

**The Year of Jubilee  
Various Scriptures  
November 4, 2018, Brian Down**

Some of you have received this card in the mail. It's from Camp Homewood announcing their Diamond Jubilee. It signifies 75 years of Pacific Coast Children's Mission. I call your attention to it for two reasons. One is that Homewood is a great ministry and certainly deserves our support. Also, it's an example of how we use the idea of Jubilee in everyday situations.

In 2012 Queen Elizabeth celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. For monarchs a diamond jubilee is 60 years on the throne. That makes her one of the longest reigning monarchs in history. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee after 25 years and her Golden Jubilee after 50 years. And of course we mark these milestones. Jubilee Parkway, Jubilee Auditorium, Royal Jubilee Hospital. A Jubilee marks an accomplishment, an achievement. It's a time to look back and see where we've come from.

But the idea of a jubilee actually comes from the Bible, from the books of Moses. And the idea of jubilee in biblical language is not a time of looking back. It's actually a time of looking forward.

Let's look at how God explains it in Leviticus 25.

**Leviticus 25 (NLT)**

***1 While Moses was on Mount Sinai, the Lord said to him, 2 "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you have entered the land I am giving you, the land itself must observe a Sabbath rest before the Lord every seventh year.***

***3 For six years you may plant your fields and prune your vineyards and harvest your crops, 4 but during the seventh year the land must have a Sabbath year of complete rest. It is the Lord's Sabbath.***

So the idea here goes right back to creation. God created in 6 days and rested on the 7th. Now keep in mind: God was not tired, He didn't need a break. Taking a full day to NOT create was part of the process of creation. It kept things in perspective: as if to say 'creating' wasn't God's only or main task. In one sense it shows He had something else on His mind.

And while God had already told them to take a sabbath day, He now adds the idea of a sabbath year. And He goes on:

**Leviticus 25 (NLT)**

***8 "In addition, you must count off seven Sabbath years, seven sets of seven years, adding up to forty-nine years in all. 9 Then on the Day of Atonement in the fiftieth year, blow the ram's horn loud and long throughout the land.***

***10 Set this year apart as holy, a time to proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live there. It will be a jubilee year for you, when each of you may return to the land that belonged to your ancestors and return to your own clan. 11 This fiftieth year will be a jubilee for you.***

Remember last week, we wrapped up a series of sermons that took us from Genesis to Revelation, from creation to redemption, a series of 49 sermons that presented the whole story of God. This is sermon 50. Our jubilee in a sense.

So when you've counted 7 7's, 49, the next year, the 50th, is the jubilee. And according to God, it's not because of what's happened in the previous 49. In fact what's happened in the previous 49 is almost to be forgotten, to be erased.

Jubilee is a fresh start, a time to return to God's original plan, His original intentions, his original provisions. It is a time of rest like a sabbath year but in the Jubilee year two key things happen: It is a time of freedom; all slaves are set free and returned to their original status as equals.

And it's a time of restoration; all families regain the original property God gave them when they settled the land.

Being a 50 year cycle, most Israelites will only experience it once in their adult lives. And so, in one sense, it allows each generation to experience arriving in the promise land as they did under Joshua, no slaves among them, and everyone benefitting from this land that God had promised.

So this is a festival on a massive scale. Some of us are counting down the months or weeks or even days until Christmas. It's a big deal. For Jubilee they count down the years, the decades. It's one event that God wants them to focus on, to be aware of for their entire lifetime. And just as they knew that all festivals pointed somehow to the Messiah. Jubilee would take on even more Messianic significance.

To understand that let's look at the two main aspect of Jubilee in peoples' lives.

**1] One was the economic aspect we've already mentioned. In the year of Jubilee all slaves would be set free and all property would be returned to the original families that owned it.**

So this knowledge would literally be calculated in the purchase price. You buying a field to plant crops, it's 11 years until jubilee so you figure out how much you can make in 11 years and that's what you offer.

A person is in financial need. There's no bank or government assistance programs. So they offer themselves as a slave, a servant to cover the debt. But how much they are worth as a slave is always calculated on how long it is until the next Jubilee. So the value of everything is based on it's relation to Jubilee.

**2] The other main aspect, and this really underlines the connection to Messiah, is when Jubilee was to begin.**

### **Leviticus 23 (ESV)**

***23 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets.***

Again, it's the seventh month - 7 the number of completion, perfection.

So there's the feast of trumpets on the first day of the 7th month. When Jeff presented this he had a shofar here; a specific kind of trumpet made from a rams horn. They had pretty trumpets made of silver that they used in the tabernacle and temple. But this was not to be a pretty sound. It was to be loud, rough, wild. Jeff pointed out that one of the uses for the shofar was as a call to war and he went on the talk about one of the key battles that we face in our generation. If you missed that week, go back and watch it.

