

We continue this week with the “**Commission**” of Jesus in Isaiah 61. As I told you last week, I love this passage of scripture. When I get down on myself or down on life, it reminds me of why Jesus came and it lifts me up. We need to keep His purposes real in our lives. Hiding this passage in our hearts can certainly help us do that. Verse 2 is our focus this week and it continues to reveal the heart of Jesus’ mission, so let’s look at it closely.

### **Isaiah 61:2**

Last week we saw Jesus has a heart for the poor, He wants to bring them good news. We also saw He wants to bring us out of prison and darkness. Even though we are on a new verse this week, the thought line never stops. The heart of Jesus’ ministry continues to flow forth as He states that He is coming “**to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor**”.

First of all I believe it would be wise to view the word “year” as a season. We must remember that II Peter 3:8 says, “**with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**” I am convinced that Jesus’ statement here is indicative of Him saying that we are entering into a new season, a time when God’s favor on mankind will shine forth. What a blessing to be living in this time of God’s favor. What is God’s favor? Simply put it is the partiality of God. It means God is for you!

In the Old Testament, because of the law of sin and death and because He is a just God, God could not always display His favor. Because of that, many times the people experienced a season of judgment. But now, Jesus is announcing through the prophet Isaiah that the “year of God’s favor” is coming. It will be a season when God can show His partiality without measure, because sin will be atoned for, because He just loves us and because He is so good.

There were times in the Old Testament where God found a righteous man on whom He could display His favor. It is a fascinating study to survey all of the people who experienced the favor of God on their life and circumstances. A study like that can give us a glimpse of what God means when He proclaims His favor upon us. His favor is incredible. Consider Noah for example. Genesis 6:8 tells us Noah found favor in the eyes of God. I Samuel 2:26 tells us Samuel had the favor of God upon him. In Luke 1:30 we read Mary found favor in the Lord’s eyes. There are countless others. Our God, is a generous and loving God who wants to bless us and pour out His goodness upon us!

We are in the year of the Lord’s favor and because of Jesus your name is on the list. You are free to seek the favor of God on your life. I encourage you to pray for that, to seek it, to allow God to show you what it means when He is partial toward you. Because of Jesus, He is!

As we move to the next line we still need to remember II Peter 3:8 that tells us God doesn’t view time like we do. The next line says, “**and the day of vengeance of our God.**” But remember “**with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**”

This statement about vengeance could sound a bit opposite compared to the former statement of favor. But is it really? Not at all! God had been putting up with the effects of sin on mankind for hundreds of years. He created us for good and blessing. Can’t you just imagine how angry He has been to see His blessings being stolen right out from under His people because of the deceitfulness of sin? He has been angry with a vengeance at how sin has stolen what He wanted

for His people, His creation. In sending Jesus to deal with the effects of sin and death, He is dealing a vengeful blow to sin. We can think of it as God being our Almighty Protector, taking up for us. We are so blessed.

I love the last line, ***“to comfort all who mourn”***. If you have ever been in a place of mourning and have experienced the comfort of the Lord you will really appreciate this. Because of Jesus’ mission in our lives, we can draw near to God for comfort and He can comfort us as no one else can. He can show us hope, He can give us perspective, He can calm our fears and minister to the deep places of the heart that we can’t even bring to words. I just have to believe as He was commissioning Jesus to come on our behalf that He looked at the sorrow of His people and said, “Go comfort them.” His Word speaks to that effect.

Knowing Jesus and His ministry in our lives is beyond compare. Do you know His favor today? Do you know His protection today? Do you know His comfort? Remember God commissioned Jesus for each one of us. These benefits are yours!

Because of Him,  
Sharon Thomas