

THE FIRST 15

Friday, November 1, 2024

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Today is Friday, November 1 and as we keep our eyes on Christ the Cornerstone, we recall how God wants to move the world from places of brokenness to places of healing.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, as I enter this time of prayer, I pause and become still. I calm my thoughts and silence my mind. I breathe deeply and slowly, and center myself upon Your steadfast love and gentle presence. Enlighten my heart and soul as I digest Your Word found in Holy Scripture. Teach me to listen for your voice above the surrounding chatter of the world. Help me understand what You are saying in my life. Reveal my places of brokenness and my need for healing in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. Isaiah 61:1-3a

REFLECTION

The ancient prophecies of Isaiah were beautifully fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. In chapter sixty one, the prophet Isaiah foretold what the Messiah will do. Isaiah's Messiah, the "Anointed One" will be known by a ministry of comfort and transformation. The Messiah will bring people into new life - healed, comforted and freed. He will bind what is broken and restore what is lost. Jesus chose to read this passage at the beginning of his ministry in the synagogue of his hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21). Jesus declared himself the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. He is the One to bring good news, healing and freedom. He is the long awaited One who brings God's transformation and healing to a broken world.

As I reflect on this prophetic passage, I consider what is being proclaimed. Good news is proclaimed for the poor. Freedom is proclaimed for captives. Release is proclaimed for prisoners. Comfort is proclaimed for those who grieve. Healing is proclaimed for the broken. This is the ministry of Christ. As a follower of Jesus it is also my ministry. I am to speak good news to those who suffer. I am to offer hope to those downcast in spirit. I am to bind up the wounds of the broken hearted. I am to speak freedom to those held captive by hurts and imprisoned by habits. I am to proclaim a way out of darkness and depression. I am to comfort those who mourn and care for those who grieve. I proclaim the name of Jesus - He is the way, the truth and the life.

I consider the places in my life where I need comfort. Perhaps I feel isolated, alone, afraid or uncertain. I consider the places in my life where there is brokenness. Maybe there is a broken relationship, or I have been hurt by someone who has let me down or disappointed me. Perhaps there is someone who has not forgiven me, or who I am struggling to forgive. I consider the places in my life where I feel caught, trapped, or bound by darkness. Something that makes me feel imprisoned. Some describe depression, anxiety, addiction, poverty, chronic pain and health issues as places of entrapment. We have a Savior who sets free and heals. We have a Savior named Jesus who comes to comfort, heal, and set us free.

Ask: Who do I know who could benefit from a word of hope or comfort? How can I speak words of goodness into the life of someone else today?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Come, Lord Jesus, you see me like no one else. You know the broken pieces of my heart, the lingering hurt, and the residual resentment. You know what entices and entraps me. You know what pulls me down. Bring your comfort to my soul and healing to my heart. See me free from whatever binds me. Remind me of my role in carrying out Your good work. Give me words of encouragement to speak into the lives of others. Let me share good news, heal what is broken, free what is trapped, mend what is torn and comfort those who grieve. Where there is mourning or despair, bring beauty, joy and praise. Amen.