

Crossings Community Church  
Matt Powell  
Series: Celebrate the Season of Advent  
December 13, 2015

### Isaiah 12

Another element I wanted to share with you this week as we just continue to layer on the significance of this Advent season is there's a group of Scriptures that align with every week of the Advent season. Another cool thing about this is not only the purpose of us having this rhythm every year where, as we celebrate Christmas, we're celebrating the birth of Jesus, but really what we're doing is we're celebrating the fulfillment of promises.

In the confidence we have in that Jesus was prophesied to come and be born of a virgin and live and die, in the same way, we're told he is coming back again. We have confidence in this season because he *did* come. He *was* born, and he *did* live, and he *did* die, and he rose again. That gives us confidence of the fulfillment of his coming promises of his imminent return. We celebrate this Advent season and just realign our lives around that rhythm.

Another cool thing is this group of Scriptures that is designated for each week of the Advent season is something that at least in our minds takes us and reminds us that he is not just coming back for Crossings Community Church. He is not just coming back for Katy, Texas, or even American Christians. He is coming back for the global church, all of those around the world who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

That means those who are in Asia, those who are in Latin America, every spot around the globe, every tribe and every language. As we gather around these groups of Scriptures, every church that celebrates Advent, most of them gather around these Scriptures that I'm preaching from this morning. It's just a reminder that we're part of something so much bigger than this building, this place, or even this country.

Do you guys remember being young and thinking that someday when you grew up, how great everything was going to be? Do you remember having those aspirations? It's like, "Someday I'm going to be able to do all this. I'm going to have all of this." I remember as a child having those thoughts. I've heard my children say things like that. You know, "When I grow up, I'm going to stay out as late as I can every night."

Maybe this was around your junior high or high school if you had a curfew. "When I grow up, I'm going to stay out until two o'clock every night." Or something I've heard my own kids say... For Mom and Dad's sanity, we have a good, hard bedtime. Right? "The kids are going to go to bed at 8:00 unless we're gone." I've heard our kids say, "When I grow up, I'm going to stay up until 2:00 every morning!" It's just these aspirations.

When I was a child, I was a particularly big-boned child. I remember thinking, "I'm going to eat whatever I want to eat when I grow up." All of these thoughts of, "Someday out there..." I know with my kids, they think they're going to get this card, and they're going to carry it in their wallet.

Whatever they want, they're going to swipe it anywhere. Man, they're going to be able to get *anything* their heart desires. I think in their minds, my debit card is hooked up to the Federal Reserve central bank account. They have so much to learn just as you and I did.

In all of their innocence, they're just looking ahead, and in their minds, they see these joys that are out there someday. They want to walk in them. As we drop in this morning to Isaiah, chapter 12, the people of Israel are doing the exact same thing. They're hearing these prophetic words, and they're celebrating.

What they're celebrating as we read this text is, "Someday out there, everything we desire in the coming of a Messiah, he is going to come. He is going to live, and he is going to reign. He is going to bring freedom. He is going to bring hope. What is it going to be like to live in that day?" That's what we're reading about this morning.

I think the awesome challenge and gift in that is you and I are standing in the day that they are longing for. As they're longing ahead of, "Someday these things are going to happen because Jesus is going to come. Messiah is going to come, and he is going to bring the freedom. He is going to fulfill the promises. What is it going to be like to live in that day? In that day, here's what we're going to do..."

The challenging thing is you and I wrestle with this this morning. How many of these things really embody us? I mean, we're blessed to be able to live in the day that they so desperately longed to be in. Yet it looks so different oftentimes from the life we live. I want to read to you the whole chapter (it's only six verses) of Isaiah, chapter 12. Then we'll dive into it a little more deeply.

Isaiah, chapter 12, begins, ***"You will say in that day..."*** This is kind of what I've already set up for you. In that day when he (Messiah Jesus) has come... ***"I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. 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."***

***With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 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. Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.'"***

Those are beautiful words. Do you hear the longing? "When that day comes, in that day, this is what you will be singing. This is what you will be crying. This is what your life will look like." All of those words are marked by joy. He says it, we read it, and we see it. It's a celebration, right? It's a response to God for Messiah reigning, and it's a joyful response.

Let's look. Verse 1: ***"You will say in that day: 'I will give thanks to you, O LORD [Yahweh], for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.'"*** That's the day. That day that's being talked about here is the day that you and I live. It's that day. Jesus

has come. Notice where the celebration here begins. This song of joy begins with, ***"I will give thanks...for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away."***

1. *We live joyously as we continuously reflect upon the grace of our God.* We live joyously. That's what's being described here. It's a joy that erupts. The very first words are, ***"You will say in that day: 'I will give thanks...'"*** That's a word of praise. That's worship. That's responding to God. Why?

