



The Gospel in a Verse Norm Skarie

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10)

This verse contains so much of the Gospel of the Grace of God that I entitled this article, "The Gospel in a Verse." Perhaps one who reads this verse for the first time and not being grounded in the Gospel of God's Grace, may not fully appreciate this statement. We shall endeavor to show the reader how much of the Gospel is embodied in Isaiah 61:10.

First, we see that the Gospel will fill a person with joy. How much joy we experience is dependent upon how much of the Gospel we appropriate in our lives. This joy is also twofold. Our soul is joyful in our God. The statement "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord" indicates that only the Gospel brings such joy in one's spirit when he accepts Jesus as his Savior. However, this joy may wear off quickly for a new believer. Where does one turn then? Jesus is our example as we read in Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus had to look beyond the cross to the joy set before Him to enable Him to bear up under the tremendous pressure of His battle in the garden of Gethsemane. That joy was anchored in what God would do once Jesus had completed the work for which the Father had sent Him. Likewise, if we are to maintain our joy, we must be anchored in the hope of God's Promises in His Word. We may mistake joy for a feeling of happiness. It is not the same! Rather, joy is an attitude of faith and trust in God, not what happens to us.

When I attended my first graduation ceremony at Grace & Glory, after my first semester in Bible College, I remember the banner over the stage read, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6) This verse became mine that day and has been a source of joy for me ever since. Consider what Job uttered in the midst of his trial: "But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold (Job 23:11). Job's confidence was in God and his focus had to be on Him, not his own circumstances. We need to be reminded that the "all things" of Romans 8:28 can be used by God to perfect and complete us. When we see this, our joy should remain relatively steadfast, no matter what we are experiencing at the time.

The source of our joy is identified by Isaiah: "For He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." We should be joyful because God has clothed us with His very own righteousness! Isaiah reminds us in Chapter 64 that our own righteousness is as filthy rags. Paul adds emphasis to this by stating that "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). This righteousness is free--a gift. It speaks of our standing and cannot be changed, nor improved. We are just as righteous the day we believed as we are ever going to be. That's our standing in Christ--righteous in the eyes of God.



The phrase "garments of righteousness" speaks of our state which is constantly changing. The key word here is "garments." God wants to make the righteousness He has given us to become practical in our everyday lives. We have received salvation in all areas of our three-fold nature--spirit, soul and body. Paul beautifully shows us this three-fold deliverance in II Corinthians 1:10: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us."

When we were born again, our spirits were delivered forever from the penalty of sin. The rest of our lives we have need of deliverance in our souls from the power of sin. Finally, we can look forward to the deliverance for our bodies from the presence of sin, as Jesus is now in heaven preparing for us mansions--our glorified bodies.

The last part of our study verse shows both the results of the Gospel of God' s grace, and implies the work that the Gospel did to bring about these results. Both Jesus and His Bride will be adorned in all their glory. How did the Bridegroom come to be "decked with ornaments?" Philippians Two shows us the seven steps of humiliation which Jesus took in coming into this world and accomplishing the work of redemption. He went lower than anyone has gone in becoming sin for us. Because of His obedience, His Father has highly exalted Him with seven upward steps. These are the ornaments with which He is decked. There are many pictures of Christ in all His glory in the Scriptures, but let us look at just two of them.

The fourth chapter of Revelation depicts the scene in heaven of Jesus being crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. Three items in the description of Christ are most significant. First, the meaning of jasper is: "He will be made prominent." Philippians 2:10 states that "every knee shall bow to Christ, who will have that place of exaltation. Second, the emerald' s color is green and speaks of resurrection--life out of death. Jesus had to die in order for God to raise Him up. This is also meaningful to us if we are to be adorned with all the glory that He would give us. Finally, the rainbow speaks of mercy, or grace, and Jesus had to rely on the grace of God to accomplish His Father' s will. We must do likewise.

The other scene where Jesus is shown forth in all His glory is when He returns to judge the world at the battle of Armageddon. The part of His glory expressed there that I would have us focus on here is the armies of heaven who followed Him. These armies represent the saints of God in all their glory, and to the extent that they have laid hold of His glory, will Christ thus be much more glorified. We see this same thought expressed in Revelation 20:2 where the bride is described as a "bride adorned for her husband." Other saints in glory will adorn, or set off, the bride.

The last part of our study should also be of much interest to us. The "bride adorneth herself with her jewels. This means that we must personally appropriate these jewels. They remind me of the gold, silver and precious stones of I Corinthians 3:12. These jewels have eternal value when compared to wood, hay and stubble. We lay hold of these jewels as we allow God to work His righteousness in us in a practical way. Each jewel represents a part of Christ' s life worked in us. This is seen in Revelation 19:7-8: "And His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine



linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Linen is made out of flax straw, and the righteousness spoken of here is what has been worked into our lives. This is in contrast with the righteousness we have by faith when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. This righteousness is represented by wool in the Scripture. Wool is not manufactured but simply taken from the sheep. It is like a gift (Romans 5:15-18). On the other hand, the righteousness that makes up these jewels that adorn the bride has been worked in her life. Our part is to submit to the operation of the Word in our lives. God does this work. All saints receive God' s righteousness by faith alone, but many saints are lacking when it comes to having the practical righteousness worked in their every day living, because this working can be very painful and many saints are unwilling to submit themselves to such an operation.

This is illustrated in Psalm 45. "The king' s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework" (Vs 13-14). Consider the pain of a needle going in and then coming back out in sewing a garment. At times the Word of God operating in our lives also hurts coming and going.

Secondly, the wrought gold. This is gold that has been beaten into just the right shape, and this is what God does in our lives to produce these "jewels."

In Job 42, we see the result of God' s working in his life. At the end of his trial, Job says, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee" (Vs. 5). Before his trial, Job had heard the message of God, but learned that message by experience during this time of testing. Compare this with the chain of events in Romans 5:3-5, which begin with the trial (tribulation) and ends with the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts. Whatever Job learned from his testing was of eternal value - one of those jewels.

James tells us to "count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations (testings). Our verse started with joy and James' statement indicates that it is imperative for us to maintain our joy even in the midst of the trials that God brings our way. We can only do this by faith, as we look beyond our difficulties to the joy set before us. What is that joy? Like Job, we must understand that God is producing gold, silver and precious stones in our lives. This alone, should fill us with joy. We can also look forward with joy to the day when "He, who has begun a good work in us, will complete it" and we then see Christ in all His glory. Like Paul, we also can trust that a crown of righteousness has been laid up for us as a result of God' s good work in us. What could give us more joy than this?

More like the Master I would live and grow,
More of His love to others I would show;
More self-denial like His in Galilee,
More like the Master I long to ever be. (Gabriel)