

## The Culture of the Kingdom

*Isaiah 61; Luke 4:16-30*

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### I. Introduction

What are the features of God's work among us that we want Him to replicate, to spread abroad? Isaiah gives us a vision of the type of culture that Jesus creates when He is at work. Indeed, it is this vision that Jesus quotes to begin His earthly ministry.

### II. Blessed to be a Blessing

During the Old Covenant, during the Judaic Age, God promised to redeem the world by blessing one people and using them to \_\_\_\_\_ the rest of the world.

<sup>1</sup>Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen 12:1-3 cf. 26:2-4)

This pattern repeats itself throughout Scripture. And as those who are in Christ, we are Abraham's offspring, heirs of this promise (Gal 3:29). God now promises to pour out His blessing upon us so that that we might \_\_\_\_\_ *all the nations of the earth*. So note this very pattern in Psalm 67:

<sup>1</sup>God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us, Selah <sup>2</sup>That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. <sup>3</sup>Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. <sup>4</sup>Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth. Selah <sup>5</sup>Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. <sup>6</sup>Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. <sup>7</sup>God shall bless us, And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

### III. The Bent Toward Miserliness (Lk 4:16-30)

It is a perennial temptation for God's people, however, to begin hoarding God's blessings rather than imitating His generosity. We become \_\_\_\_\_; we are happy to enjoy God's blessings, but we don't want others to enjoy them. We believe that Jesus will bless us, not for the benefit of the nations but to spite them. Jesus' contemporaries succumbed to this temptation and Jesus corrects them.

### IV. The Culture of the King

So this brings us to Isaiah's vision of the culture of the Kingdom in Isaiah 61. How does Isaiah paint the calling of God's Messiah, His Anointed, His Christ? This culture is something that *the Messiah Himself creates*. He accomplishes these things in the midst of His community by His Spirit. Isaiah 61 is \_\_\_\_\_, "*The Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor...*" (61:1) Isaiah's vision is not mere legislation, not merely a description of what God expects *us* to accomplish. It is His *promise* of the type of community *He Himself will create through His Son and by His Spirit* (Phil 2:12-13).

- A Culture of Mercy, Grace, and Justice (vv. 1-3)

<sup>1</sup>*"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; <sup>2</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup>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."*

Jesus brings in his wake *healing, liberty, comfort, consolation, beauty, joy, and praise*. The multiplication of images emphasizes the gracious nature of the Messiah's rule and the kindness He extends to His people. But also, note carefully, He brings godly *vengeance*, that is, justice (2b) in His wake. Mercy and justice go together.

- A Culture of Restoration and Reconciliation (v. 4-6)

<sup>4</sup>*And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. <sup>5</sup>Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, And the sons of the foreigner Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. <sup>6</sup>But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast.*

Second, the Messiah creates a culture of *restoration* (4) and *reconciliation* (5-7). As those transformed by Jesus, His people work to *restore* what has been lost (4). The culture created by Jesus is one of *restoration* and culture building; the slow, steady work of repairing what has been destroyed; not the rapacious, greedy culture of theft and conquest. Further, Israel and the nations would be *reconciled* and live at peace.

- A Culture of Generational Faithfulness (vv. 8-9)

<sup>8</sup>*For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, And will make with them an everlasting covenant. <sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, And their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, That they are the posterity whom the LORD has blessed."*

Because God loves justice and hates deceit, He takes the initiative in creating a covenant of truth with His people (8). And this covenant reveals itself in generational faithfulness. When generation after generation praises the Lord and worships Him, this is evidence of His blessing upon a people. However, when one generation rises up against the previous and rebels against truth, this is evidence of His judgment.

- A Culture of Joy (vv. 10-11)

<sup>10</sup>*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

Finally, the Messiah creates a culture of \_\_\_\_\_. He sings of His joy in the Lord (10a-b cf. 3c, 7d). Why is the Messiah joyful? Because God clothed Him with salvation and covered Him with righteousness. So His joy would spread to all the nations (11c).

## V. Conclusion