

Beauty for Ashes



Isaiah 61:1–11 · This week: The Redeemer Shall Come to Zion, Isaiah 58–66

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me** lesson 42, “The Redeemer Shall Come to Zion,” on Gospel Library

START

Early in his ministry, Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth, the town where he grew up, and read from Isaiah 61. Then he sat down and said, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:16–21).

READ TOGETHER

In a synagogue, a reader stood to read the scriptures and sat down to teach. After Jesus sat down, everyone in the room kept their eyes on him (Luke 4:20).

ISAIAH 61:1–3

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; ³To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Read verse 1 as Jesus describing his own work. He came to heal the brokenhearted, to free the captives, and to open the prison for those who are bound. He said so in front of the neighbors who had watched him grow up.

Verse 3 promises “beauty for ashes.” In Isaiah’s day, people in deep grief dressed in sackcloth and ashes, as Mordecai did in Esther 4:1. The Hebrew word for “beauty” here means a headdress, the kind a bridegroom wore on his wedding day (Isaiah 61:10). The Lord takes away the ashes and crowns his people instead.

He also gives “the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” The people who receive these gifts become “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.” He often gives them through his people. At baptism we promise to mourn with those that mourn and comfort those who need comfort (Mosiah 18:8–9).

TALK ABOUT IT

What “ashes” might someone in our family or ward be carrying right now? When has the Savior given you something good in place of something hard?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Jesus read Isaiah 61 and said it was about him. He still gives beauty for ashes and joy for mourning.