

“I Will Trust and Will Not Be Afraid”

Isaiah 12: 1-6

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Similar worlds: The words “I will trust and not be afraid” were spoken by Isaiah the prophet about 2700 years ago. At that time, the Assyrian army was dominating the region and Judah was just a small nation living in its shadow. The Israelites’ world was unpredictable. There were warring factions all around and they felt the world was unpredictable. Today our world is not so dissimilar. The terrorist group ‘Isis’ is terrorizing regions of the world today and the nations of the world seem to lack the means in eradicating this scourge and other evils from the earth. Whether the threats are on a global scale as an economic crisis, or on a personal level such as illness, the death of a friend or loved one, it is not easy to stare it in the face and say the words “I will trust and will not be afraid.”

Two songs are sung. Two songs are sung in this passage beginning with this phrase:

“And you will say in that day” (from 12: 1 and 4)

“You will say in that day: I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, and you comforted me. ² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD^[a] is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation (12: 1-2).” The first song is sung by an individual who is thankful about the deliverance by God who is ‘my salvation’. Though the individual is not specifically identified (it could be Isaiah), the text quotes back to the Exodus from Egypt. In Exodus 15:2 we read, “*The Lord is my strength and my might and he has become my salvation.*” The picture we see here is of a mighty warrior who can defeat Pharaoh and his armies in order to free the people of Israel from slavery. For those who are experiencing fear in their lives, this memory of what happened in Egypt with God’s victory over earthly powers helps them recall that they are not alone in this world.

“And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵ Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known^[b] in all the earth. ⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal^[c] Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel (12: 4-6).” The second song offers a song of thanksgiving to the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah calls the people to lift their voices to God. Give thanks and sing praises! This is not an individual song but it is a communal song. It is kind of like a choir gathering around the individual voice in verse 1 and 2. It is not one, but a chorus of voices offering praise and thanksgiving to God for what God has done. These voices of praise are a strong defense against the grip of fear. This is also true in our community of faith in our context here today as we witness and are aware

of God's saving deeds. It is so much easier to trust and not be afraid when the whole community is together singing and supporting one another.

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation (12:3)”. This verse ties these two songs of the individual and the community together. Verse 3 is a reminder to the Israelites and to us today that God's salvation is fundamental to life - as water which falls as rain and water which comes up from the earth. In verse 5 we read, *“Sing praises to the Lord for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth”*. It is important to remember that it is God's saving power which gives us opportunity to choose the position of trust instead of fear when we are confronted with pain, loss and uncertainty. The ‘wells of salvation’ indicate God's abundance so much that our parched lips of fear are relieved by water which moistens our lips to sing praises together.

Carol: *What Child is this* (Let us sing together) Words by William Chatterton Dix

*What Child is this who, laid to rest- on Mary's lap, is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet - while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King - whom shepherds guard and angels sing,
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud - the Babe, the Son of Mary!*

*Why lies He in such mean estate - where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here - the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through - the Cross be borne for me, for you,
Hail, hail the Word made flesh - the Babe, the Son of Mary!*

*So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh - come peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings - let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise, the song on high - the virgin sings her lullaby,
Joy, joy, for Christ is born - the Babe, the Son of Mary!*

I will trust, and will not be afraid (from 12:2) As we travel the journey to Bethlehem this Advent season, we are continuously hearing about the bad news and the injustice which are going on in our world. The baby Jesus born in Bethlehem is a fulfillment to the promise of God to bring redemption to the world. ‘In that day’ the well of God's abundant love wins over death and good wins over evil. We read the words of Luke 2: 10 and 11: *“Do not be afraid, for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people, to you is born this day in the city of David a saviour who is the Messiah, the Lord.”* With joy we move forward into the future together singing this song, *‘Great in our midst is the Holy one of Israel (Isaiah 12:6)*. Therefore, *“I will trust, and will not be afraid”*. Amen.