**Family Service Talk 12th January 2025**

**Isaiah 12:1-6**

***Songs of praise***

***12 In that day you will say:***

***‘I will praise you, Lord.
    Although you were angry with me,
your anger has turned away
    and you have comforted me.
2Surely God is my salvation;
    I will trust and not be afraid.
The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defence[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2012%3A1-6&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-17903a)***];
    he has become my salvation.’
3With joy you will draw water
    from the wells of salvation.***

***4In that day you will say:***

***‘Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;
    make known among the nations what he has done,
    and proclaim that his name is exalted.
5Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things;
    let this be known to all the world.
6Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,
    for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.’***

I don’t know whether you can cast your mind back a week to last Sunday when we struggled through the snow to church … or wisely decided that staying at home was a much more sensible option! As I walked back home across the fields, it quickly became clear that, as the temperature rose and light rain began to fall, the snow was melting but the resulting water seemed to have no-where to go. The result was that everywhere I looked (or stepped), was a lake, pond, river or puddle produced by the melting snow! I was very wet and muddy by the time I arrived home!

It set me thinking about water – and especially when it is where we don’t think it should be. All over the country this week, homes have been made uninhabitable by awful flooding and the world over, millions of lives have been devastated by the force of water in the last few years. At the other end of that spectrum, many countries regularly experience the effect of severe drought and resulting famine. We need water for life, we can’t live without it but it also has the potential to result in much damage and intense suffering.

In this country in our daily lives, we mostly take the supply of water for granted and indeed, much of what we do is dependant on it. Can we make a list of things for which we are reliant on a supply of water? …. ~ washing clothes ~ cleaning ~ washing up ~ showering ~ bathing ~ drinking …. to name but a few

As I thought about making a list, I realised that for many of these uses, we add something to the water …. …. Persil for washing clothes ~ Flash for cleaning ~ Fairy Liquid for washing up ~ shower gel for showering ~ bubble bath for bathing ~ squash, or even whisky, for drinking! All these things make water easier to use or maybe more pleasant to drink. But actually, a glass of cold tap water is wonderfully refreshing on a hot day and a mug of hot water warms you and cleanses your insides on a cold day, especially after the excesses of the Christmas season!

Our reading this morning talks about a type of water but it certainly doesn’t seem to need to have anything added to it. It does however speak of the joy that comes when this water is drawn from the well of salvation. *(Isaiah 12:3)* What exactly does this mean? What is this water? And where is this well of salvation?

The reading comes from the book of Isaiah who was, of course, one of the major Old Testament prophets. A prophet’s role was to give messages from God to the people of Israel.

So, Isaiah …. ~ reminded the people how they should be living as God’s chosen people ~ showed them how they were getting it wrong ~ and explained to them what the consequences would be. But Isaiah also told them about God’s incredible grace and mercy in having a plan to save the people even when they didn’t deserve it. And in the first 11 chapters of the book of Isaiah, we can read aspects of all these things!

By chapter 12, Isaiah is looking forward to a time when God’s plan to save his people has already happened …. ~ when God’s anger has turned away and he comforts them *(Isaiah 12:1)* ~ when God’s people trust Him and are not afraid *(Isaiah 12:2)* ~ when they know the joy of drawing water from the well of salvation. *(Isaiah 12:3)* And, as a result of all this, the people will give praise to God, *(Isaiah 12:4)* they will shout aloud and sing for joy! *(Isaiah 12:6)*

But hang on … what was the plan and what actually is the water from the well of salvation ….?

We have just celebrated Jesus’ birth – God coming to earth as a tiny baby over two thousand years ago. He came in fulfilment of all that God had told his people through prophets such as Isaiah. **He** was God’s plan to save his people! He came to die the death of a sinner in punishment for our sins despite having lived a perfect life himself while he was on earth. He did this to save all who believe in Him …. each person who is sorry for all that they have done wrong and believes in Jesus, is declared right with God and will remain in God’s presence for ever ….. God’s salvation plan!

It is this eternal life with God that Jesus offers that is …. ~ the water drawn from the well of salvation *(Isaiah 12:3)* ~ the water of life spoken of by Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well *(John 4:14*) ~ the free gift of the water of life we are **all** invited to take *(Rev 22:17)*

And this water of life needs no purifying to make it safe to use; it needs nothing adding to it to give it flavour or help it to work better. The water of life offered freely by Jesus to all people is the only thing that we need in order to be saved and to live in fullness of life with God for ever. No wonder we can ‘trust God and not be afraid’. *(Isaiah 12:2)*

And no wonder, as Isaiah said, we will want to ~ tell others what God has done *(Isaiah 12:4)*  ~ shout aloud and sing for joy in praise of our great God! *(Isaiah 12:6)*