But for our study today we'll remember that the first day of the month was 'trumpets', a wake up call. The next 9 days would be spent praying, meditating, taking stock of one's life, they would be known

as The Days Of Awe. And then the 10th day would be the Day of Atonement, the most solemn day, a day of repentance but more importantly a day of accepting God's forgiveness.

### **Leviticus 23 (ESV)**

**26 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 27 "Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement.**

And in the year of Jubilee, on the Day of Atonement the shofar would cry out again and in a sense people would wake up to find that God has restored all things to His original plan. As he says:

"a time to proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live there."

Most festivals had people bringing individual offerings for individual sins. Atonement was different. On the Day of Atonement there would be ONE sacrifice offered for the sins of ALL of God's people. The entire nation would gather together to offer ONE sacrifice.

This would be done every year BUT on the 50th year, on the Day of Atonement, the Shofar would sound again and it would be Jubilee: freedom, hope.

For much of Israel's history it was assumed that Jubilee was symbolic of the Messianic age. Sp they poured through God's prophecies about the future kingdom and they longed for it.

And their understanding of it was best summed up by Isaiah.

### **Isaiah 61 (NLT)**

**61 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me,  
for the Lord has anointed me  
(made me the Anointed one, the Christened one, the Moshiach/Messiah)  
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 favour 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.**

It's really what our human nature longs for. We want peace and justice and freedom and an end to despair. Human history is full of new political systems and new political parties and all kinds of wars trying to bring this about.

But we know it can't come from us. Don't get me wrong; I like humanity, I like being human, I like what we've accomplished. I love the architecture, the plays of Shakespeare the music of Mozart, the curry at Rejoy and Mini's house. I love that we have cured diseases, and put a man on the moon - probably.

But we know, no matter how much good humanity can achieve, we know that there are those among us who will go into a synagogue and murder 11 people and claim that we'd all be better off by eliminating a specific race. Humans can slaughter innocent people. Humans can keep entire nations in poverty so that a few can live more comfortably.

What we long for most we cannot achieve ourselves. So what God promises through Isaiah gives us hope.

In just a few sentences God sums up what he is going to do for His people.

Summing up:

**The Anointed one  
will bring good news,  
set captives free,  
announce the time of the Lord's favour  
and God's judgement,  
and make God's people righteous.**

Sound familiar? It should. Let's look at Luke chapter 4.

**Luke 4:16-21 (NLT)**

***16 When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. 17 The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:***

***18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,  
that the blind will see,  
that the oppressed will be set free,  
19 and that the time of the Lord's favour has come."***

***20 He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. 21 Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"***

As amazing as this seems it started as a normal event. In their synagogues they had a reading cycle for scriptures. They would go through all of the books of Moses and parts of the prophets on a regular basis - every year or every three years. And if there was guest such as a respected rabbi he would be given the honour of reading that week's portion. So the scroll is given to Jesus.

Now this is a scroll. It's not a book where he can flip through to the page he wants. He opens the scroll which has been rolled to the passage to be read for that day and it just happens to be Isaiah 61.

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,  
that the blind will see,  
that the oppressed will be set free,  
and that the time of the Lord's favour has come."***

And once he's read it he's expected to give a teaching on it; to point out what other famous rabbis had said about it.

He sits down.  
They all watch him, waiting for his teaching.  
But he says something no teacher has ever said before.

"The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"

In other words, the kingdom of God is at hand. The promises that Moses gave, the hundreds of years of prophecy, the very idea of Jubilee and the triumph of God's Anointed is happening in your lifetime. Not just the observance of Jubilee which happens once in an adult's lifetime but the actual day of the Lord's favour.

In other words, fasten your seat belts and hold on. Here we go!

But wait a second. We have to notice one thing. Jesus stopped in the middle of a sentence. There's a whole section of Isaiah he didn't read but should have. He's clearly saying 'this part is fulfilled this very day'. But the rest ...

You see in all the prophecies and teachings about the Messiah, the Christ there is an undeniable conflict and contradiction. On one hand he would establish the throne of David but on the other hand he would be a suffering servant, despised by the people.

On one hand he would ride on the clouds like a triumphant warrior but on the other hand he would ride in peaceably on the foal of a donkey.

There were endless discussions and arguments about how both of these ideas could be fulfilled. This day Jesus ends those arguments.

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,  
that the blind will see,  
that the oppressed will be set free,  
and that the time of the Lord's favour has come."***

This is being fulfilled now in your time.

BUT

***"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."***

The final judgement, the final restoration, the complete righteousness of God's people, that is yet to come.

