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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 19, 2015
2nd Sunday after Easter

Scripture Lessons: Revelation 2:1-5; John 21:1-14

Hymns: 196; 371; 754; 313:2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 61:10-11

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,

My soul shall be joyful in my God;

For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,

He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments,

And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth brings forth its bud,

As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth,

So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth
before all the nations. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, Our Risen Lord, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Easter Joy.

Well, it's been a couple of weeks since we celebrated Easter, I
imagine most of us are pretty much past Easter in our thinking and
on to other things. Denise and I worked out in the garden and yard
yesterday. We had our first asparagus of the season for lunch
yesterday. Funny how such simple pleasures, such daily blessings

can give one a sense of joy. But really that doesn't begin to compare with the joy that comes to us with Jesus' resurrection! We dare not allow the joy of Easter to be no more for us than one of the little joys of daily life that are so soon put out of our minds! To know that our Redeemer lives, that we don't have a dead Jesus as the reality of life, that brings us great and lasting joy. He brings us power and purpose for this life. That brings us joy!

Today we turn to a prophecy of Isaiah that accentuates that joy, that spiritual thrill that we possess. Our text opens with expressions of great rejoicing; **"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God"** (Isaiah 61:10). And although this Word of the Lord was written by inspiration some seven centuries before Jesus's death and resurrection the blessings described in our text that bring such joy to our souls are blessings that continue to come to us through Jesus' resurrection. Our Easter joy is not diminished by a couple of weeks passing, and neither should it be overshadowed by those satisfying, and yet mundane tasks which we accomplish in our daily lives.

Sometimes we express our joy by the way dress. There was an expression in days long gone when I was young that one would put on his "glad rags" when it was time to be happy and enjoy a special occasion. The clothing one choose to wear was an expression of the mood of the person and the event. In our text we have something a little different which may also happen in life but nothing like it does when the Lord is the one who provides the clothing. Isaiah would lead us to express our joy over our --

THEME: Our Easter Adornment: Spiritual Fashion Designed by the Lord

Our text tells us that we have been dressed in --

I. The Robes of Righteousness.

The picture in our text is very much a picture of people being dressed up for a wedding. This is not a reference to how the guests dress for the wedding. It is a reference to how the bride and groom dress for the wedding.

Isaiah 61:10 For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

I officiated at my nephew's wedding last weekend. Our whole family was there along with many other friends and relatives. It was a big wedding, and most people came dressed in something nice. The wedding party were dressed **much** nicer. The bridesmaids were wearing really pretty dresses, and they all their hair done up, and fingernails polished. The groom and groomsmen were wearing really sharp tuxedos. But no one was dressed like the bride. Her white dress was absolutely stunning. Her hair, her flowers, her accessories were all just perfect. It was the complete package, a beautiful bride presented herself to her husband before the Lord, and their union was blessed. What a joy!

We have all seen this picture played out in other weddings, and it brings joy to our hearts each and every time. That is the picture the Lord presents in our text. We are adorned like a bride or groom ready to be presented before our beloved. Of course this is a spiritual picture, and the one to whom we are presented is the Lord Himself. And now let us consider how it is that we have been dressed and adorned for the Lord. **“He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robes of righteousness”** (v.10).

“Garments of salvation:” He has dressed me up with the right clothing so that I might gain access into heaven. Talk about a dress code! This is a little more demanding than “no shoes, no shirt, no service.” That would hardly do for a comparison to the adornments of a wedding couple. It is far more than a coat and necktie, or even a “dinner jacket required” kind of affair. All those would merely be similar to the inadequate attempts at righteousness that come from man and his flawed attempts at appearing righteousness without actually being righteous. Even those deeds that look so good and even godly to us, if they are not prompted by faith in the merits of Jesus, they are nothing more than filthy rags. Indeed they are truly foul and smelly, and they stink to high heaven, quite literally. We cannot be adorned with our own works of righteousness for

everything that we have done is fouled by sin, and made corrupt and unclean.

