

Isaiah 12:1-6

¹ And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. ² Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' " ³ Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation. ⁴ And in that day you will say: "Praise the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted. ⁵ Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth. ⁶ Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

It is good for us at this point to do some review. Up to this point we have seen God exhibit His grace to Isaiah in Chapter 6. We saw grace for Judah in Chapter 8. We saw grace for Israel in Chapter 10.

The beauty in all this is that the people God had grace toward **never did anything to win it or deserve it**. They had no redeeming qualities. It was not on their part that they did anything to be on the side of God's favor. Again we see that salvation is not primarily about **man's** choice. It is primarily about **God's** choice. There is something interesting we need to know about the Hebrew language in our text. When **we** use the word you, it can be singular, addressed to one person. Or it can be plural, addressed to many. I could be talking to Diane and say "you" or I could be addressing all of you by saying "you" and we can only tell by the context. But the Hebrew has two different words.

The you in verses 1 and 2 is singular. So Isaiah is saying this is true to each of these people. Then in 3 and 4 it is plural, so he is saying you as a whole.

So there is a difference in verse 1 and verse 4 that the English doesn't reveal.

When verse one says "In that day you will say", it is talking about personal witness. These people will have learned this for themselves.

In verse 4 where it says "In that day you will say", it is talking about corporate witness. You as a group will get this.

¹ And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.

Some people like to understand Christianity as if it is some kind of myth passed from generation to generation. They treat it as some kind of brainwashing or conditioning where a person accepts something because they are too stupid or gullible not to.

We see in Isaiah that this is just the opposite of what **really happens** in true salvation. Here the society is turning against God. Even the parents were turning against God. But there would be a remnant left against all odds. They will be

people who serve God even though doing so is very unpopular. They are the miracle people.

That is the part that the world **does not** and **cannot** understand about Christianity. Whether faith follows a bloodline or not, no amount of human conditioning can make a person believe. Every believer is a miracle. And this morning we are looking at the miracles that resulted in God's ministry to His people.

The context of the time period is revealed in Chapter 11. It is when God's people return from captivity. These are God's people who were not assimilated into the culture they were living in. They clung to their God even when surrounded by all the alternatives.

So when these miracles return home, this is what they will say as individuals. This is how they will personally evaluate their lives. They will say this:

"O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.

Think about this. Many people would be offended to think that God is angry with them. Their arrogance would not accept that God **has anything to be angry about** with them. Or they have construed God into being the kind of being that is always lovey dovey and just thrilled that any human being would give Him the time of day.

That is all wrong. God gets angry. And His anger is always about sin. So when we cling to sin, we make God angry.

For those of you who have kids, how do you feel when your kids blatantly disregard what you say? When they knowingly rebel against your authority? Does it not anger you? Of course it does. Who do those little pipsqueaks think they are to rebel against those who have done so much for them?

Well God gets angry too. He gets angry at our rebellion. He will discipline his children. He will punish his enemies. But He too gets angry.

If you are a believer you do well to avoid the things that make God angry. There is no sense inviting His discipline.

If you have never received God's forgiveness, now is the time to receive it. God's anger rests on all those who reject Christ, who will not receive His gift of salvation and submit to His Lordship. Submit today.

These people Isaiah is referring to got the point. They are praising God. They admit that they deserved God's wrath. But they did what was needed for God's anger to turn away from them.

But notice that God doesn't just leave them in a vacuum. Now the same God that was angry with him or her comforts that person.

I liked what one of the commentators said. He said that our deepest problem is not whether **we will love God**, but whether **God will love us**. When we

understand how much we **deserve** his anger, avoiding that wrath becomes our highest priority. And that is exactly what the gospel does. It is not that we dodged the wrath of God. But Christ stepped in and took the wrath of God full force. It all landed on Him.

And now, wonder of all wonders, that same God who carried his wrath out upon His son **comforts** us. He even sent us the **comforter**.

Look at 2 Corinthians 1. Listen for the words comfort and consolation.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

³ **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. ⁶ Now if we are afflicted, *it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.* ⁷ And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also *you will partake of the consolation.***

Look at this. Our God is called the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Is that how you would describe God? Have you experienced remarkable comfort at His hands? I don't know about you, but there have been times when I cried out to God for comfort. I did not know what I would do without it. And what God usually provided was a truth in His word that relieved the turmoil I felt. He gives answers. He gives comfort. Sometime his comfort comes to us through other people. That is how Paul describes it. **Others face hardships. Others get comfort.** And then they are free to spread that same comfort to others. Really, what comfort are we specialists in giving? What comfort has **God used you to give** in a powerful way in someone else's life? Wasn't it often the same comfort you longed for and finally received when you too were in great hardship? That is one of the benefits of suffering much for Christ. We also experience **more** of His comfort, **more** of his consolation.

