

**12.8.24                      The LORD GOD is My Strength and My Song                      Isaiah 12:2-6**  
**Douglas Scalise, Brewster Baptist Church**

Have you started listening to Christmas music? I have. As I've been driving, working on sermons or at the gym, I've listened to music as diverse as Handel's Messiah, a contemporary rendition of God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Lindsey Stirling's violin led renditions of Christmas Classics, and Brian Setzer's Boogie Woogie Christmas. You can't beat Brian Setzer's version of Run, Rudolph. Run. Singing, music and sharing the story of Jesus and Christmas are so intertwined in our hearts, memories, and moments this time of year. We'll be going Christmas caroling this Saturday to BBC folks who aren't able to worship with us in person. When we sing joyfully and give thanks to the Lord and share who God is and what God has done as we do every Christmas season, we're doing something quite ancient. Something that's deeply embedded in the human spirit. We hear this reflected in today's scripture from Isaiah 12 which is about who God is, what God has done for us, and what that means for each of us.

The prophet Isaiah is to biblical prophecy what Beethoven is to music and Babe Ruth is to baseball. He's prominent and significant. Isaiah lived in the 8th century before Christ. He was called to prophecy around the year 742 BC and died around 715 BC. Isaiah served in Jerusalem during the reigns of four Judean kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The biblical Book of Isaiah is a major contribution to the Jewish and Christian traditions. Isaiah is the first of the seventeen prophetic writings in the Hebrew Bible. Based on the length of each book, five of them are called Major Prophets and twelve are Minor Prophets. The Book of Isaiah, the first of the major prophets, is like a miniature Bible. The Bible has 66 books and Isaiah has 66 chapters. The Bible has two parts with thirty-nine chapters in the Old Testament and twenty-seven chapters in the New Testament. In Isaiah, Chapters 1-39 could be called the Book of Judgment and Chapters 40-66 are often called the Book of Consolation. Isaiah's name essentially means "*the Lord is my salvation,*" or "*Yahweh is salvation,*" and the salvation of the Lord is the book's overall theme. Think how remarkable it is that we have and can hear words that are roughly 2,750 years old. Listen to **Isaiah 12:2-6** (ESV) which is a song of praise.

<sup>2</sup> “Behold, **God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid;**  
for the Lord **God is my strength** and my **song**,  
and he has become my **salvation.**”

<sup>3</sup> With **joy** you will draw water from the wells of **salvation.**

<sup>4</sup> And you will say in that day: “**Give thanks** to the Lord, **call upon** his name,  
**make known** his deeds among the peoples, **proclaim** that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup> “**Sing** praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;  
**let this be made known** in all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Shout, and **sing** for **joy**, O inhabitant of Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

Isaiah’s song from 2750 years ago is from a world so different than ours that you might think it couldn’t possibly have anything to say to you. Yet even though so much has changed scientifically, medically, technologically, and in many other ways, the hunger of the human heart and the needs of people remain strikingly similar across hundreds and even thousands of years. Isaiah’s song speaks of many things that we long for and desire in our life. Regarding the qualities, attitudes, and actions that Isaiah mentions, ask yourself, are there any of these things that I wouldn’t want in my life? I’m referring to - trust, confidence and courage which are the opposite of being afraid, strength and power for living, joy which is infectious and meant to be shared, connection with others. Could you use more of any of those in your life? Isaiah says there’s a way to experience them.

The idea I want to share with you today is that **when God is our salvation, it leads to trust, joy, and sharing with others.** And trust, joy, and sharing with others are all things most of us need and want.

### **1. Salvation Leads to Trust (Isaiah 12:2)**

Isaiah 12 begins with a confident declaration: “**Behold,**” or “**Surely God is my salvation.**” In the book of Isaiah, the word “**salvation**” appears **twenty-eight times.** “**Salvation**” means **God’s act of rescuing or delivering people from danger and hardship.** Saying “**God is my salvation**” is way of saying, **God the source of my safety and strength,** allowing us to trust God without fear. Salvation represents

deliverance and restoration to a state of well-being. So many people today need deliverance from all kinds of sins, conditions, and situations, so many people are not well and need healing, wholeness, and restoration.