The garments of salvations must be superior to anything that we have done. The garments of salvation are made up of the righteous acts of a sinless Jesus who lived His life on earth in perfect fulfillment of the law of God, and lived in perfect love toward all men. This righteousness is credited to us through faith in Christ Jesus. When God the Father looks at us He sees the righteousness of Christ.

But it includes more than this. In the hymn before the sermon we sang, “**Jesus Thy blood and righteousness my beauty are My glorious dress**” (TLH 371:1). The garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness with which we are spiritually adorned includes the sacrifice Jesus made for our sin. It includes the scourging and the thorns pressed down upon His brow. It includes Jesus giving His soul into death. We are to see ourselves in this picture with the robe of Jesus’ righteousness wrapped around us, and the jewels of His righteousness and loving deeds adorning us as beautiful jewels, the most splendid of accessories. Spiritually clothed like this we are not only acceptable to God, but our own souls are filled joy and gladness for we are absolutely beautiful without any flaw or blemish visible. All has been covered by Christ, who leaves us stunning, and irresistible to the Lord!

In our text Isaiah was presenting the design for this wardrobe of righteousness. The designs for our salvation attire were laid out beautifully, drawn in marvelous detail already in earlier chapters of Isaiah, as well as in the writings of the other prophets. These were sketches of what was to be delivered. What we are looking for is --

II. The Assurance of Production.

Isaiah 61:11 “For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

Once again this past winter there were days when I felt like spring was never going to come, but deep down I knew it would come. It

had to come because that is how the Lord has directed the course of this world for thousands of years. In anticipation of that event of spring coming I ordered seeds that are sitting in a box waiting to be planted. Some of them will be planted in tiny little peat pots this afternoon. I will plant them knowing that there is a germ of life in those seeds and germination will happen, and the plants will spring forth and grown, and so will the seeds planted in the garden a little later this spring. It is a sure thing, but first those seeds have to be put in the ground where they begin to break down, and then there is new life.

Just days before His death when some Greeks requested an audience with Jesus the Lord referenced this same picture when speaking of His own death and resurrection and the life it would produce for us all.

John 12:23-24 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

That was the assurance the Lord presented through Isaiah that all would be in place for us to receive the righteousness which we needed. All the things sketched out for us in the prophets would take place exactly when they were supposed to take place according to God’s direction of the events of this world. The righteousness we needed would be produced, and it was produced just as we talked about it already this morning. Jesus lived that perfect righteousness, and Jesus endured the curse of the law for our failings; **“He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures!”** It was all just like the confident manner of seeds coming forth from the ground with new life and multiplying life.

And this is how **“the Lord God *caused* righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”**

The Apostle Paul explained how the Lord completes this among us.

Romans 4:24-25 “It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

Righteousness is imputed or credited to us who believe in God who raised Jesus from the dead. Faith in Jesus includes this article of faith that God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus was delivered up to suffering and death because somebody had to pay the price for our sin; somebody had to endure the curse of the law, and Jesus did. Righteousness and then praise springs up in all the earth with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection brings it all together. It declares God’s acceptance of the Jesus redemptive sacrifice. **Jesus has reconciled the world to God.** When faith lays hold of that righteousness, songs of praise and joy and rejoicing flow from the heart. This goes out into all the world.

It isn’t reserved for the privileged few. People of every nation have come to learn of Jesus as the Christ who was crucified and the third day rose again. The Spirit has worked faith in the hearts of people throughout the world. Joy and rejoicing replaces the despondency of the sin burdened soul. This joy is not defeated by sickness, or poverty, or persecution, or even death. This is a joy that perseveres through all the trials of this life unto everlasting life.

The Lord has put it all in place. We are ready for the spring fashion shows. We are the models of the Lord’s most beautiful, indeed spectacular designs! We are adorned with the robes of righteousness which the Lord secured for us in the death and resurrection of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May this joy and rejoicing live in our hearts, and be evident in our songs of praise now and every day of every year of our lives! May we never, ever lose our first love, and treat this as a small thing that the Lord has done. He has adorned us with the glorious robes of Christ’s righteousness, and we stand before the Lord in righteousness and true holiness forevermore.

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.