

10 Marks Of A True Believer – Isaiah 12

Is 12 (p.576); I Googled “counterfeit money” as I was thinking about the message this week, and was blown away by the different marks of **authenticity**
Characteristics to help us distinguish between real bills and fake ones

Like the security thread embedded in the paper, and various watermarks, and color-shifting ink on the front number
And then of course, there’s the crisp clarity of the portrait, and seals, and border . . .
And the colored fibers in the paper; Real money has marks of authenticity

And the same is true of believers – followers of Jesus Christ; There are certain criteria that mark them, and indicate authenticity; *Some* of which are laid out in this passage*****
And I want to highlight them for you, not so you can inspect and judge others, but so you can inspect and evaluate yourself; So you can assess yourself

• [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.”*

Isaiah is saying that in the great day of salvation, the day in which we’re in right now . . .
When people seek the Lord, and more and more barriers are removed so that more and more people can enter the way of holiness (Is 35:8) . . .

In that day, those who find him, those who remain faithful to him, those who love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength – will say and do certain things
That is, they will be marked by certain characteristics
Criteria by which to assess their lives and hearts and *salvation*

IOW if these things don’t mark your life, you need to do some serious soul-searching; B/c you may not be saved; Or if you are, something’s wrong

So as we go through this list – make an honest assessment of your life
And if you’re a believer – identify your areas of weakness, deciding to grow in them . . .
And rejoice in your areas of strength, committing to continue in them

But if you come to the conclusion that you’re not a true believer – make today the day
Especially as we share in communion later on

That said, the first mark of a true believer from this passage, is that . . .

1. They give thanks (v1)

They’re not just thankful, but they express it; Look at v1
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.

True believers recognize God’s righteous anger for their sin and sinfulness, and thank God for his mercy; *Though you were angry with me, your anger turned away*
That’s mercy – withholding the punishment we deserve

Punishment on this side of the cross, that was inflicted on Jesus
And credited to our account through faith and repentance
In which case he’s angry no longer, and we give thanks; Especially realizing the depth of our sin, and the seriousness of his wrath

• But that’s not the only cause for thanks; He doesn’t just withhold his *anger*, he extends his comfort; *Your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.*
That you might console me; That you might relieve me of pain, or regret, or remorse

Like when Paul says in **2 Thess 2:16-17** – *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort* [eternal peace, eternal consolation] *and good hope through grace, [17] comfort your hearts* [right now Paul prays] *and establish them in every good work and word.*

True believers recognize the turmoil caused by their sin, and thank God for both his mercy and his comfort*****

2. They trust (v2)

[2] *“Behold, God is my salvation* [my deliverance, my rescue]; *I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”*

Before we get to the trust part, do you see the 2 phrases – *God is my salvation*, and *he has become my salvation*?

Not only are true believers *saved* by God, but he *is* their salvation
IOW *his* presence, *equals* their deliverance; Kind of like when a fireman rescues a person from a burning building
In that moment, he *is* that person’s salvation; Just like God is our salvation, when he rescues us from the throes of hell
He *becomes* our salvation, and he *is* our salvation

• Which we know from the New Testament, requires *trust*, faith; And there are 5 main aspects of it; True believers first of all, trust . . .

A. God’s Word

If the Bible says it, they believe it, and that settles it

B. God’s grace

God’s grace to extend salvation to them, and bless them with life

C. God’s power

God’s power to keep them; To preserve/protect them unto eternal life, starting right now

D. God’s provision

God’s provision to sustain them with life’s necessities – physical and otherwise

E. God’s people

Including those he’s put in place to lead them, shepherd them, and teach them (**Summ**)
True believers are marked by trust

3. They're courageous (v2)

Look at v2 again; True believers say – *I will trust, and will not be afraid*

That's courage; And notice it's a decision of the will, a choice – *I will not be afraid*

Despite the reality of death, the hardship of life, persecution, embarrassment, the opposition of man, the warfare of demons . . .

