**3rd Sunday in Advent –
Text**: Isaiah 61:1-3,10-11

**Theme:** Emmanuel—God with us!

A young child was working hard to draw a picture. Breaking his concentration, his mother asked him,. “what are you drawing?”

“I’m drawing a picture of God,” he said.

To which his mother said, “But nobody knows what God looks like…”

This didn’t stop the boy, who simply said, “They will when I am done!”

 Isaiah, in a sense, is painting a picture for us today. He is telling us of what the Messiah will look like when he comes comes. The picture he paints is that of God himself working out the plan of Salvation. He will send the Messiah. The one the Bible calls—Emmanuel—God with us! It is a prophecy of the coming Messiah. We meet the Messiah in this passage. Messiah, is a Hebrew word, and it means “Anointed.” In the Old Testament, when someone was anointed, that person literally had oil poured over their head. No, not motor oil. It was some sort of fragrant olive oil, perhaps, and that was used for anointing. Certain persons were anointed for a very specific reason: for instance, when God had chosen that person to hold an important office. Aaron was anointed when he was chosen by the Lord to be the first high priest. And of course David was anointed when the Lord chose him to be the king of Israel. They were all set apart for a very special purpose.

Jesus is the Messiah. The anointed one. We even hear him speak. He says: **The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the afflicted.** Did you notice something here? Let me read it again. **The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the afflicted.**  Does this description fit anyone we know? Why, yes, of course. Think about Jesus–who, by the way, was from the line of David, the one that Matthew spoke about in his Gospel, 1:22-23 “**Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”**

–think about when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. What happened? The Holy Spirit came down out of heaven and rested upon him. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. And the Father’s voice affirmed his choice: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Clearly this was Jesus being anointed into his office as the Messiah. A beautiful picture painted for us here!

Then early on in his ministry recorded in Luke chapter 4 , at the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus stood up to read the lesson for that day, and he unrolled the scroll of Isaiah, and he read the very words of our text: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me,” etc., to do all the wonderful things Messiah would do. And when he read this, Jesus then said, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

So Jesus is the Messiah. He’s the one Isaiah foresees in our text. By the way, the Greek equivalent for the word “Messiah” is “Christ.” “Christos” means “Anointed One.” So, Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah. The picture painted. Look at who he is and what he does.

**He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,**

**to proclaim freedom for the captives**

**and release for those who are bound,**

**2to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor**

**and the day of vengeance for our God,**

**to comfort all who mourn,**

**3to provide for those who mourn in Zion,**

**to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,**

**the oil of joy instead of mourning,**

**a cloak of praise instead of a faint spirit,**

**so that they will be called oaks of righteousness,**

**a planting of the Lord to display his beauty.**

The good news he brings is ALWAYS the answer to the problem we are having. Are you soiled? He makes you clean. Are you mourning? He brings you comfort. Are you captive, he makes you free. Free from the curse of sin. How is this possible? Now look again at the picture. This is Emmanuel—God with us. Only God can save us from the curse of sin. Jesus, that little baby there in the manger. He is both true God and true man. He is Emmanuel. He came to take care of the cures of sin. How? He lived a perfect life in our place and then he went to pay the price for our sins there on the cross. He was made sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Only God could do it. Only Emmanuel—God with us.

There is another picture here. One that is painted by Isiah. He says that Emmanuel will be dressed for the occasion. When the Lord comes, it will be like a wedding. A day which is long awaited. A day which is a great celebration. A day which is a highpoint of the year.

**10I will rejoice greatly in the Lord.**

**My soul will celebrate because of my God,**

**for he has clothed me in garments of salvation.**

**With a robe of righteousness he covered me,**

**like a bridegroom who wears a beautiful headdress like a priest,**

**and like a bride who adorns herself with her jewelry.**

So, we need to be dressed appropriately. But what if you have nothing to wear? That’s how we all are. We look in the closet of our heart and find that the moths of sin have destroyed the garments. We have nothing of our own to wear. We are like Adam and Eve, shamefully hiding our sins from the Lord. The best they could do was sew together some fig leaves – makeshift coverings at best.

Instead God sacrifices his son, and we are clothed with Christ. As Revelation 7 says it, those in heaven have “washed their robes in the blood of the lamb”. Or, as Isaiah here says, “**he has clothed me with garments of salvation, and with a robe of righteousness he covered me**”.

 Now look what things look like when we are properly dressed. What things look like when Emmanuel will come again on the last day! **11For as the earth produces its growth,and as a garden causes what has been sown to sprout up, so God the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up in the presence of all the nations.**

 So, we can sing Oh come Oh come Emanuel—again. Because Jesus will come again. And he will find us dressed. **Amen**