

Isaiah 12:1-6 (NIV) 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."

In the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in whom, through whom and by whom we have received the manifold blessings of God, D.F.R.:

There is a custom at Jesus Cares programs to ask for prayers. Sometimes there ends being quite a few and they run the gambit from prayers for a sick friend, someone in the hospital, prayers for someone or something in the news, prayers for rain, for winter to be over. Sometimes those prayers were prayers of thanks: for successful surgery, that someone was in heaven and not suffering anymore, to badly needed rain, for someone who had been part of our Jesus Cares program and was retiring or moving away.

Because God has given us so much for which to be thankful, the Prophet Isaiah leads us on this Thanksgiving holiday to:

Give Praise to God's Name!

1. Because God is our salvation
2. Because God is our strength

1. Because God is our salvation

To exalt something means to "lift it up" or "to praise it." To exalt God's name means to lift it up God's name by praising him, thus reminding ourselves and testifying to the world around us of the greatness and goodness of God..

Praising God's name, lifting him up in our thoughts and prayers is a normal, healthy activity for Christians. It is as normal as breathing, as ordinary as eating and drinking. As Isaiah tells us: "**I will praise you, O LORD.** and again later he says "**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.**"

Isaiah doesn't debate whether or not we should exalt God's name. He accepts that as a given, something that every Christian will do so -- simply they are Christians.

We have so many reasons to praise God. We could praise him (and certainly) should because he is our Creator. We could thank him for putting food on our tables, for our families and friends. But that's not the reason that jumps out at us in Isaiah's words.

The greatest reason that you and I have to praise God and glorify his Name is because of our salvation. **{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."

Notice how certain Isaiah is that his salvation comes from God. **Surely God is my salvation.** There is no doubt in his mind that God is the source of his salvation. Heaven is his not because of anything he has done, but only because God chooses, by grace, to give it to him. Later on in Isaiah, God tells us this about himself. **I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.** (Isaiah 43:11)

As Isaiah says about our salvation: **{3} With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.** This Thanksgiving holiday, we rejoice in God's gift of salvation to us, because we know that salvation can come only through God. But along with our salvation, we also know that God has given us many other gifts.

Luther said that three gifts of God always go together. Wherever we find the forgiveness of sins, we will also find eternal life and salvation. When God reaches out to us and forgives us our sins, he at that very same moment reaches out to us and gives eternal life in heaven and saves us from the fire of hell.

2. Because God is our strength

The gift of salvation of salvation means that we don't have to worry, that we have no reason to worry, because as children of our Heavenly Father, we know that God will provide for our daily needs. As the prophet puts it so simply, **I will trust and not be afraid.**

Think about what those simple words mean. **I will trust.** Faith is not simply knowing that God exists, but trusting what he tells. Faith is living our lives with the certainty that what God says he will do, he will do.

I will not be afraid. What a powerful statement. A couple of years ago, we started seeing the slogan "No fear" on hats, shirts, bumper stickers, etc., but Isaiah said it for us almost three thousand years ago! As Christians, we don't have to be afraid, because we have nothing to be afraid of. God takes care of all needs: we have been freed from hell, the devil has been defeated, our sinful nature has been put to death. Our physical needs have also been taken care of — with God providing a roof over our heads, food on our tables, and beds for us to sleep in. Since God provides for all our needs — and has promised to take us from this world to heaven when we die — so why should we be afraid?

As the redeemed children of God, we shouldn't be afraid, as Isaiah reminds us: **The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song.** When life is difficult, God is our strength. When we feel pushed down by the problems of our life, God holds us up and keeps us from giving into despair. When life tosses us around like a boat on a stormy sea, God is our strength, our rock, to which we come and we know we will not be disappointed.

None of us knows where life is going to take us. We don't know if we will end up in a hospital bed, a wheelchair, or if we will have a stroke that will leave us paralyzed or come down with Alzheimer's. We don't know if we lose all our possessions in a fire or a tornado, if we will end up deaf or blind

some day. Yet we put our trust in the Lord and our not afraid because God is our strength and our supply, and he will help us and be with us no matter what the future may hold.

So we have every reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving. God has supplied our every need, and no matter what the future may hold, we know that he will not leave us or forsake us but give us what we need when we need, because God is both our salvation and our strength, today and forever.

Let us close with the ending words of the common table prayer, and consider how appropriate they are tonight, and when we use them before our Thanksgiving meals: **Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good. His mercy endures forever! Amen.**