God alone is the source of salvation. The God of salvation is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The same God who delivered Israel in the past is the one who offers salvation to us today. The salvation Isaiah refers to is not a future possibility; it's a present reality for those who trust in the Lord. To say, "God is my salvation," is a bold affirmation of faith which changes our life.

The second part of this verse speaks to **the emotional and spiritual response to salvation: "I will trust, and will not be afraid."** Trust is the opposite of fear. To trust in God's salvation means we can release our anxiety and fears because we know that the One who saves is also the One who strengthens and defends us. The words of Isaiah are a reminder that God is trustworthy. We can cast our cares upon the Lord because God cares for us. The God who brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt, the God who sent His Son to save the world, is the same God who is with us now and forever. Are you trusting in God's salvation? Or do you find yourself holding onto fear and anxiety? Trusting in God's salvation is the foundation for the joy that Isaiah speaks of. When we're confident in God's ability to save, fear gives way to peace and joy.

## **2. Salvation Leads to Joy (Isaiah 12:3)**

Verse 3 introduces an image that would've been especially meaningful to the people of Israel—**wells of salvation**. "*With joy you will draw water from the wells of **salvation**.*" Isaiah compares salvation to a well that offers what people can't live without: water. It's an evocative picture of God's redemption being like water for thirsty people. Isaiah says that salvation is as necessary for human well-being as water itself. Wells were vital sources of life in the arid regions where Isaiah lived. Water was and is essential to life, and the act of drawing water from a well symbolized the provision of life itself. In the context of salvation, **the wells of salvation are a metaphor for the abundance of God's grace and mercy.**

Isaiah tells the people, "*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*" This is not a passive waiting, but an active, joyful participation in the blessings that God has provided. God provides the well, but we're the ones who need to lower our bucket

and do some pulling. There's a partnership and participation side to our faith. The "wells of salvation" suggest not a thin trickle, but a deep abundance. Hearing this image, some of us think of Jesus, speaking with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well about water. In **John 4:13-14**, Jesus says to her, ***"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."***

In Advent, we're invited to draw from the "wells" of salvation God has made available to us. These wells are filled with the life-giving water of Christ's love, presence, teaching, and sacrifice, the forgiveness of sins, and the hope of eternal life. The joy of drawing from these wells is a deep, spiritual joy that comes from knowing we're loved, redeemed, and made new by God's grace. It's a joy that can't be taken away, a joy rooted in the salvation we have in Christ.

Advent is a time to remember that the wells of salvation are always open to us. When we feel parched or dry, when we're afraid or uncertain, when we're burdened by the struggles of life, we're invited to come to the well and drink deeply of God's grace. In Christ, we have access to the living water that satisfies our deepest needs. God's salvation is refreshment for spiritually parched people. Salvation leads to trust, joy, and

### **3. Salvation Leads to Sharing with Others (Isaiah 12:4-5)**

<sup>4</sup> *And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.*

<sup>5</sup> *"Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth."*

This is a command to **make known** God's deeds to other people, to make known God's glorious acts in words and through singing. Each of us has the privilege and joy of making God's good deeds known to others. We have the responsibility to share who God is and what God has done. So many people are afraid, and don't know who they are or whose they are, so many are lacking in strength and joy. All these things we find in our relationship with the Lord and in the salvation God provides.

When we celebrate the coming of Christ at Christmas, we're not merely celebrating ourselves, but we're called to proclaim the good news to the world. We're to bring in and include others in the blessings that come from finding our salvation in God. This is part of the joy of Advent—the invitation to share the story of God's salvation with others, to make His name known among the nations. We're also called to *"sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things."* Singing is an expression of joy, and in this passage, it becomes an act of witness and sharing. Our praise is not only a response to what God has done but also a testimony to the world around us. The world needs to hear this message—especially in a time when so much despair, darkness, and confusion abound. Isaiah's message and ours is a message of salvation, trust, joy, and sharing with others. Let's not keep this good news to ourselves.

