"Death for Life"

A Cross for a Crown: The Great Exchange #4

INTRODUCTION

As we conclude our sermon series this Easter Sunday, we will consider the greatest exchange of all made for us at the cross: death for life. The good news of Christianity is that we can have abundant, eternal life. But this life is made possible only by the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the Old Testament, Isaiah prophesied of this great exchange in a prophecy echoed by Jesus seven centuries later. Jesus, our messiah, offers to exchange beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, and praise for despair. This study considers the significance of each of these great exchanges in our lives.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Is there anything in your closet that either brings you joy to wear, or that you put on when you feel joyful?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Beauty for Ashes

Q1. Read Isaiah 61:1-3; Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

Isaiah tells us, to those who mourn or grieve, the Lord bestows a beautiful headdress to replace our ashes. In times of the Old Testament, to cover the head with ashes was a token of self-abhorrence and humiliation. It is an outward symbol of the condition of a repentant heart. Why would the recognition of your spiritual condition be a reason to grieve? The Lord replaces the ashes of grief and repentance with an ornament or headdress, as might be worn by a bride or groom. (a "pĕ'er" from a root word meaning glorify or beautify). In the Sermon on the Mount, what did Jesus say about those who mourn? In what ways then can we understand the phrase "blessed are those who mourn?" What does Paul say ultimately results from godly grief (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)?

Oil of Gladness for Mourning

Q2. Read Isaiah 61:1; Galatians 5:22; Acts 10:38; Luke 10:20

God offers us the oil of joy to replace our lamenting. In the first verse of Isaiah 61, how are "The Spirit of the Lord" and "the oil of anointing" directly linked? We are told in Gal 5:22 that the fruit of the spirit results in, among other things, joy. Following the statement that "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power", what resulted from that anointing? Even though we may

rejoice when God's power is revealed through us, what does Jesus tell us is the ultimate source of joy (Luke 10:20)

Praise for despair

Q3. Read Isaiah 61:3; Matthew 12:18, 20; 2 Corinthians 4:13-16
In the final great exchange Jesus removes our spirit of despair. The phrase

used here can be translated in many different ways; despair, faint, heaviness, discouragement, weakness. It comes from the image of a wick that has nearly gone out. Can you recall a time in your life where you felt this way? If so, can you share that experience with your group? What are we told about Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Matthew 12:20? The comfort that comes from God's presence in our lives gives birth to an attitude of thanksgiving to God. What do you find in 2 Corinthians 4:13-16 that would cause your praise and thanksgiving to overflow? At this time you may want to pause and offer prayers or songs of praise to God in recognition of what He has offered to you by His death on the cross.

Wrap-Up

This Easter season we celebrate the gift of life we have been offered through Jesus death and resurrection. He offers to us a beautiful headdress in exchange for the ashes of humiliation and repentance. He anoints us with the oil of gladness in the Holy Spirit in exchange for our mourning. And when we are weak and failing, His presence fills us to overflowing with praise.

Memory Verse

and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair...

Isaiah 61:3a NIV

Prayer (20 MIN) Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:
Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more notes)

Challenge:

Ask God if there is an area of your life that you need to "exchange" with Him.

Q1

Isaiah 61:3 ESV - 3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

John 10:10 NIV - 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Matthew 5:4 ESV - 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 ESV - 9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

Q2

Isaiah 61:1 ESV - 1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

Galatians 5:22 ESV - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Acts 10:38 ESV - 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

Luke 10:20 NIV - 20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Q3

Isaiah 61:3 NIV - 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy 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.

Matthew 12:18, 20 NIV - 18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ... 20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory.

2 Corinthians 4:13-16 NIV - 13 It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Prayer Notes cont.					