

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BIBLE OUTREACH

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DAILY DEVOTION THE GREAT EXCHANGE.

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Isaiah 61:3 (NLT)

“To all who mourn in Israel, He will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair.”

For the brokenhearted, God makes this comforting promise in Isaiah 61:3. Imagine it - Beauty for ashes? What an exchange! That is the promise of God in Christ! Over 700 years before Christ came to earth, the prophet Isaiah prophesied this: “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon Me, for the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.” Isaiah 61:1 (NLT).

This was a Messianic prophecy pointing to Jesus Christ.

The mission of Christ was to bring good news! That’s what the gospel is! The word “gospel” means “good news!” The gospel is good news in a bad news world! The good news is that God offers you and me the exchange of a lifetime - a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, (and) festive praise instead of despair.”

Most of us are familiar with the concept of bartering – exchanging things of equal value. But God offers you and me the most unusual exchange of all – a crown of beauty for ashes! In other words, God offers you healing and wholeness for your pain and brokenness! Who wouldn’t want to accept such an exchange! Ash Wednesday presents you and me with the opportunity to thank God for this glorious exchange! Rather than focusing on what we are to give up, which in eternity amounts to ashes, we can rejoice in what we have to gain, a crown of beauty! Halleluiah! What a Savior!

As we look forward to Good Friday and Easter Sunday this Lenten Season, let’s shift our focus from the sacrifice of stuff to the surrender of our souls. .

In Psalm 51:16-17 (NIV), David sang, "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, You, God, will not despise."

We can bring our brokenness to God and find healing for our souls!

In her book titled: 40 Days of Decrease, by Alicia Britt Chole wrote, "God seems more interested in what we are becoming than in what we are giving up."

Ask yourself, "What am I becoming?" "Am I becoming more or less like Christ?"

PRAYER

Oh God, transform me into the likeness of Your Son and renew the wonder and passion of His death, burial, and resurrection in me, in Jesus name