In his first coming, Jesus would be a suffering servant, despised by the people. He would ride in peaceably on the foal of a donkey and offer himself as the ONE atoning sacrifice that would be for all the sins of God's people.

And that would stop him mid-sentence, a pause, a holding of the breath.

And then -  
At the signal of the Father -  
On a day yet to come -

He will ride on the clouds like a triumphant warrior and establish the throne of David and

### **Isaiah 9 (NLT)**

**6 The government will rest on his shoulders.**

**And he will be called:**

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

**7 His government and its peace  
will never end.**

**He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David  
for all eternity.**

**The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies  
will make this happen!**

Jesus even talked about his own return using the idea of Jubilee.

### **Matthew 24:30-31 (NLT)**

**30 And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with the mighty blast of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.**

Jesus is talking about Jubilee and most of the listeners would have know that.

This is what Peter was talking about in that great sermon he gave on the day of Pentacost:

### **Acts 3:19-21 (NLT)**

**19 Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. 20 Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. 21 For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets.**

Peter is talking about Jubilee and most of the listeners would have know that.

Paul describes it like this:

### **1 Corinthians 15:52 (NLT)**

***52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.***

Paul is writing about Jubilee and most of the readers would have know that. Jubilee is here but it is not finished yet. It has begun but we are still in the years of anticipation. That being the case I want to go back to those two main aspects of Jubilee and so how they are at work now.

Now I admit that both of these areas we're going into can make Christian squirm a little. So let's be careful.

### **Point One - Freedom to captives, property returned.**

It is indeed a completely new beginning but in fact the previous 49 years are not completely forgotten. If someone worked hard and invested wisely building up to Jubilee there would be last repercussions in the new age.

Here's an example; Someone's tired, they think they've worked hard but have very little to show for it. They think, "It's 5 years to Jubilee. Let's sell the farm, live off the profits, stop working so hard, and in 5 years we get the land back anyway. Maybe even sell Jr. off to work as a slave."

Someone else has worked hard, he's made good choices, he has a little profit to work with. He hears his neighbour is selling his land. So he makes some calculations, figures out how much he can make from the land in 5 years and makes an offer. Also "buys" or hires the guy's son as a labourer to work the extra land. It's accepted. He buys the land and the son and gets to work."

5 years later it's Jubilee.

The son is set free and the land is restored. BUT the profit made off the land and the profit from the son's labourer stays with the guy who ran it for 5 years. So the original family gets their son and the land back but that's all. Now they start from scratch. The other guy returns the son and the land but is now farther ahead. He also only has his original land but he now also has a nicer house, better farm equipment, more animals. How they spent the years building up to Jubilee would have lasting repercussions beyond Jubilee.

I know why we shy away from this topic as Christians. We never want to lose sight of the fact that salvation is a free gift, achieved by the blood of Jesus and NOTHING we can do can add to it.

But let's not forget these passages:

Jesus promises:

#### **Matthew 16:27 (NLT)**

***For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.***

#### **Revelation 22:12 (NLT)**

***"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.***

But he also warns:

#### **1 Corinthians 3:13-15 (NLT)**

***But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.***

Jubilee will happen once in each of our lifetimes. Either if Jesus comes back or if we go to him. It will happen for each of us. And how we live our lives, how we honour our God, how we serve the Lord of the Universe, according to scripture, will have lasting repercussions once jubilee happens.

Point number two is also very important. It begins with the celebration of Atonement. But let's see how serious God is about atonement.

### **Leviticus 23 (NLT)**

***29 All who do not deny themselves that day will be cut off from God's people. 30 And I will destroy anyone among you who does any work on that day.***

This sounds very harsh and very mean. It sounds almost petty. But we need to remember the big picture.

God made a covenant with Abraham - through his descendants all nations would be blessed. Through his descendants God would wage a war against Satan to end his power and set humanity free. Through his descendants God would send the Messiah.

He made a covenant with Israel at the foot of Mt. Sinai. He saved them out of Egypt and then asked them if they trusted him enough to obey his laws: laws that He would show us how we are trapped in sin, how our efforts are not enough to save us from the power of sin. The nation accepted that covenant.

Within that covenant was the Day of Atonement, a celebration year after year that would prepare mankind to understand the significance of what Jesus had to do on the cross.

And so if individuals within that nation chose to opt out of Atonement;

if they chose NOT to fast and deny themselves

if they chose NOT to accept the Lord's rest

if they rejected the idea they were meant to be more than the wealth they could earn and the stuff they owned

- maybe they wanted to put in a little overtime, get some work done when every one else was taking a day so they could work without others interfering

- if they truly believed they were just measured by their achievements on earth then they could opt out of Atonement, they could reject the Lord's sabbath rest.

