



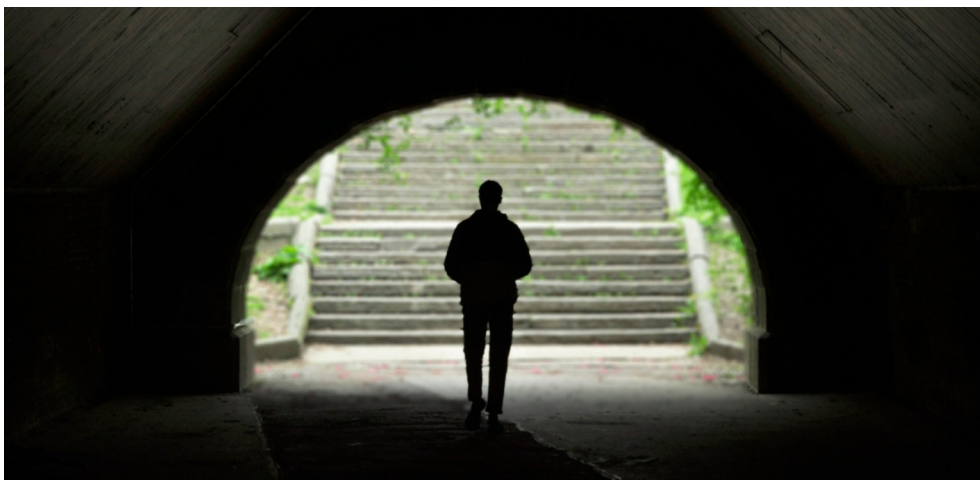
THE WORD FOR TODAY

Isaiah 61, 1-3

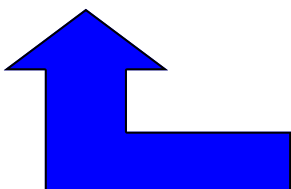
Jesus—the Anointed One, the Messiah

We have been celebrating the birth of our Saviour Jesus, the Light of the World. By his coming Jesus brings light and hope to our lives, however dark the place we are in right now might be. This baby lived on earth, was crucified and rose again to be our living Lord, our Saviour and our Friend.

Isaiah is speaking some six centuries before Jesus' birth, to people who couldn't see any light at the end of the tunnel. These Jews had been brutally crushed by the Assyrians, and they had lost hope that God would ever send his promised Messiah to save them. Isaiah was speaking to renew their hope, and speaks to us today, as we contemplate a world full of uncertainties in 2025.



Follow the words of this passage round the church, beginning on the north wall of this little building, the Offering House. We are using the New International Version of the Bible, which you can find on the internet under Bible Gateway, and the whole "Word for Today" is on the church website, which is www.libertonkirk.net You can also find meditations and prayers on other Bible passages there in previous "Words for Today".



Turn immediately left to find the first verses of the Bible passage on the bench

***“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me”***

1



This is the passage of scripture Jesus chose to read when he first preached in a synagogue. He said that Isaiah’s prophecy was now fulfilled in him. Jesus was the long-promised Messiah, the chosen one of God. Jesus was anointed by God with the gift of the Holy Spirit to be able to carry out God’s plan for him.

As Christians we believe that when we choose to follow Jesus we too receive that precious gift of the Holy Spirit—that’s quite amazing, isn’t it? We too are chosen by God to be part of his family and to do his work in the world. It’s a very special calling.

***Lord, thank you for sending Jesus.
Thank you for the Holy Spirit, which you give me
when I acknowledge Jesus as my Lord and Saviour.
Help me to be guided by the Holy Spirit in all I do.***

(Station 2 is on the East side of the church building)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“ . . . to preach good news to the poor.”

2

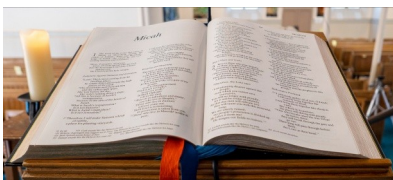
Jesus was sent by God to preach good news, not exclusively to those people struggling to make ends meet, but to all those in need of good news, those feeling that their lives are in some way impoverished.

Jesus is good news. Ask anyone who knows Jesus in their lives. I know, for example, that he brings assurance and peace, guidance and strength—others will tell you more. He makes a difference, bringing light and hope and purpose.



*Lord, thank you for the good news of Jesus.
Help me to accept him into my heart.
Let me feel the warmth of his loving presence
and the energy he brings.*

(No. 3 is further along this side of the church building)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted”

3

What a lovely picture this conjures up! Jesus doesn't come just to comfort somebody whose life is falling apart—he comes to “bind up” - to make sure that life is held together securely in his love so that it doesn't shatter—it has a firm binding.

Whatever life might throw at us that threatens our ability to keep going—when everything seems to be falling apart—Jesus will bind us up and hold us together, lovingly and gently. Trust him!



