

The Year of the Lord's Favour

- CCC "Deciding on Action" workshop talk

Introduction

- Manifestos in political life...
 - what we will do... honest!
- Passage Jesus' quoted at start of his earthly ministry
 - what he was about... "the Nazareth Manifesto"
- In Bible times, when paper was not cheap and reading was difficult, they tended to quote Scriptures differently
 - typically people had large chunks memorised
 - when you quoted something, you'd quote the key phrase or phrases from the section you were referring to - chapters and verses hadn't been invented!!
 - and in quoting a **little**, you want your listeners or readers to remember the **whole section**
- So what passage stands behind the familiar "tagline" that Jesus quoted?
 - Isaiah 61, which we read a moment ago!
- And three words in particular:
 - **Favour, Justice, Delight**

Favour (v.3-7)

- God has good in mind, not ill
- **The optimist says, "My cup runneth over, what a blessing." The pessimist says, "My cup runneth over, what a mess."**
 - different people view world in different way!
 - but for all of us, at times, it can be grim!
 - society crumbling, church declining, personal tragedy...
- Easy to forget God's good intentions!
- Talk about the OT's uni-dimensional view of Messiah's coming, and reality of his coming once in frailty and once in power and glory...
 - **OHP**
- Restoration, rebuilding, beauty, gladness, praise, wealth, riches, inheritance, joy...
 - these are the words that characterise God's kingdom come
- We live in a **now and not yet** of that kingdom
 - for church, and for community

Justice (v.8-9)

- The nature of what is built in the "year of the Lord's favour" is a place of **justice**:
- Justice is one of those words which has a broad sweep in OT thought:
 - it doesn't just mean getting the right decision in court
 - (though it certainly includes that)
 - it means wrongs being righted, poverty being stamped out, it means fairness of opportunity, it overlaps with the wholeness of that other broad OT word, peace (shalom)
 - it is **just** for people to have access to work, shelter, support, help
 - and unjust when they do not - and God hates injustice!
- We'll be looking at broad themes of need, of "injustice"

Delight (v.10-11)

- All of this is rooted in relationship with God!
 - when this messenger of God's kingdom, the Messiah, comes, the kingdom he announces isn't the be-all and end-all of his coming
 - he's not merely interested in earthly justice, as if that will cure all humanity's problems!
 - his **delight** is in God, in a living joyous relationship with God
 - here is someone who knows God's salvation, who is filled with joy in the relationship with God like a bride or groom on their wedding day
 - and here is someone whose fruitfulness (soil, plants coming up) comes out of that relationship with God!
- **Favour - Justice - Delight**