BUT the result would be that they have also rejected the benefits of Atonement, when Jubilee arrived they would have nothing because they had rejected God's covenant with Israel and so they would have none of the promised land since they rejected the promise.

And having rejected a relationship with the creator who had given them breath and food and life they would also then forfeit breath and food and life.

If they rejected God's Atonement on God's terms they would have nothing when Jubilee came. Now we usually think of Salvation as opting IN to God's Covenants.

We accept Jesus as our Atoning Sacrifice. As the book of Romans explains, by personally accepting the blood of Jesus for our salvation we are grafted in to the covenants of God and full partakers in Jubilee. But there is still an element of opting OUT of God's promises.



Romans also says:

### **Romans 1:20 (NLT)**

***For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.***

Even those who have not heard the gospel will still be accountable for what they DO know and what they HAVE seen. If they refuse to acknowledge the creator then He will not acknowledge them.

So it's Friday afternoon, 5:01. You work in a tall office building and at 5:01 you are down the hallway heading for the elevator. The doors open, you get on, and realize one of your colleagues is still standing in the hallway. You say, "Aren't you getting on the elevator. It's time to go home." And they say, "I haven't decided yet."

But it's obvious they have decided. They have chosen to not get on the elevator. They may be trying to convince themselves that they are still choosing whether or not they want to get on but really, they're not choosing. They've chosen NOT to get on. They either choose to get on or they choose not to get on.

Atonement is presented in the same way. We choose to accept the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf or we do not.

Some people may convince themselves they're still in the process of choosing. They like church, they like the encouragement, they like the music, they're just not sure if they're ready to accept the whole "Jesus as my Lord and Saviour" idea.

By not choosing they have chosen. By not claiming the blood of Jesus they have rejected God's atonement. And so, when Jubilee happens, when Christ returns, when God's promises are fulfilled and his plans put into effect - those who have not "chosen" Jesus will have no place in the age to come.

And so we accept Jesus sacrifice on our behalf. We accept the Lord of the Universe on HIS terms and all the promises of Jubilee are ours. Jubilee is the guarantee for all that God promised. It is just a hint of paradise, eternal life, all that our hearts long for.

In a few minutes we will take communion together as Jesus taught us. But I just want to point out one little phrase that Paul uses when he describes communion to the Christians on Corinth.

### **1 Corinthians 11:26 (NLT)**

***26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.***

How we observe sabbath may be different for each of us. But we don't observe sabbath years as a count down the years to Jubilee. But communion - this is our count down.

With each communion we "are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again." We are counting down to the completion, the fulfillment of Jubilee. We are longing for we read about in Revelation: This is Jubilee:

### **Revelation 21 (NLT)**

**21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." 5 And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!"**

#### **Revelation 22 (NLT)**

**3 No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. 4 And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.**

**12 "Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."**

**16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star."**

**17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let anyone who hears this say, "Come." Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.**

**20 He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!"**

**Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!**

**21 May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.**

**The Year of Jubilee  
Week of November 4, 2018**



**Objective of this study:** To let God's goals for the Jubilee Year to shape our beliefs, actions and relationships. And to see how Jesus came to fulfill and teach these same things.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us.]

**Welcome (5 minutes)**

Have you ever attended a 50th anniversary or 50th celebration of some sort? What was it like? What sorts of things did people talk about or focus on?

**Worship (5 – 10 minutes)**

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Isaiah 61:1-3** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you. Did anything "jump out at you"?

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.]

**Word (30-45 minutes)**

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. Read Leviticus 25.
  1. What is revealed about the heart of God in this passage? What does he care about?
3. Read Isaiah 58:1-12; 61:1-3.
  1. What do these passages reveal about the heart of God? What does he care about?
4. Read Luke 4:16-21.
  1. What does this say about Jesus' heart and purpose?
5. How did God intend for the Jubilee Year to shape Israel's thinking/beliefs, actions/behaviour/ and relationships?

**Work (30-45 minutes)**

1. Based on the above readings, what is God's call for us as his people? How should we be investing our time, treasure and talents?
2. Are there changes in attitude or behaviour that the Holy Spirit is nudging you towards?

**Prayer**

1. Spend the rest of the time praying for each other. Praise God together for how he works, and how he allows us to partner with him to accomplish things in his kingdom.
2. Here are some things you can pray about for the church:
  - A. That, as a church, we would actively and purposefully engage in the mission of Jesus in Campbell River.
  - B. Our church board and staff as they lead us to live out the mission of Jesus
  - C. River Kids ministry as they reach out to kids in our community.
  - D. Our missionary of the week: Nadeem and Jamilla Qazi – The Fellowship in Pakistan
  - E. Local CR church: Pastors Barry and Peter at Black Creek Community Church