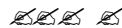


Good News! God IS Our Salvation!”

Isaiah 12:1-6

“1 In that day you will say: "I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. 2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."..."
Isaiah 12:1-6 (NIV)



The more driving I do around Christmas time around here, the more I recognize that the most significant thing about Christmas is NOT buying gifts. It's waiting.

Everywhere you look at Christmas there's waiting. Waiting in line. Waiting for items order on the internet to come. Waiting for families to decide what there plans are going to be. Waiting...

I don't know about you, but waiting is one of the hardest things. It seems that all we ever do in life...is wait.

This afternoon I was coming out of Kmart's busy parking lot, trying to turn left onto Avon. Traffic was cleared, but I couldn't go. Why? Because there was someone on Avon Road wanting to turn left. There were several times that things cleared enough for the driver to go. But she didn't. So, I had to wait.

And have you noticed how when you go into a parking lot, unless you get a parking space immediately, you have to wait.

No matter where we look, there's waiting. Once Christmas is done, much of the seasonal waiting will be done. But for now, in the weeks preceding Christmas, it's all about waiting.

During Advent, not all the waiting is man-made. Not all of it is caused by the rush, the hustle and bustle, and the euphoric mad-rush of Christmas. In fact, the most significant waiting was initiated—caused—by God. Yep, if you must blame someone or something for all this waiting, we must look to God *first*.

When we consider how long we have to wait in long lines or wait in traffic, or any thing else we've had to wait for, our wait is small—infinitesimal—in comparison to the wait God's people had as they waiting for God to fulfill His promise and send Jesus.

Look at all the people.

☞☞ How long did Adam have to wait? And he lived over 900 years....and died, still waiting for Jesus to come.

☞☞ How Noah must have prayed and waited for God to save the world years after the flood, when he saw that the flood did not eradicate sin.

✂✂Abraham waited his entire life...all 175 years...for God’s promise of a Messiah, a promise given directly to Him.

✂✂So did his sons, Isaac and Jacob, to whom Jesus was promised.

✂✂Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, prophesied the coming of John the Baptist. He knew what to watch for...but all he could do was watch...and wait.

And how about Isaiah...searching, longing to see the Messiah. His prophecies demonstrated the passion and clarity of prophetic vision...yet, he waited and waited. But notice what characterized Isaiah’s waiting. It was not some sort of desperate, “Will he ever come.” No, not at all.

Note that even though Jesus would not appear for another 700 years, another seven centuries, Isaiah wasn’t really waiting. He was already celebrating! Celebrating that God’s salvation as if it had already come!

Can’t you see Isaiah just talking, rejoicing and celebrating Jesus’ coming on “That day”?

4 In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."..." Isaiah 12:4-6 NIV

What’s Isaiah’s secret? How can he dare celebrate God’s promise long before it even comes? Simply because Isaiah understands something about faith. What is that which he understands so well?

Simply this: that if you have faith in God’s promises, it’s as good as done. If God promises it, it’s as if God’s already done it. Yes, if “love,” as the saying goes, “means never to have to say you’re sorry,” then we can say “faith means there’s never any waiting.”

Listen to his confidence:

“2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.” 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” Isaiah 12: 2-3

Can’t you just hear Isaiah going around shouting, “Good News! Good News! God is our Salvation!” Dance in the streets! Shout for Joy! “Good News! God is our salvation!”

That’s *confidence!* That’s *joy!*... That’s *faith.*

One other interesting thing: The word in the Hebrew for “salvation” is derived from the Hebrew word for “Jesus.” As Isaiah proclaimed God’s salvation 700 years before Jesus was born, His prophecies even pointed to salvation in Jesus.

Perhaps there’s a lesson for the many times in our lives that we’re waiting. The lesson is simple: By faith, don’t focus on the waiting. Instead, focus on the fulfillment...and the joy of that fulfillment.

In my ministry I have often seen many people have to wait. Whether it's family counseling, or healing from illness, or recovery from grief, or finding a new spouse after divorce or death, or going through family circumstances, or trying to find a new job, perhaps waiting is the greatest need to which you and I minister.

Whatever the waiting, when you and I wait, Isaiah points out that we must have a new attitude: an attitude of faith. This attitude will not focus on the existing circumstances. No, instead it will focus on God's promises, the greatest of which is that He will save us.

No matter who we are, God can't—and won't—be rushed..

The great New England preacher Phillips Brooks was noted for his poise and quiet manner. At times, however, even he suffered moments of frustration and irritability. One day a friend saw him feverishly pacing the floor like a caged lion. "What's the trouble, Mr. brooks?" he asked.

"The trouble is that I'm in a hurry, but God isn't!"

Haven't we felt the same way many times? In his book, *Growing Strong*, Charles Swindoll wrote, "True patience is waiting without worrying" (p. 124).

If we look at Isaiah, we may see him waiting. But he's certainly not worrying, is he! That's a model for us. Why isn't Isaiah worrying? Because He trusts God. He knows God's nature. He knows God's promises. And He knows God is faithful. No matter how long Isaiah has to wait for God, nothing—NOTHING—diminishes His confidence in this simple message:

"Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid." Isaiah 12:2 (NIV)

What about you? How is your waiting going? Isn't it frustrating? Isn't it painful? And doesn't it seem to eat away at your confidence in God? If it does, look at Isaiah. Claim God's promises of grace just as Isaiah did.

The famous author Henry James once wrote, "It's time to begin living the life you imagined." Perhaps we should paraphrase. "It's time to begin living the life God imagined for you."

We begin that new life today at the coming of Jesus Christ. The wait for His "new life" as a human being on this earth is over. Surely, as Isaiah wrote, God is our salvation!

Now, a new life also awaits you. No need to wait! Indeed, when we see the new born King, we just can't wait to rejoice...and proclaim, "Good News! God IS our Salvation!"

"Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation...Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."... Isaiah 12:1-6