

The High Price of Freedom

When Jesus stood in the temple reading the passage from Isaiah 61 (as stated in Luke 4:18-19 *at right*), He was referring to himself as the Messiah (“the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me”) and to the rest of the Trinity (Holy Spirit and God as “Lord”) as well.

His mission involved much more than paying the price for our sins and securing us a place in heaven. He died for our freedom in this life on earth!

Jesus came to . . .

Preach the gospel (good news) to the poor

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.

Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, and your wages for *what* does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good,
and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and
your soul shall live . . .” (Isaiah 55:1-3) NKJV

Have you ever been homeless, flat broke or sick from hunger? How does it feel when someone offers you a place to stay, a home-cooked meal, and help with some overdue bills? Have you ever had someone to pay in full a debt you were unable to pay? Do you remember the relief, gratitude and joy that overwhelmed you?

Perhaps you haven’t struggled financially, but you know what it means to be “poor in spirit.” You’ve been beaten down emotionally to the point where you don’t feel worthy to even exist or be loved. You feel invisible and devalued, disrespected and undesirable. You retreat to a safe place within yourself so you won’t ever be hurt again.

Jesus came to give you hope! With a gentle touch, He will lift up your head to look into His compassionate eyes where you will see the reflection of yourself—the one He loves! He will embrace you in His arms when you are feeling lonely, and hold you in the night when you are afraid.

He will whisper into your ears the good news of the gospel that says you don’t have to be pretty or perfect or deserving of God’s love—you just have to be willing to give Him your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and let Him love you like no one else can ever do.

Heal the brokenhearted

What is breaking your heart? Are you grieving over the loss of a marriage? Actress Jane Fonda’s regret is that she will never be able to celebrate a 50th wedding anniversary. Many of you who have suffered the trauma of divorce will understand her pain.

Is your heart broken because of wasted years and foolish choices?

Time does not heal all wounds. Jesus is the only one who can restore, redeem, and renew your heart. Instead of offering you an anesthetic to numb the pain, He provides a complete makeover from the inside out if you will trust Him to wield the scalpel of truth held by the hand of grace. “*When we are laid bare before Him, we can trust Him to bring healing*

medicine.” (Beth Moore)

What hurts are you clutching that you need to place in His hands?

Proclaim liberty to the captives

Are you suffering in bondage to another person, an addiction, fear, or a spiritual dictator? Are you in captivity to Satan’s lies that say that you must remain in an abusive marriage and “suffer for Jesus,” or that you must submit to evil because wives are commanded to submit to their husbands.

Jesus came to free those who are captive to the law, and bound by legalism and narrow thinking. He provides a new way through grace, mercy, and truth where you can be forgiven and set free to become the person He created you to be—to enjoy abundant life here and now in spite of circumstances around you.

How different would you be if you were truly free to express your own opinions, make choices to love freely, and develop the creative gifts God has placed within you?

Recovery of sight to the blind

Blindness is not just a physical malady—it can also cripple you spiritually and emotionally.

Are you living in denial about verbal or physical abuse occurring in your home? Is it easier to blame others or God for your situation than to take a good look at yourself to identify areas of weakness that may be contributing to the dysfunction in your home?

“Search me, O God . . . and see if there is any wicked way in me.” Psalm 139:23-24

Set at liberty those who are oppressed

What or who is holding you back or suppressing your identity and creativity? It could be a parent, a spouse, or a legalistic church. Why are you giving them the power to stifle and define you when Christ gave His life to set you free from suffocating oppression and bondage to sin.

You are free in Christ—it’s time to live! *“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”* (Galatians 5:1 NAS)

Here is John Eldridge’s translation of Isaiah 61:1 in *Waking the Dead*:

“God has sent me on a mission.
I have some great news for you.
God has sent me to restore and release something,
And that something is *you*.
I am here to give you back your heart and set you free.”