

Parts 1 & 2

Introduction

- Servant part of book vs Anointed Conqueror part of book
 - we the church stand at 56:1: looking back to once and for all redemption at Calvary (52:13-53:12), yet still awaiting a final divine act which will rescue the church from sin, failure and opposition, to the coming of that salvation, that reign of righteousness!
 - central to the vision is the person of the Anointed One,
- Four songs, matching the four servant songs, though less well known as distinct entities.
 - they parallel the four servant songs - related themes...
 - but in the new context of redemption won, heaven anticipated!

Exposition

(59:21) "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever," says the LORD.

- In Isaiah **covenant** has only been mentioned in connection with servant so far.
 - implication is that God's covenant is **mediated through the servant**
 - and now here the covenant is connected to the anointed conqueror, the one who (like the servant) has the Spirit on him and the Lord's words in his mouth
- Notice the covenant **is**, not **will be** as it was in 42:6 and 49:8
 - the covenant has been made, effected, put into place;
 - now it will **not depart** from the anointed one, **or from his children!**
- that's us!!!
- Covenant is a kind of formalised relationship, a promise underlying a stated way of relating:
 - I will and you will.... God's covenant's are, in a sense, the promise of security rather than fickleness
- **So:**
 - covenant now in place, won by servant's suffering;
 - this has opened us into a situation where servant can now be describe as conqueror, one who will not be defeated;
 - and this covenant is eternal

(61:1) The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach 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,

- Second song, as second servant song, is auto-biographical (cf 49:1-6)
 - quoted by Jesus in Luke 4
 - common theme with that 2nd servant song is transformation (may have been forgiven for thinking of this passage as we read the earlier one, prisoners being released from prison etc!)
 - freedom for captives - release from darkness for prisoners - binding up of the broken hearted
 - and again, the presence of the Spirit of God and the Word of God
- **Bind up/bandage** - words are suggestive of personal care, not a kind of magic wand, make everyone better kind of thing!
- **Broken heart** - can be any kind of human breakdown, from emotional trauma to conviction of sin
- **Proclaim freedom** - especially with close connection in v.2a of **year of the Lord's favour** - very suggestive of the year of jubilee
 - elaborate on Jubilee... freedom for slaves, rest from labours, blessing

- Thus **good news** embraces personal renewal and restoration, release from restrictions imposed by people, and rectification of circumstances

(61:2) to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

- What is to come is both **year (long)** of favour and **day (short)** of wrath/vengeance
- Yet the thought in the song as a whole falls back to favour:
 - the comfort for those who mourn....
- the primary thought, though, is comfort for those who mourn over **sin**.
 - *do we mourn over sin?*
- Why did Jesus stop at favour? (Was he being selective!?!)
 - because his work in his first coming was limited to that;
 - (John 12:47) For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it
 - but Jesus is coming again, and it seems to be that Isaiah is here referring to the whole of the Messiah's work, his bringing salvation and his role as judge;
 - in terms of timing, Jesus separates them into his first and second comings...

(61:3) and provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

- Penitence brings transformation!
 - grieve... (for sin)... crown of beauty, etc
- In the Hebrew, words are: **peer** (head-dress, crown) and **eper** (ashes), and what we have translated as **instead of** carries the connotation **exact equivalent, substitution**
 - so sense is that which was bad is exactly replaced by that which is wonderful and beautiful through the transformation the anointed one brings for those who grieve for sin.
- Jesus' work of salvation transforms, especially sin to righteousness
- **Garment** - whole big cloak thing, all enveloping - our praise will envelope all of our lives, cover every aspect of who we are
 - contrast with **despair** - that which is dull and listless, compare with the **dimly burning wick** that the servant would not snuff out!
 - so, transformed from dull and listless, not snuffed out, into praise!

Conclusion

- Glorious confidence in the covenant God has made with us, mediated through Jesus
- Sense of the transformation that comes through this anointed conqueror, through Jesus, as we mourn for our sin.
- Do we **mourn** for sin?
 - or do we **live with** sin....?
- Are we transformed from despair to praise, not so much necessarily in our external circumstances, but also in our response to things, in our inner life?
 - pray God we will be!