Because the anger that is there... Don't be mistaken that our God is without anger. The anger that is present, instead of being unleashed on us, has been turned in another direction. We have reason to live joyously as we reflect upon the grace of God. Here's the way the New Testament describes this. I'm just going to read it to you from Romans, chapter 3. Paul says...

***"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."***

Listen to this. This is verse 25: ***"...whom God put forward [Christ Jesus] as a propitiation..."*** Big word. Think *substitute*. ***"...by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness..."*** His anger turned away, and they're saying, "We long to live in that day when his anger has been redirected."

Paul finishes this story for us that today we respond to God joyously. We live lives characterized by joy because of the grace of God that, amidst his anger, we did not have to carry that. We did not have to take it on. We did not have to because we couldn't receive the punishment we were due, but it was Jesus Christ as the substitute who took on the anger and the wrath of God to prove our God is righteous.

They're longing to be there. They're longing! "I want to be in that day! I want to worship in that day!" Man, what would it be like to respond to God as one who sits redeemed by the blood of Jesus? ***"I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me."*** I think somehow in our deep theological pontifications, we have removed the anger from God. We don't like to talk about that.

I hope I don't get in trouble for this. Our staff meetings on Sunday nights happen at my house. Every Sunday evening, we have a staff meeting at my house, and we have it outside on the patio. It's a great patio. We're out there talking. Well, that aligns time-wise with when my wonderful bride is putting my children to bed, bath time, prepare for Monday morning school, and getting them in bed. Sometimes on a very rare occasion as we're sitting on the back patio, we'll hear some of the chaos that's going on in the house.

I had to tell the guys. I said, "Look, my beautiful, wonderful, sweet wife with the angelic voice up here can have a righteous, biblical, healthy, disciplinary anger toward our children sometimes." They're in there, and we're hearing what's going on as this bath time and bedtime

stuff is happening. I think for us oftentimes, we see people, and we make this read... I know I've done it before.

I'm not going to mention names, but I was talking to one of the families in our church one time, and I began to say, "It's just so sweet how... Does she ever get angry?" He was like, "Whoa, man! Let me tell you about how she gets angry." We think about God that way because we've read the Gospels (praise the Lord), and we've looked at Jesus (amen), and we've seen how loving he is. That's a fantastic part of this whole salvation story that we need to dive deeply into. He is a loving Savior who loved people well.

But the whole reason he had to come was he had to come to appease the anger and wrath of an almighty, righteous God. We can't remove that from the equation here. What the people of Israel and what the prophet Isaiah here are saying is, "In that day, you will worship differently because Jesus has come, and he has taken on the wrath and the anger of God."

That anger has turned away from you, and instead he comforts you. That should change the way we live. It should change the way we worship. We live joyously as we continuously reflect upon the grace of our God.

Verse 2: ***"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."*** The song of joy we should be singing (you and I today in this day), the song of joy that was being prophesied, being longed for, is one of trust and strength and power that comes from the work of Jesus in our redemption and salvation.

2. *We live joyously as we grow in the fullness of our salvation.* For many of us in here, you've come to a place in your life where you've placed your faith in Jesus, and you understand and you realize the wickedness of your life and the sin you've walked in. Jesus came, and as a substitute for the price you should've paid, he paid that price, giving you the opportunity to have a real relationship with him and spend eternity with him by faith.

You've come to that place. For you saying as this song sounds, ***"Behold, God is my salvation,"*** that may be an easy statement for you, but maybe there are some of you in here who haven't come to that place. You've been around the church, and maybe you've even done the right things. But to be able to truly come to a point where you've said, "I believe and give my life. I surrender me to Jesus..."

Then again (I said this last Sunday) my hope is this Advent season creates an urgency in you, because we're standing here celebrating this because Jesus came, fulfilling all the promises that foretold his coming. In that same confidence, we know he is coming back. The New Testament tells us to live every day as if he is coming back tomorrow. If you've yet to place your faith in Jesus and walk in the joy we're looking at this morning, I invite you to place your faith in Jesus Christ. Believe and begin to walk in the freedom bought by the blood shed on the cross.

