

Sing For Joy!

Isaiah 12:2-6

Introduction: The air is filled with singing these days, more than any time in the year we sing songs that are jolly and merry. Songs that reminds us of Saint Nicholas, songs intended to cheer up the world for a few weeks to help us forget all our troubles. Let me see – The little drummer boy, I ‘m dreaming of a White Christmas, I saw mammy kissing Santa Claus... On the tenth Day of Christmas ... Oh how could I forget... Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way...

Isaiah’s call to sing for joy was much more sublime than dashing through snow, or dreaming of snow, or who is kissing Santa. He was calling his people to celebrate the mighty acts of God in deliverance not only from Egypt and Babylon but the continued fulfillment of his promise of salvation. We also, are called to sing for joy because God’s unfolding plan has become personal for us tonight.

We have reason to sing because God is:

1. Our salvation vv. 2-3

With joy shall you draw water from the wells of salvation.

What do we understand by the wells of salvation? We shall not strain the prophet's meaning here, if we take salvation almost in the fully developed New Testament sense, as including negatively the deliverance from all evil, both evil of sin and evil of sorrow, and positively the endowment with all good, good both of holiness and happiness which God can bestow or men can receive. Then, if so, God Himself is, in the deepest truth, the Well of Salvation. The figure of the text does not point to a well so much as to a spring. It is a source, not a reservoir. All the springs from which salvation, in any measure and in any form, flow to the thirsty lips of men, are in God himself. For men Jesus is as the river that flows from the infinite divine nature. He is for us the only source, the inexhaustible source, the perennial source. The apostle Paul said it this way: "...They drank from the Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ." I Cor. 10:4

The well was the meeting-place in those hot lands, where the solitary shepherds from the pastures and maidens from the black camel's hair tents met in the cool of the evening, and ringing laughter and cherry talk went around. So jubilant is the heart of the man whose soul is filled and feasted with the God of his salvation, and the salvation of his God.

We have reason to sing because God is:

II. Our strength vv. 4-5

We may recall God's triumph over the Egyptians; then Moses and Miriam led the Israelites into singing the praises of God and exalted his mighty strength. (Exodus 15:2ff) The prophet now calls upon Judah to do the same. For us tonight, we move beyond Egypt and beyond Babylon to our own deliverance in Christ. We celebrate the advent of Christ into a world that desperately need him. We are grateful for his mighty deeds, and individually and collectively we sing for joy. I want you to know tonight that he is strong enough to handle the challenges of our lives, our families, our calling.

Notice also, that His mighty name and deeds are to be proclaimed to all nations. We should never lose sight of the fact that God is the God of the whole world. Christmas is the message of God's love for the world.

Jesus loves the little children,

All the children of the world;

Red and yellow, black and white,

They are precious in his sight,

Jesus loves the children of the world.

We have reason to sing because God is:

III. Our Song v.6

His presence is celebrated.

“Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

His promise of salvation was fulfilled in the coming of Christ. John the evangelist in his most sublime prologue captures for us the theological essence of the fulfillment of this promise.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... full of grace and truth.(John 1:14)

The word became flesh and tabernacle among us

The word became flesh and pitched his tent in our neighborhood. He pitched his tent down by the side of my tent. You recall in the Old Testament the word “Tabernacle” is written descriptively in two ways. Sometimes it is called the Tabernacle of witness and sometimes it is called the Tabernacle of the congregation. There are two other terms that I find rather fascinating which John may have had in mind, they are the Tent of testimony and the Tent of meeting.

The Tent of meeting was the place, God appointed, where he met with man, and to which man came to meet with Him.

The Tent of testimony was the place where God spoke to men, and men listened. Now wrote John, who had been brought up in that religion; and to whom that symbolism was always luminous, the Word pitched His tent among us. That was the Tabernacle for which he had been waiting, toward which we had been looking. He became at once Tent of meeting between God and man, and Tent of testimony through which God spoke to man.

John on the island of Patmos wrote: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God.’” (Rev. 21:3)

Conclusion: This is indeed the most wonderful time of the year. It is truly the time to sing, but the subject and object of our singing should be determined not by an oversized man in a red suit or the longing for chestnuts by an open fire, or the jingles of an over-crazed culture for things. We sing because we drank from the deep wells or springs of salvation. That God is our strength to accomplish his will in proclaiming his name to the nations. But most of all, to celebrate his presence in our midst. Immanuel - God with us.