

Wells of Salvation: A Thanksgiving Devotion

from Isaiah 12

by Bill Mace

Read: Isaiah 12 (ESV)

> ***1*** *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, that you might comfort me.*
>
> ***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."*
>
> ***3*** *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*
>
> ***4*** *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.*
>
> ***5*** *"Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.*
>
> ***6*** *Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."*

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Where this song comes from

Isaiah 12 is a hymn of thanks sung by people who deserved judgment and received mercy instead. It closes the first major section of Isaiah, chapters 1 through 11, which open with God's charge against a rebellious nation and end with the promise of a shoot from the stump of Jesse — the Messiah — and a remnant gathered home (11:1–16).

The words "in that day" (vv. 1, 4) point forward to that rescue. And verse 2 deliberately echoes Israel's first song of deliverance at the Red Sea: "The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation" (Exodus 15:2; see also Psalm 118:14). Isaiah is saying that a greater exodus is coming, and God's people will sing again.

For us, that day has dawned in Jesus — whose name means "the LORD saves." This is a Thanksgiving song we are invited to sing now.

Devotion: Thanks that runs deeper than the harvest

Most Thanksgiving lists start with what is on the table: family, food, health, a roof, a job. Those are real gifts, and we should name them. But Isaiah 12 starts somewhere deeper. Before it thanks God for anything he has given, it thanks him for what he has done about our sin.

1. Thank him that his anger has turned away (vv. 1–2)

"Though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me." The singer does not pretend God was never angry. Sin is real, and God's judgment against it was just. The wonder is that the anger *turned* — and comfort took its place.

We know where it turned. It fell on Christ at the cross, so that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). That is why verse 2 can say, "I will trust, and will not be afraid." The person who has been forgiven by God has nothing left to fear from God.

Notice too that the LORD is not only my *strength* but my *song*. He doesn't just carry us through hard years; he gives us something to sing about in them. Some at our tables this year are grieving, or tired, or anxious. Gratitude does not deny that. It remembers that the deepest problem has already been solved.

2. Keep drawing from the wells (v. 3)

"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." In a dry land, a well is life. You don't visit it once; you go back every day with your bucket.

Salvation is like that. We are saved once for all, but we keep drawing on it — for peace on a hard morning, for patience with a difficult relative, for hope when a diagnosis comes. Jesus stood up at a feast in Jerusalem and cried, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37). He is the

well. Thanksgiving is one of the ways we lower the bucket: when we name what God has done, our joy is refilled.

3. Let thanks become testimony (vv. 4–6)

The song turns outward: "make known his deeds among the peoples … let this b.e made known in all the earth." Gratitude that stays private tends to shrink. Gratitude that is spoken grows, and it invites others to drink from the same well.

The chapter ends with the reason for all this joy: "great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." Not distant. Not merely above us. In the midst. The holy God has come to live among his people — "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) — and by his Spirit he is present at every table where his people gather.

So as we give thanks this week for turkey and family and football, let's go one layer deeper and thank him for the turned-away anger, the never-dry well, and the Holy One in our midst. Then let's tell someone.

Around the table

1. What is one thing you are thankful for this year that money couldn't buy?
2. When did you first realize God's anger toward your sin had been turned away in Christ? How did that change you?
3. Where do you need to "draw water" from God right now — peace, strength, hope, patience?
4. Who is one person you could tell this week about something God has done for you?

Closing prayer

Lord, we praise you. We deserved your anger, but in Jesus your anger has turned away and you have comforted us. You are our salvation, our strength, and our song, so we will trust you and not be afraid.

Thank you for every good gift on this table and around it. But most of all, thank you for yourself. Teach us to come back to your wells every day and to draw with joy. Give us courage to tell others what you have done, and let us sense tonight that the Holy One of Israel is great in our midst.

In Jesus' name, amen.