But for those of you who are here and you're saying, "I've been there, and I've placed my faith in Jesus," then my challenge to you is how well then do you say these words: "I will trust, and I will

not be afraid"? See, that's the other part of the song. He goes on to explain, "**Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid.**"

For those of us who it's easy to maybe say, "God is my salvation" and it's not as easy to say, "I will trust and not be afraid," maybe that's the growth journey you're on here as you read this and as you look and reflect on the song that should mark our lives, the celebration, the joy that should characterize who we are, a joy that's bigger than any circumstance.

That's what biblical joy is. It's not the happiness that says something good happened today, and something bad happened the next day. Rather, it's a joy that's bigger than any circumstance because of the work of Christ, because of the rescue we walk in in Christ Jesus. This morning my encouragement to you is I've found in my own journey this proclamation of trust has been honed through the crucibles of life.

This proclamation we read here of being able to say, "God is my salvation. I will trust, and I will not be afraid" oftentimes for me... I'm one of those who learns the hard way. That's come through me walking through difficulty and then saying, "Yes, that is true. I could really trust him because he was faithful every step of the way."

We need those testimonies around us. Maybe some of you in here are walking through that kind of crucible, and you're saying, "I don't know if I can say that. I believe God is my salvation. I'm trying to trust, but I'm afraid." By faith, make this proclamation. By faith, begin to say these words and believe it. I promise you that he will be faithful.

The next time, the next season, the next corner of life you round and you get back in that place, you will be able to say it louder and more confidently, "**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.**"

This is part of our growth journey. That's why I love that language, "**...he has become my salvation.**" That's part of our process of getting to know him, getting to know him deeply, trusting him completely, coming to a place in our journey where... We read this passage often, I think, but I think it's helpful.

Coming to a place in our journey in our relationship with Jesus where we truly believe these words from Psalm 27: "**The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold...**" Not *a* stronghold...*the* stronghold of my life. "**Of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.**"

You hear the confidence in those beautiful words. This next part is my favorite. "**Though an army encamp against me...**" You've been in those seasons of life where that's what it feels like. It's like, "There is an army surrounding me." "**...my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.**" That's the song, and that's the prophetic word saying, "In that day when Messiah Jesus is reigning and his kingdom has been inaugurated." That should be the song that marks our lives.

"He is my salvation, and I trust. He is my stronghold. I will not be afraid." We live joyously as we grow into the fullness of our salvation. When I say *fullness*, it's about the confidence in him as we grow in understanding who he is and what he has done for us and what he has rescued us out of. In that comes a fullness of confidence as our relationship with Jesus deepens.

Isaiah wrote, "***For the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.***" That's a confession in that song. It's a confession that says it's nothing else. In the same way that we saw in Psalm 27, there isn't anything else that is going to be my firm foundation. I've looked, and I've searched. If you've come to a place in your life where you've placed your faith in Jesus, you probably have a story of all of the things you've looked for for rescue.

They can be little things that were insignificant, and some of them are really significant. All of that and the searching... The alcohol, the drugs, whatever type of substance abuse, the sexual pleasure or power of manipulation, professional success, parenting success, all of those become strongholds in our lives, leaving us thirsty for the strength and the confidence and the salvation that only Christ Jesus can bring.

***"...he has become my salvation."*** That's the song. ***"...he has become my salvation."*** May that be our confident cry. ***"...he has become my salvation."*** Out of all the other things I have dipped my toe into or submerged myself into, he has become my salvation. Verse 3: ***"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 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.'"***

We're reading here about a group of people who wanted to be where you and I are today. They wanted to be where you and I are today. They wanted to be in this place, and these prophetic words are saying, "When that day comes, these must be the marks of your life which inflame the joy bought by Christ Jesus."

3. *We live joyously through the outward proclamation of Christ Jesus.* We live joyously through the outward proclamation of Jesus Christ! These are some things I hear oftentimes. We begin to have these conversations about outward proclamation of Jesus, right? We begin to talk about what that looks like. Then we begin to talk quickly about personalities and what we feel comfortable doing.

I wonder for just a minute if we were able to talk to this group of people who were there and they were hearing these prophetic words. They longed to be in this day where they could celebrate in the way that's described here. We begin to share with them, "Well, I'm an introvert, so I don't really like talking about Jesus to other people." I wonder what they would have thought about that.

Or maybe, "I'm not a religious studies person. I'm not smart enough. I don't know how to convince somebody about Jesus. I don't get involved in those conversations. I'm new to all of this proclamation stuff. I don't really know exactly how. I'm going to leave that to the old timers." Or,

"I'm not a pastor. I'm going to leave that to the professionals." As I heard recently, "I have a *real* job."

