



# Links Players

## Giving Thanks - Helping the Hurting

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn....(Isaiah 61:1-2, ESV).*

Let's face it: golf is hard. I once watched an interview with Jack Nicklaus. In that interview, arguably the greatest player who has ever lived said, "Golf is hard."

Perhaps I should say, "Golf can be hard." Clearly, there are moments or even seasons when this game comes easy. We find the "zone," and it is effortless. Can I get an amen?

Life is a bit like that! We have seasons of smooth sailing, and the next thing we know, an unexpected storm is brewing on the horizon. Seemingly out of nowhere, the heavens unleash thunder and lightning that causes even the strongest to grow weak in the knees.

In moments like these, we need each other. Three years ago, I was playing eighteen with a gentleman who was in his nineties, a magnificent athlete. I was in "bad form." The harder I tried, the worse it got.

Surprisingly, he spent the entire round telling me how good my action was. I promise you, no one else saw whatever he saw, but his encouragement is cemented in my psyche.

Isaiah's prophecy regarding the Messiah announces some characteristics of the "Coming King." This prophecy gives us some identifying traits that we might recognize him as "The Christ." Among these markers, he will: "bind up the brokenhearted," "proclaim release to captives," and "bring good news to the poor."

Now, of course, Jesus accomplished every one of these and more while on earth. But this "good news" doesn't stop there. He frequently and directly applies these benefits to us from his throne in heaven by the power of his Spirit. However, that doesn't exhaust the applications of his goodness to us either.

Many times, if not most of the time, he indirectly uses his people empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring the "good news to the poor," to "heal

the brokenhearted," and to "release the captives."

As an old, wise Southern preacher once told me, "People need Jesus with skin on!" Of course, what he meant was easy to comprehend—people need to experience the power of the gospel by the Spirit operating in and through other people.

As we approach the Holiday Season (Thanksgiving and Christmas), let's pray and ask the Lord to use us toward those who find themselves in the difficult seasons of life.

Like our Links Fellowship at The Golf Club at Blackrock, let's find those who are hurting and meet their needs!

**Prayer: Jesus! Lead us! Use us!**

### READING - Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21.

1. Reminisce and call to mind those times when your swing was in "bad form." Remember and discuss when a golf pro or close friend came alongside you and gave you a swing tip or an encouraging word that "healed" the issue.

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2. Among the identifying traits listed in today's text (Isaiah 61) regarding the Messiah, which one stands out to you in this season of your life?

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3. As you discuss these Messianic attributes, perhaps someone you know needs to be "released from captivity" to alcohol, excessive gambling, or some other debilitating issue. With discretion, pray and discuss how the Lord might use you to bring freedom into their lives.

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