*Lord Jesus, bind me up when I am broken.
Hold me together when my life seems to be falling apart.
Help me to trust in you.*

(Walk along the back of the church and turn right to find No. 4 on the prayer bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“... to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners”

4



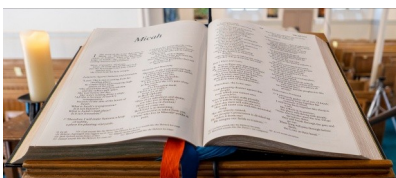
I like to think that the children's Christmas presents the folk of Liberton Kirk sent to the Prison Service brought some light to Dads there, who were able to give their children something for Christmas. It must be a particularly difficult time for them.

Whether imprisoned in the justice system or by addiction, a hostile home environment, a phobia, or whatever, Jesus offers freedom. He offers constant companionship, a listening ear, strength to cope and to change if that is what's needed.

He offers a different focus for our lives, to release us from whatever holds us captive—we just have to accept the offer.

***Lord Jesus, thank you for being with me always.
I pray for all those in prison and for those
held captive by addictions or bad situations.
Help them all to find you and accept the freedom you offer.***

(No. 5 is on the West side of the church before you come to the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***“ . . . to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour
and the day of vengeance of our God”***

5



These words really remind us of the power of God and his control over this world he has made. Yes, his kingdom will come and it will be as wonderful as foretold, but there will also be judgement, and evil will be brought to account.

Unlike Isaiah’s original listeners we know that Jesus came to offer us, through his death on the cross, the forgiveness of our sins. All we have to do is believe in him—God’s grace does the rest. There need be no fear of the day of judgement—Jesus has paid the price for our sins. How wonderful is that!

***Loving God, thank you for the promise of your kingdom to come.
Thank you for the forgiveness offered if I believe in Jesus as my Saviour.
Help me to be truly humble before you, God of all power and might.***

(Walk towards the front of the church and find No. 6 near the cairn)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“ . . . to comfort all who mourn ”

6

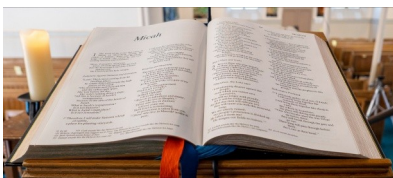


Losing a loved one is a difficult thing to live through, not just in the first few days or weeks, but later on, when memories are triggered by something, or when loneliness threatens to take over. That’s something to bear in mind, remembering people who are grieving not just in the time leading up to the funeral but much later.

Jesus offers a permanent comfort blanket—a quiet presence always there to listen and strengthen and reassure, someone who understands.

*Lord, thank you for the comfort you offer.
Help me to seek you out when I am sad.
Please be close to all mourners today.*

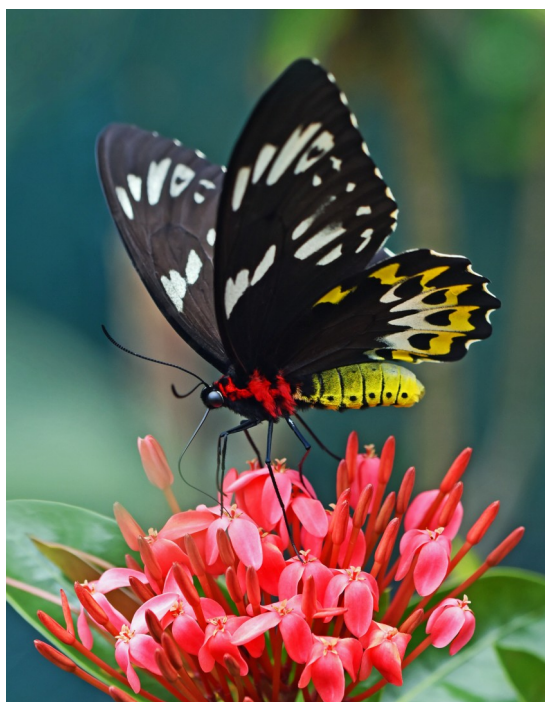
(Walk to the front of the church and find No. 7 on one of the benches)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“. . .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 splendour.”*

7

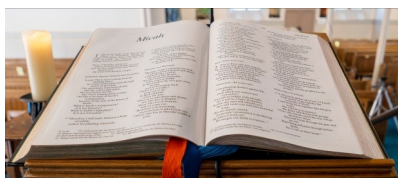


When Isaiah wrote these words of prophecy he was writing to people in despair—about their country, their city, and about themselves and their future. As Isaiah speaks God’s word to them they hear that they will be transformed. Not only will they change their weeping into praising but they will also be people who will display God’s glory in their lives.

Having Jesus in your life can have a transformational effect just as great as the caterpillar’s change into a butterfly. Try it and see!

*Loving Lord, sometimes I despair at the state of the world,
and my inability to do anything about it.
Transform my despair, I pray.
Come into my heart and make me new.*

If anything you have read has prompted questions you would like to discuss, please contact John Young on 664 3067 or jyoung@churchofscotland.org.uk



THE WORD FOR TODAY

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