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4-28-2024

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

In Isaiah 61:3 it says, “**....to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.**” These are awesome promises for those that love the Lord.

First off, he plants us and calls us trees of righteousness. We obtain this title because in I Corinthians 5:21 it says, “**For he** (The Father) **made him** (Jesus) **to be sin for us, who knew no sin;** (Jesus was sinless) **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**” We cannot become righteous on our own. It takes Jesus to do this. He takes our sin when we receive him as Savior and makes us his righteousness. Now that is a great exchange for each of us my friends.

It can't be earned. It can't be bought. It can't even be stolen. It is a free gift that we receive by faith. We can't work hard enough to receive it. God paid for it, and we receive it by faith in his blood shed on the cross and his bodily resurrection.

What are some of the benefits of this exchange besides eternal life? Well, we get beauty out of the ash heap of our lives. He takes our brokenness and turns it into something beautiful. He takes our mess and brings reconciliation to God. Then, when we are cast down with a heavy spirit because of our sin, or any situation that is discouraging, he puts his garment on us; the garment of praise. He becomes the song we sing and the praise that comes from our lips to restore our spirits.

Remember we can't plant ourselves. God plants us so that he is glorified. He will never allow anyone to receive His glory. He deserves all the glory and honor for what he has done. It gives him great pleasure to make us into something beautiful and full of praise.

So, rejoice, knowing that God is doing this work in you and me, and that His plan will be worked out in our lives!