



Growth Group Discussion Questions

6. The Anointed One frees you and changes you

Read Isaiah 61:1-9

1. As a witness to God Israel failed miserably. See Isaiah 42:18-19. God's people were blind, deaf and therefore spiritually bankrupt. As a result they lost all influence in the world. ***Read Isaiah 61:7, 9. Compare God's people's failure with the future role of God's people among the peoples of the world. What do you think needs to happen to bring about the change?***
2. ***Following on from question 1 answer the following questions to learn more about Who is able to so radically change God's people that they rise up to play their role in the world.***
 - a. How can we be sure that the Servant is capable of spiritually transforming God's people? Hint: see Luke 4:14
 - b. What is another word for 'Anointed'?
 - c. Glancing over verse 1, what one word would you pick to summarise what the Anointed One will do for His people? Hint: see John 8:36
 - d. What will His people's overriding feature be?
3. Go over verse 1 – 3 and make a list of all that the Anointed One will do for His people. ***What would you say to someone who says, "But, I am a Christian and I really believe and trust in Jesus, but I don't feel like these things are true for me!" Share some practical ways that can help us to grasp our great salvation.***
4. According to verse 4, using language of the Old Covenant, God's people will be completely restored once the Anointed has done His work of spiritual transformation. ***Looking over verse 5-7 how would you describe the influence of God's people in the world? Hint: see what 1 Peter 2:9 says about Christians!***
5. ***"One of the greatest attractions Christians have is abiding joy." Discuss this sentence in the light of what we've seen in Isaiah 61.***

Leaders Notes

1. Isaiah 61:1-3 is the climax of the five songs about the Servant. In this final song the Servant's role as the One who spiritually transforms God's people is the main focus. This question helps the group grasp the logic of the passage. In order for God's people to be an influence in the world, they have to undergo radical spiritual transformation. It's not enough that God brings people out of Egypt, gives them their own country, gives them perfect laws to keep – none of these things help. Only an internal miraculous spiritual transformation will get the job done. And who can do that? – see next question.
2. The Anointed One is the Only One who can get the job done.
 - a. He is anointed by the Lord with the Holy Spirit so that He is empowered by the Holy Spirit as we are told Jesus was in Luke 4:14
 - b. The word for 'Anointed' in Hebrew is Messiah and in Anglicized Greek, Christ.
 - c. Freedom. The Anointed will set God's people free from sin's captivity and ultimately from all the consequences of sin.
 - d. Joy and rejoicing. This is an extremely attractive feature as we live as witnesses in the world.
3. This is probably the heart of the application of the whole passage for Christians and worth a good time of discussion. The point is that very often Christians feel just as broken-hearted, held captive, mournful and faint-spirited as if the Anointed had never even come! This kind of spiritual depression is quite common. Satan hides our victory from us. Our own wicked and stubborn hearts eclipse the joy that should be ours. But none of this changes the fact: Jesus Christ has done the job. We are free, we are saved, we are under grace not condemnation. We must fight hard to win the sensation of the victory that Christ has already won for us. And there is no shortcut. Spending time meditating on the Anointed and His victory, recalibrating our minds to see spiritual realities as they really are, and above all else, concentrated talking to the Anointed – all of these practical things will reignite our dull senses to the joy that should be ours. To simplify: if you spend two hours watching TV, the next day you will experience spiritual joy commensurate with those two hours of trash. But, if you spent the same two hours reading the Bible, praying, and reading a chapter of a solid book, the next day you will already start to feel different. Two hours in a gym will not instantly change your physique. Keep at it, and within weeks you will be transformed. The same is true spiritually. And yes, even the most fit sculpted bodies still get flu and go down for a couple of days, but the solid work can't be undone and they bounce back. Same with Christians who work hard at their salvation. (2 Peter 1:5 – make every effort to add to your faith... etc.)
4. We will attract 'strangers' to join us (5), we will be priests and ministers (6a) – which means that we will mediate the word of God to the world and pray for the world to God – and, we will be held in high regard as we enjoy and rejoice in our God (6b-7). Notice how closely 1 Peter 2:9 says all of this about Christians. Especially 'declare the praises' – joyful rejoicing in Him.
5. One of the reasons some churches grow is purely because of the joy on display. Any Christian who goes through suffering and still rejoices in God is immediately an enigma and attraction to their neighbours. Sadly, even churches where the Bible isn't taught still grow because joy and hope are so attractive. Even more sadly, some churches which pride themselves on doctrine and good bible teaching don't grow because their services are so stiff and joyless. When people look at your joy, do they 'want what you've got', or do they see you as grumbling and complaining like every other grumpy not-yet Christian? Do we need to repent of this 'selling the Servant short' by not rejoicing in His work enough? May God grant that our joy is blatant and palpable and yet at the same time anchored in solid gospel truth!