and strength to serve Him. Even young people may grow weary and tired and vigorous young men may get exhausted in trying to serve the Lord. But those who wait on the Lord, no matter what their age, will gain new strength. What a wonderful promise! And when young people are collapsing, these older men "who wait on the Lord will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and won't get tired. They will walk and they will never become weary". I want to encourage everyone to learn to wait upon the Lord in simple trust for all your needs. You will gain new strength, as this verse says. Or as another translation puts it: "Those who wait on the Lord will exchange their strength". That means that we give our human strength to the Lord and He gives us His Divine strength in exchange! Hallelujah!! It is wonderful to exchange everything we have with the Lord. Jesus told the Father, "All that I have is Yours, Father. And all that You have is Mine" (John.17:10,11). In the Lord's service you need the Lord's strength to see you through. All those who serve the Lord really need to trust the Lord to give supernatural strength from above, His resurrection power - not only in our spirit but in our bodies too. Then we will bear fruit for Him even in old age (Psalm.92:14).

Let the glory of the Lord be revealed in you: Isaiah 40:3 has four applications for us. First of all, "the valleys must be lifted up" (v.4). There is no place for discouragement and depression under the new covenant. We are never to say, "I am good for nothing, I am useless." God is a God of encouragement. He has lifted us up in Christ and given us dignity. We don't have to live in the dumps - in the valleys "anymore". We are children of the King and He lifts our heads up. Secondly, "the mountains must be brought low" (v.4). All pride in us must be brought down. Thirdly, "the rough places must become smooth". There is a lot of coarseness, rudeness and roughness in our lives. These have to be smoothed out and we have to become gracious and gentle. Fourthly, the crooked paths must become straight (This is how this verse is quoted in Luke 3:5). There are crooked areas in our lives, such as unrighteousness in money matters. All of that has to be made straight. This is what true repentance involves - the valleys being lifted up, the mountains being brought down, the rough places made smooth, and the crooked paths made straight. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed in our flesh. In our flesh, others will see the glory of Jesus Christ.