

Day One

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God speaks a word of grace here in Isaiah 62:1-5. He will speak up for His people. He will not remain quiet. He will give them a new name. They will no longer be called Deserted or Desolate. They will be called Hephzibah which means “My delight is in her” and Beulah which means “married.”

We too have been given new names. Because we have been baptized into Christ, we united with Him. We are married. We are not alone. And because we are clothed with Christ’s righteousness, the Father now says to us that His delight is in us.

This is the reason for His coming into this world, for taking on human flesh and taking our place under the law. He satisfied the demands of God’s law with His perfect life. He then suffered the penalty that we deserve because of our sin. And then He rose from the dead.

By sharing the benefits of His work with us, we are now free to live as dearly loved children of God. We are free to live the new life that God has created in us. We are a precious jewel in His hand. His delight is in us.

Day Two

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Here in John 8:48-59, I don’t think that there is a worse label that one could place on another Jew than to say, “You are a Samaritan and you have a demon.” And the demon possession would be of secondary importance.

Jesus is a resident of Nazareth in Galilee of the Gentiles. That already makes Him suspicious in the eyes of those in the Council in Jerusalem. He has spent some time in Samaria and in Tyre and Sidon (Gentile regions). It’s little wonder that they think He is a Samaritan (or at least want Him to be). The Messiah would never be a Samaritan.

But when Jesus tells them exactly who He is, they pick up stones to stone Him. They do that because Jesus spoke the name that God gave to Moses – the name that no one spoke lest they use it in vain. But Jesus does more than speak the name. He tells them that He is God in the flesh. He is the great I AM.

Only the eyes and ears of faith can see and hear and believe that claim. Human reason can’t. And it reacts just like we see here. We could talk about the powers and principalities that are really behind the hostile reaction that Jesus receives here. But that’s a discussion for another day.

Day Three

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In John 14, Jesus is preparing His disciples for His leaving – both His death and His ascension after His resurrection. The Holy Spirit will be sent to them so that He can dwell in them. In Acts 2, we see the fulfillment of that promise. We also hear Peter say, “Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and receive the Holy Spirit.” So there is a connection between our being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Jesus also says that He will not leave them as orphans. He will come to them. Certainly there is a connection with His post-resurrection appearances to the disciples. He tells them that because He lives, they will live also.

He comes to us in baptism. He comes to unite us with Himself – to join us together with Him. Joined together with Him, we are not orphans. We are dearly loved children of God. We are fellow heirs with Christ of the kingdom of God. He said previously in John 14 that He is going away to prepare a place for us. And if He goes away, He will return so that He can take us to be with Him where He is. We have a home – an eternal home.

Day Four

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Here in John 17, Jesus prays for His disciples. He is asking His Father to care for them because they will remain in the world. Jesus will ascend to sit at His Father’s right hand. His disciples will remain in the world and so Jesus is asking that His Father care for them through all their trials and troubles.

Jesus also prays that the Father will restore to Him the glory that He had before the world existed. The Son of

God set aside that glory – His glory – in order to take our place. He set aside His glory to become sin for us so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus' road to glory goes through the cross. He had to become the perfect sacrifice that would take away the sin of the world. He had to become the ransom price that paid for our freedom – that set us free from the chains of sin and death that held us captive and kept us separated from God.

Joined together with Him in His life and death through the waters of Baptism, we now live in His glory. We now live in His victory. We now live a new life that is Jesus' gift to us. We have been crucified with Christ and the life that we now live we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave His life for us.

Day Five

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Here in John 7, Jesus has gone up to Jerusalem – into a hostile environment. He is in the temple courts teaching. The people are in a state of anticipation. Messianic expectations were the focus for many. They were wondering if Jesus was the Messiah.

The rulers did not. They were convinced that Jesus wasn't the Messiah. They knew that Jesus was from Galilee because that's where Jesus did His first miracle (in Cana of Galilee). They also knew that the Messiah was not going to come from Galilee. He was supposed to come from Bethlehem – from the line of David.

What they didn't know (or had forgotten) was that He was born in Bethlehem – that He was indeed from the line of David. Would that knowledge have made a difference in what they believed about Jesus? It might have for some. But for most, they had already closed their minds to the possibility.

And Jesus doesn't make any clear claims to His identity. He doesn't proclaim Himself to be the Messiah. But He doesn't remain silent. He says that if anyone is thirsty, they should come to Him and drink. He says to whoever believes in Him, they will have rivers of living water flow out of their hearts.

Jesus is saying that He is the source of life. Again, later on in John's gospel, Jesus will proclaim that He is the way, the truth and the life. Anyone who believes in Him will receive a new life – an abundant life – that will not fade or dry up. He is indeed the great deliverer – the Savior – who has come to rescue us from the power of sin and death.