

INI Hymns
New Year

Sermon 22-07
1/2/22

Isaiah 12:2-3

*“Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid;
‘For Yah, the LORD, is my strength and song;
He also has become my salvation.*

3 Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Happy New Year! Doesn't that sound so positive and upbeat? New Years is a time for optimism! Everyone is happy and celebrates the beginning of a new year because they are optimistic that the new year will bring good things. It's like a chance to start over fresh—a new beginning. But how long does that happy optimism last? It doesn't take long to realize that we are still living in the same fallen world with our same sinful inclinations and desires.

Optimism does have great value for your attitude and outlook. It helps you stay in a good mood and therefore it has a benefit to your health and wellbeing in general. But optimism has little effect on reality and the future. A year ago everyone was optimistic that 2021 would be a better year. It had to be better than 2020, many thought. Looking back now, it's questionable if it was really much better. We did get a vaccine for Covid 19. But we were still shut down and unable to worship together in person for the first six months of the year. After that things seemed to improve and look more promising, but then we had an unprecedented summer of devastating fires. And now with new spikes in Covid infections the restrictions are tightening up again. Not only that, but we are seeing a lot more distrust and people turning against each other. Instead of banding together to fight a common enemy people are more divided than ever and striking out at one another over the best ways to fight. As a result people seem much less optimistic about this coming year. Some suggest that Covid is here to stay. That could very well be the case, we don't know. That is what is most disturbing to many people, we don't know. It is that uncertainty that causes optimism to lag and fear to grow in the hearts of people.

God offers us something much better than mere optimism, that is TRUST! Listen again to what Isaiah says in our text: “I will trust and not be afraid.” Those two concepts go together, trust and not being afraid. When you truly trust there is nothing to be afraid. A little child might be afraid of walking in the dark, but if he walks hand in hand with his father, he trusts him and is not afraid.

What gave Isaiah that trust which was not afraid? He says, “Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid.” When you have the Almighty God as your salvation and you walk hand in hand with Him, then you have something solid to put your trust in and there is nothing to fear. You can face each new day with joy and confidence and without fear because the God of your Salvation is with you. And so we can enter the new year with something much better than blind optimism. We can enter the new year with Trust in the Lord. We know and trust that the God of our Salvation controls the future. So our theme today is:

Trust El Yeshuati – He Holds Our Future

What was that? El Yeshuati is the Hebrew name of God used in our text. El Yeshuati is the “God of my salvation.” El being the Hebrew word for God, the Mighty one, and Yeshuati meaning “my Salvation.” Isaiah invites us to “Behold” Him, take a good look at “God my Salvation.” That is a name you can trust completely.

When we hear the word “Salvation” we usually think of our spiritual and eternal salvation. And that is good, but we should understand that God's salvation is wonderfully comprehensive. The

word Salvation encompasses every aspect of life. God SAVES us from a multitude of physical enemies and earthly troubles. Moses uses that word when God Saved Israel from the army of Egypt at the Red Sea. God provided miraculous salvation. When Jonah was swallowed by the great fish, God gave salvation by causing the fish to vomit Jonah out on dry land. In short, El Yeshuati is the God who can and does save us from all kinds of troubles. As King David says, He is the one “Who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things.” Psalm 103:3-5

Isn't it wonderful to be able to enter a new year and face the uncertain future with El Yeshuati, the God of my salvation. He can save or deliver you from Covid 19 and from all the negative repercussions of it. He is the one who can keep you safe through any unforeseen troubles that might come up in the new year. “For Yah, the LORD, is my strength and song.”

Note especially He is God of MY Salvation. He is MY strength and song. He is mine by faith and because He is mine, He goes with me wherever I go. He is the one who saves ME out of all MY troubles. David says in Psalm 54:7 “He has delivered me out of all trouble.”

