



# Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

## December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020: Advent 3 Coming Soon: How Shall I Meet Him?

*Text: Isaiah 61:1-11*

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup> 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. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. <sup>10</sup> I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup> For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

1. If ever a year felt like a doomy, gloomy funeral, it's been 2020. Make a list of things that have left you feeling poor, afflicted, brokenhearted, captive, and in darkness?

Making constant decisions about how to operate, where to go, how to act is like a plague of affliction that leaves people feeling overwhelmed. Being stuck inside without your normal support system and social contact is taxing. Many have lost their jobs and are struggling financially. All of these physical stressors can lead us to idols, substance

abuse, coping mechanisms that keep us locked in a prison of guilt.

2. Jesus comes to fulfill our every need! He has truly brought good news for the poor and afflicted, healing for the broken-hearted, freedom for the captives, and light for those who sit in darkness. How can you open the eyes of your heart to see each of these cures in your life?

Jesus has brought us the cure of every wound we have. Sometimes we continue to suffer because we won't take the cure, we won't come into the light, we don't take to heart the good news. Sometimes it takes something bitter to bring you to the point where you finally see everything he has done for you.

3. Look up Leviticus 25:1-13. What does it mean that the Servant of the Lord has been sent to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (the year of Jubilee)? What does this mean about the year 2020?

Debts forgiven! Property restored! Slaves freed! We have seen somewhat of a parallel with the loan forgiveness that the government has offered in the 2020 payment protection plan. When we think of all our sins forgiven, our slavery ended, and our eternal inheritance restored, this truly is the year of Jubilee!

4. The year of the Lord's favor is also the same time as the day of vengeance of our God. Who will experience which? The Last Day will be the sweetest day of victory for believers and the final death knell of God's vengeance for the unbelievers. As we look forward to that day, those in Christ already experience the year of the Lord's favor, even while we wait for the last day!
5. God's Old Testament people had been captured because of their unfaithfulness and sent off to captivity in Babylon.

What was God's purpose in allowing them to face consequences in their earthly life?

God allowed them to face the consequences of their unfaithfulness as a drastic wake up call to repentance. Their wicked actions had caused God to send them away like an unfaithful wife and there is captivity they would realize what they had done. In our life, we might face natural consequences to our actions that call us to repentance, though know that God does not punish us directly for any and every sin we commit.

6. Jesus is changing this funeral into a wedding! The Servant of the Lord bestows on you a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of the spirit of despair. How can you remember these things when the mourning and despair are starting to creep back in?

There's been many days this year that seem to start at a melancholy low-point. Often this happens as a result of going through the days and weeks without the proper personal spiritual nourishment. A daily dose of law and gospel is the best medicine to help wear the crown of beauty and the oil of joy each and every day.

7. The metaphor of the unfaithful harlot turned into the radiant bride of Christ is perhaps the most striking metaphor in all of Scripture. What does verse 10 mean for each and every believer in Christ? See Christian Worship hymn 376.

When we think of how our sins have dirtied us with impurity and filth in the sight of God, how we have been unfaithful to our wedding vows, yet God in his mercy makes us pure and holy and loves us as his bride—I can't think of a more striking picture of the gospel. Jesus your blood and righteousness, my beauty are my glorious dress!

8. We live in a culture of weddings that are all about the bride. For what reasons is this wedding all about the groom?

We come totally empty handed, covered in filthy rags. But our heavenly bridegroom came down for us and our salvation. He suffered and innocent death and poured out his blood to cleanses us. He has prepared everything our wedding day, even the robe of righteousness for us to wear. This wedding is all about the Groom!