Yesterday afternoon I was working out at the gym and when I moved from one part to another, I was surprised to see a young man with a Bible open to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke. I said to him, *"May I ask why you're reading the Gospel of Luke?"* He told me he had to read Luke 1 for a Bible study at his church. I said, the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, and Zechariah's prophecy about their son? He looked at me rather surprised and said, *"Yes, that and the story of the prodigal son."* I smiled and said, *"May I share a couple things with you for your Bible study?"* He said, *"Sure."* So, I began by saying although many people call it the parable of the prodigal son, it's really the story of the Loving Father. I gave him a couple more nuggets and then we both did a set of exercises. I was going by him again and I said, *"Would you like a little more?"* He said, *"Absolutely. Keep 'em coming."* So I explained how the younger son was feeding pigs which was the lowest job imaginable for a Jewish son because pigs were unclean, how both sons were prodigal in different ways, but how the key to the story is how God, like the loving father, is always looking, scanning the horizon, hoping lost children will return home and then the great joy and celebration that erupts when what was lost is found. As I was leaving, I smiled at him and said, *"Have a great time at Bible study tomorrow."* I'm sure he's going to surprise a couple people at his church today. I walked out of the gym smiling and joyful because I'd had the chance to share with someone about how great God is.

The final verse of this passage is a call to exuberant praise. “*Shout, and **sing for joy**, O inhabitant of Zion, **for great in your midst** is the Holy One of Israel.*” The reason for such joy is simple yet profound. **The greatness of God is the foundation of our joy.** God’s salvation, holiness, majesty, power, and presence are reasons to rejoice with all our hearts. Advent invites us to remember that Immanuel—God with us—is the reason for our joy. In a world that can often seem bleak or uncertain, the greatness of God stands as a beacon of hope. The Advent season reminds us that God is with us and God’s greatness fills our hearts with joy.

What would you say your greatest need is in life? How you answer that question will determine how you spend your time. If your greatest need is for money, you can wear yourself out trying to get rich, and the next dollar you earn will never be enough. If your greatest need is for technology, you can become a slave to the latest gadget. If your greatest need is education, you can spend your life running after knowledge only to discover the more you know, the more you don’t know. If your greatest need is for someone to love you, you’re getting closer, but no human relationship can fully satisfy the God-sized space in your heart. If your greatest need is for salvation, trust, courage, forgiveness, peace, meaning, or love, you can spend the rest of your life following Jesus and getting to know better the one who loves you and shows you how to live as a member of God’s family and you’ll never regret it. God loves you more than you can imagine, and Jesus demonstrates that love in laying down his life to free you from the power and consequences of your sin.

As we continue the season of Advent, I pray we’ll be filled with the joy of Isaiah’s song. Let’s trust in God’s salvation, draw from the deep wells of God’s grace, proclaim the Lord’s glory to the others, and shout for joy because the Holy One is among us.

May the joy of salvation fill our hearts and may that joy overflow into our relationships and the world around us as we proclaim the glorious things God has done in Christ.

### Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. In verse 2, Isaiah declares, "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid," What does trusting in God look like in your daily life? How do you overcome fear with faith?
2. The phrase "The LORD GOD is my strength and my song or my might" is repeated in Scripture (Exodus 15:2, Psalm 118:14). Why do you think the idea of God as strength, song, and might is so central in the Bible?
3. Think of a time when you felt weak or overwhelmed. How did you experience God's strength in that situation?
4. Verse 4 calls believers to "*Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples.*" How do you share God's goodness with others in your own life?
5. Isaiah speaks of joy in salvation. How do you maintain joy in your faith, even in challenging circumstances?
6. What steps can you take to rely on God as your "strength and song" this week? Are there specific areas of life where you need to surrender control to God?