

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NRSV)

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my whole being shall exult 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 a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

For Reflection and Prayer:

What did you hear as you listened to the text? Did a word or phrase stand out in particular?

Notice the way your senses are evoked, whether it's a body feeling, picture, metaphor, sound, or gesture and see if it is possible to describe what you are noticing inside you. Stay with that, making room for more to be made known to you.

Have a conversation with God about what you are noticing. You might journal, draw or color your thoughts and feelings and how you sense God responding to you.

Savor any consolations the Lord brings. Simply rest in God's presence.

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NLT)

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me,
for the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted
and to proclaim that captives will be released
and prisoners will be freed

² He has sent me to tell those who mourn
that the time of the LORD's favor has come,
and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.

³ To all who mourn in Israel,
he will give a crown of beauty for ashes,
a joyous blessing instead of mourning,
festive praise instead of despair.
In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks
that the LORD has planted for his own glory.

⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins,
repairing cities destroyed long ago.
They will revive them,
though they have been deserted for many generations.

"For I, the LORD, love justice.
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
I will faithfully reward my people for their suffering
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹ Their descendants will be recognized
and honored among the nations.
Everyone will realize that they are a people
the LORD has blessed."

¹⁰ I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God!
For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation
and draped me in a robe of righteousness.
I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding
or a bride with her jewels.

¹¹ The Sovereign LORD will show his justice to the nations of the world.
Everyone will praise him!
His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring,
with plants springing up everywhere.