It's amazing, isn't it, when you begin to think about the context these people were in and the things you and I say and do. They longed so desperately to be able to proclaim with no filter whatsoever, "Here is the work of God. This is what the love of Jesus looked like. Everybody, come and look and see and live in the rescue I experience."

So many of us are walking around saying, "Well, it's just not me. I'm just not that kind of guy." If we're not proclaiming Jesus Christ in an outward manner in our lives, then we're not walking in the joy purchased at the cross. As we walk through our lives, if we're not proclaiming Jesus in an outward manner, then we're not walking in the joy for which Jesus Christ died.

You see, we're in a day (today) after his life, death, resurrection where he has then called us. We have all of those awesome passages of Scripture from Matthew 28 to Acts 1:8, all the ways he is sending us. The part that we don't understand is that we walk in the joy as he is using us as we proclaim him outwardly in the middle of our personalities he has given to us, in the middle of our jobs and careers and contexts and neighborhoods.

He has placed us with that personality in that place to walk in joy amidst our outward proclamation of his works. The invitation is, "Come. Walk in the joy of being used by God." We live joyously through the outward proclamation of Jesus Christ. It says, "***...make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.***"

4. *We live joyously through the outward demonstration of our adoration.* Before I read verses 5 and 6 here, we live in a day where spirituality is so privatized. You can have your spirituality and you can believe whatever you want, but you just keep it to you. That's what we hear. That's the world we live in. That's the culture that saturates our minds. Listen here to the Bible, which should be what saturates our minds.

***"Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."*** Does that sound private ("Keep it to yourself") in the least? Shout, proclaim, announce, adore our God because of who he is and what he has done. A demonstrative, passionate, vocal adoration fuels our joy.

Here's the way I think about it. We used to go to La Finca Mexican restaurant on Westheimer Parkway way too often. We would go, and they have this (many of you have been here) back room. Every time we walked in, I noticed they took us to that back room. No matter how empty the place was, they would always take us to that back room. Then I also began to notice at other times when other people were there that all of the young children were in that back room as well.

My theory was (and I never asked them or tested this) if you walked in (as we did) with three children or more, then they're going to take you to the back room. Here's what happens in the back room. All the children are in there. They're talking, and they're playing. The adults are trying to have an adult conversation with other people, right? They're talking above the children.

Well then what happens, parents? The children have to get a little louder because the parents are talking. What happens there in this room (the room from you-know-where for Matt) is you get in there, and the volume is just escalating constantly. It's horrible. It's punishment in my mind. But it's louder and louder and louder.

This is what I think is happening here in the Scripture. We've begun to worship. We've begun to outward... Some of you are so uncomfortable with this. When I talk about outward adoration, you say, "No, this is outward adoration for me in worship on Sunday morning, Matt. You don't understand. It makes me so uncomfortable to do anything else."

Here's my encouragement to you. As you begin to walk in this, your joy will begin to increase. As you begin to walk in more freedom in this outward adoration, that means when you're singing with the church here on Sunday morning and we're gathered together and we're proclaiming and we're responding to our God...

Or if we're responding here as a church in prayer together corporately, individually in the back, or if you're at home in your office, study, bedroom, and you're worshiping or you're praying, as you begin to adore out loud our God, your joy begins to come up. Then your adoration begins to increase as well. Your total decibel level of joyous living increases. I adore more. I'm going to worship more. I can't help it. I adore more, and I'm more joyous. It just inflames a joyous life.

We live joyously through the outward demonstration of our adoration. As we close, I think this is a great encouragement for us to hear this time of year because, again, biblical joy... This joy that we're wrestling with that we've talked about this morning is not a circumstantial emotion. Many of you in here right now today are in circumstantial emotions that you in your mind see so far away from joy.

If you're not there today, some of you as we approach this holiday season of Christmas and the thoughts of family or maybe lost family or relationships or lost relationships or financial difficulty, all sorts of different struggles are going to begin to pull at you. My encouragement to you is this season, no matter how many of those claws that are reaching at your spirit, this could be the most joyous season you've ever experienced because of Jesus, who is bigger than any struggle, who is bigger than any circumstance.

He is bigger than any up and down roller coaster that could be marking your journey today. We live joyously as we continuously reflect upon the grace of our God. We live joyously as we grow in the fullness of our salvation. We live joyously through the outward proclamation of Jesus Christ. We live joyously through the outward demonstration of our adoration.