Isn't it wonderful how this suffering and comfort cycle works out? It ends up being spread throughout the whole body. It starts with one person. That person becomes a comfort specialist as a result of the pain they experience. God teaches that person much, and they can then spread that comfort in Christ's name.

Do you see God as your **comforter** or **torturer**? Do you fear His wrath or embrace his comfort? God truly is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Do you embrace the Comforter as He brings the truth of God's Word to life in your life?

I wonder what would happen if the Bible truly was the first thing we ran to when we were suffering. I wonder what would happen if we called out to God to meet

us there in His word? Maybe we would be much better at giving and receiving comfort. Maybe we would become **comfort specialists**, just like the Holy Spirit is. The individuals in Isaiah's text were doing just that. They were the remnant returning and they were praising God that not only did God not destroy them in His wrath, He comforted them in their suffering. That is what the individuals would be saying. And they would also say the following.

² **Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'** "

The text literally reads Yah Yahweh is my strength and song. He uses God's personal name not once but twice. When we experience grace, when we really grasp that it is for us and that we are bathing in **a sea of it**, when we bask the wonder of it all, it reverses everything. We go from being rightfully afraid of God to being amazingly, inexpressibly, enthralled with the person of our Savior. We become what would **appear** to be overly and maybe **improperly** familiar with Him. But it is not because of anything bad. It is because we are enthralled with our beloved. I am his and he is mine. It is a wonder of wonders.

And look what these individuals will say.

The Lord is my strength and my song.

We need to back up. First these people said Behold God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. The way this is worded it means that **God is their exclusive trust, their only trust, their only salvation.**

What situation is there in your life that you are really only trusting in God to provide for you? It is a place where you are not trusting your abilities. You are not trusting your resources. You are not depending on something you are doing to make the difference and provide you with what you need.

How different would our lives be if we could really say this? If we could really say, I am not depending on my efforts taking care of this situation. I am not trusting my strategies, or my human defenses, or my relational interactions, or anything else to take care of this. I am only trusting God.

Can you imagine how many problems in our marriages or other relationships we could have avoided if we would have **just chosen to trust God** instead of trying to **get our own way by our own strategies**? So much of the pain we cause is by trying to get what we feel we need our own way. But what would have happened if we had decided to trust God? If we had said, Lord I trust you to make the changes in this person's life that I love that YOU want. I trust you to do this. And I will watch and wait as you do?

That is the kind of thing Isaiah is talking about. He is talking about going to prayer like prayer is our only resource, like going to God is **really going to the only source** of our help. Like he truly **is** our **total** salvation, not just for our souls, but for

everything in life. He is the one we trust to save us from this or that threatening thing.

Look at the thing that drives you to desperation. Trust that to Christ. That is the starting ground. Trust that thing to Christ. And do not back down until He moves in you to change **either you or your situation**.

We will find that when we really do business with this, and I mean really down in the guts of where we live. When we choose to trust Christ as our provider and deliverer and strength **there**, fears will subside. We will learn that we really **can** trust in Christ to deliver us. He delivers on His promises. We really **are** safe. We really **do** have a father who approves of who He made us. He wants our company. And He will not allow us to fall away. When we rest all our hope and trust on Him, our fears will seem incongruous to the joy we see before us. We sing this hymn, but can we commit to living it?

1. What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
 - Refrain:
Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
2. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
3. What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

I wonder if there isn't a direct relationship between **how much we trust and how passionately we sing**. In our text this trust that overcomes fear says that God is not only his strength but **his song**. A song that comes from the heart is an expression that is hard to contain. When our heart breaks out in song it is an expression of delight. This goes beyond a rational understanding of a relationship. It is an expression of the wonder and delight we have in the one we are in relationship with.

Marriages are tricky things. Living with another human being is not always easy. So God gave us rules and principles to go by. And often we need that guidance so that we will do the right thing. But sometimes if you are fortunate, you feel enamored with the person that God has placed you with. And at that point you feel **the delight that inspires songs**. That is the kind of heart stirring that Isaiah describes here. It is the delight in God that wants to break out in song. Because you feel that **only song** is adequate to say what you want to say. Simple words will fall short.

Now look at that verse again. It starts with

God is my salvation

Then it goes to

He also has become my salvation.' "

Literally it says "And He is to me for salvation."

What you don't see here is a salvation experience that is in the past. It is always **in the present**. This testimony to God's grace may have **something to say** about the past. But it also has a **continuing story** of how God has become that saving influence in this person's life. Just as the **trust** is present, so is **the salvation**.

When this person needs salvation, he or she knows where to find it. It is found by trust in the savior.