It is wonderful to enter the New Year with El Yeshuati whom we can call on in every trouble and need. But there is so much more reason to rejoice in this name and trust this name. The “*Ti*” on the end of Jeshuati is the personal pronoun “my.” If you take that off you have the name Jeshua. Does that ring any bells? That is the Hebrew pronunciation of the name Joshua. And you know the Greek pronunciation of that name - it is Jesus. The God of My Salvation is a direct reference to Jesus. You could even translate it, “God, My Jesus.”

Jeshua or Joshua in the Old Testament is a type or picture of Jesus. Just as Joshua brought the Children of Israel out of a bleak, forty year sojourn in the wilderness marked by hardships and death and brought them into a rich new life in a land “flowing with milk and honey;” so Jesus leads those who are wandering in the spiritual desert of sin and sorrow into the eternal land of rest in heaven.

That makes going forward into the new year all the more wonderful. God is MY Jeshua, My Jesus, My Savior. He is not only my Savior, He is my Salvation. It is a completed fact. Jesus has conquered sin and Satan when He died on the cross, it was FINISHED! He has also conquered death and hell, when He rose from the dead, death was defeated forever. Now He leads me through this life to my eternal home in paradise. All along the way He saves me from every trouble and illness and uses them to keep me on track and brings me closer to that eternal home.

Whatever the future may bring, Jesus is there as My Salvation to bring me through it. Therefore “I will trust and not be afraid.” We can enter the New Year with great confidence. The Apostle John says it this way, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.” 1 John 4:18 Jesus' love for you, which He showed in being born in this world as a man in order to take our place and suffer our punishment, is truly perfect. There is no greater love. When we know His love for us and trust His love for us, there is nothing to fear.

Now look at verse 3 of our text: “THEREFORE,” because God is your Salvation, “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” What a beautiful picture. It takes us back to the Children of Israel in the wilderness on their way to Mt. Sinai. Their water ran out and there was no water to be found. They were in a desperate situation and cried out to Moses. Then God told Moses to go and strike the Rock in Horeb and water came gushing out. Can you imagine the joy with which the people came and filled their water containers and drank to the full. They were joyful because that water saved their life! And there was plenty for all to drink.

That is the joy Isaiah is describing. The Apostle Paul said that Rock was Christ. Jesus is the water of life. Shall we not come and draw water from the wells of salvation with great joy? Shall we not be eager to come to Jesus in His word and draw the water which will save us from eternal death and give eternal life?

This is all about our attitude toward worship and God's word. It was somewhat shocking to see

that of all the churches in Vernon that advertised their Christmas services, none of them had church on Christmas Day. That is just too much church to have services three days in a row. Now there is nothing that says you have to have church on Christmas Day. And I'm certainly not trying to suggest that we are better than the others because we did. But it does say something about one's attitude toward worship? The point is we each need to examine our own attitude toward our worship and toward the word of God. Do we come here with joy, eager to drink freely of the water of life from the Wells of Salvation? Do you drink like it is saving your life? Because it is! Do you "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. 3:16) Do we "delight in the law of the Lord and in His law meditate day and night" together with the Psalmist? (Psalm 1:2)

If we see our attitude towards God's word and our worship waning, let us recognize it for what it is, a sign of our apathy and ungratefulness toward El Yeshuati, God My Salvation. It is the result of our sinful heart. May we repent and come eagerly and joyfully to draw water from the wells of salvation. Come and be reassured of God's grace and forgiveness, for Jesus is the God of My Salvation. Jesus told the Jews in Jerusalem, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." John 7:37-38. Come to Jesus and drink that He may keep you from spiritual dehydration while we pass through the wilderness of life in this world on our way to our promised land of heaven. Come joyfully to the Lord's Table and have Jesus serve you personally with His own body and blood which He gave to pay for all your sins. As we do, God will fill us all the more with the joy and appreciation of knowing that El Yeshuati holds our future. And then, as we enter the New Year and each new day we can truly "Trust and not be afraid!" May God grant it to each of us.

Amen.