

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

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.

He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's  
favour has come, and with it,  
the day of God's anger against their enemies.

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.

In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks  
that the Lord has planted for his own glory.

They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities destroyed long ago.  
They will revive them,  
though they have been deserted for many generations.

"For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing.  
I will faithfully reward my people for their suffering  
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their descendants will be recognised  
and honoured among the nations.

Everyone will realise that they are a people the Lord has blessed."

I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God!

For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation  
and draped me in a robe of righteousness.

I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding  
or a bride with her jewels.

The Sovereign Lord will show his justice to the nations of the world.  
Everyone will praise him!

His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring,  
with plants springing up everywhere.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, 28

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances,  
for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test  
everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every  
kind of evil.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your  
whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus  
Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you  
is faithful. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.