If someone were to watch our lives, would they see us running to our Savior when we need one form or other of salvation? It isn't complicated. We either rely **on our own resources** or we **rely upon God** for those saving things in our lives. What savior are we going to trust? That is the real issue. And we will only want to **sing** of our Savior if we are continually **trusting** in our savior.

³ **Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation.**

When the right things are in your heart, that then find expression in your words, **only then** will you draw waters from the well of that source. When you **see** Christ as your salvation, and when you **test** Christ as your salvation, and when your salvation is delivered to you time and time again, then your joy will be in the right place. You will be enamored with your God and draw water from that same well with joy.

The imagery here is very encouraging. Our need for this water is constant. And the provision of this need by God is ever present. Oh what a wonderful God we have. Oh that **we would test Him to find out**. Oh that we would trust Him to do what He says He will do.

Does this life that is described look like drudgery to you? Does this look like a life that is a drag to wake up to? Does this look like a life you would want to escape? No. Not at all. It is joyful and hopeful. It is a new adventure in trusting God every day. It is life of delight in Christ. That is not some exceptional Christian life. That is how the Christian life is to be lived. If that does not describe our lives, I believe

the problem really rests in the words **trust** and **salvation**. I think if we look at our lives long enough we will see that we are trusting something other than Christ to give us what we think will really, down deep, save us.

And in that day you will say: "Praise the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted.

Now the you is plural. Now everyone is saying something. The group of individuals who have learned to trust Christ are coming together. And that is where true church comes from. We see nothing of the petty grievances. There are none of the peripheral concerns.

What is being said? What is front and center?

"Praise the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted.

Look at the focus of all that is being said in this fellowship of believers. Who is at the center of their gathering? God. Praise God, Call upon God. Declare God's deeds. Let everyone know it is God's name that is exalted.

When the people of God **trust** God and **test** God and **find Him true**, their mutual fellowship is one that is focused on God. That is how church should be.

I don't know how many churches there are in the United States. But I know if they were all coming together like this our nation would be in a much different state than it is now.

I'd like to read you a quote.

In 1993 three New Tribes Mission missionaries were kidnapped in Colombia by terrorists. For eight years their families and friends wondered and prayed and worried. Eventually they were informed that the men were dead. Dan Germann was the NTM director in Colombia at that time. In an interview he said that their prayers changed through those long years of uncertainty. They started out praying that God would bring the men home safely. They ended up praying, "God, even if we never know what has become of them, you will still be God." Dan said, "There is a very special sense of awe at **who God is** and **how sufficient he is** when the miracle doesn't happen, but the wonder of his sufficiency is still present." This too is the triumph of grace. We come to realize that God is **God**. Our living and our dying take on a very special sense of awe, no matter what price we pay to spread his song. His cause is the one cause on the face of the earth that will finally succeed.

Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.

This is the kind of praising God we are called to do. We praise God because He is God. We hold out who He is by what He has done. We look to Him as the one on the throne sovereignly reigning over the activities of man. And we present Him as such to anyone we have the opportunity to.

While this text presents us with an example to follow, the example of the remnant coming together, it almost goes without saying that it would be irrational to do anything else. What we are seeing in this passage is the passion that comes from true experience with God. When a person tastes God's grace and really comprehends it, there is a rejoicing that naturally accompanies that experience of grace. We look at the text and if we are wise we wonder how could it be any different? How could we **not** do these things?

But there **is** a way. And the way is to choose another route, other than trusting God for the salvation we need today. It is by having a wonderful theology about a God that is never tested by walking by faith in that God. Then we can have a pretty dismal boring unchallenging life where we allow ourselves to become pretty dismal. We do not get there by trusting. We don't get there by testing God's promises to deliver us. We get there by unbelief.

⁴⁵ Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth. ⁶ Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

Look at this. It doesn't say grit your teeth and bear it. It doesn't say grovel on to your last days. No. It says SING to the Lord. Again, that is what people do when their hearts are full of joy. Sing. And why? Why not? God has done great things. He is doing great things. It is like Him to do great things.

What we see here in Isaiah is the New Testament church. We have a precursor to the book of Acts. They did just this. They sang to the Lord. They proclaimed the excellent things God had done. Creation is pretty well seen by every thinking human being. They are not inclined to give God credit. But we should.

And look at what this says. Cry out and shout. Let that expression in your heart **of gratitude to God** find its release in **telling the world** about it. Cry out and shout. Now, why should we do such a thing?

For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

The Holy One in your midst? How could that be? No Jewish person would expect God to be present with them, especially in bodily form. But this word from God through the prophet Isaiah was warning them to expect this. One commentary said it well. He is distinct but not aloof. Oh praise God that He is not aloof. Praise God that He came to be in our midst. And according to His word, He is in our midst right now.

Sing to the Lord, for He has done excellent things.

Sing leaning on the everlasting arms