Despite all that – true believers choose courage, instead of fear

And do so for 2 reasons – (a) God is their strength; and (b) God is their song

I will trust, and will not be afraid [they say]; *for* [or b/c] *the LORD GOD is my strength and my song*

He's their *strength* to persevere, fight the good fight, and walk in his way . . .

And he's their *song*, as in their source of joy, and security, and peace – along the way

Which often results in an *actual* song, doesn't it? Especially in times of stress

Like when I hung my door hangers last Monday – following through on the Spirit's

impulse I mentioned several weeks ago

I don't know why, but it was one of the scariest things I've ever done

And I sang the whole time – “My Jesus I love thee, I know thou art mine . . . If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now”

If people were watching out their windows, and I'm sure they were – they probably thought I was crazy

But it was an expression of my peace and security, due to the Lord's presence in my life

His presence as my strength and my song; Enabling me to choose courage, instead of succumb to fear

- And one more thing here; You see *LORD GOD* there in v2, in all caps?

That translates “Yah Yahweh” in Hebrew – the original language

Yahweh being God's *proper* name, and Yah being a shortened form of it to express *endearment*

How appropriate don't you think? That true believers would call him by name, and do so in an endearing sort of way

It's kind of like Jesus calling him *Abba, Father* in Mark 14:36 – another expression of

intimacy and endearment; And it's at our disposal as well

Having been given the Spirit of adoption – *We* [too] *cry* “*Abba, Father!*” Rom 8:15 says

Especially so, since he's our personal source of strength, security, and courage

4. They're joyful (v3)

Isaiah says in v3, that in the day of salvation – *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation*. You will draw sustenance from the reservoirs of God's grace

And do so with *joy*

Why? B/c the blessings of salvation *satisfy*, and the reservoir is *limitless*

Just like Jesus told the woman at the well in **John 4:13-14** – “*Everyone who drinks of this water* [the physical water] *will be thirsty again, [14] but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him* [the water of salvation, the water of life] *will never be thirsty again*. No wonder true believers draw on it with joy – it satisfies

And, it's limitless; Jesus **goes on** to say – *The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*” A source of grace that never runs out

Or as he says later in John 7:38 – *Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*”

No wonder true believers are joyful*****

The source and blessings of their salvation are limitless, and all-satisfying

5. They're contagious (v4)

V4 – *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.*

Not only do true believers give thanks themselves, but they encourage others to do the same; Not only do *they* call on the name of the Lord for help, they encourage others to

Not only do *they* make known his deeds and proclaim his name – they urge others to

That's being contagious; They affect and influence those around them, for the Lord; For the kingdom of God

Far from sitting around and remaining silent, far from keeping to themselves and remaining private – they're contagious; Urging others to do the very things they do

6. They pray (v4)

It's not just that they encourage others to do so, but they do it themselves – they *call upon* [God's] *name*; I think that's the implication . . .

B/c true believers wouldn't encourage others to do things they don't; In this case, pray to God; Asking *him* for help; Seeking *his* face

They don't pray to patron saints – unless they're massively confused or deceived

They don't pray to Mary, they don't pray to deceased relatives, they don't pray to spirits – they pray to God

They call on *him*, and all that *he* offers, as represented by his name

It's like the prophet Joel said (Joel 2:32) – *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*; And Jesus, in John 14:13 – *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do*

7. They spread the word (v4)

They make known his deeds among the peoples; The nations

Which includes everything from telling your co-worker about what God has done in *your* life, to telling the nations about what God has done to *offer* them life

Which you *do* by the way, as part of a church who supports those who *go* to the nations

Who *go* to the uttermost parts of the earth, to spread the Word on our *behalf*

Who plant churches, or the seeds to plant churches

- Making known God's work of grace among the nations, doesn't mean every single one of us goes to every single nation

It means going where *you* are supposed to go – across the street, or across the ocean

It means playing *your* part in God's grand plan; Speaking up and talking about him *wherever* you are

It means not hesitating to mention *his* work, at yours

It means making known *his* deeds, among everybody else's

True believers spread the word

8. They exalt the Lord (v4)

That's the *last* part of v4; True believers – *proclaim that his name is exalted*

They take every chance they can get to glorify God, make him look good, and lift high his name – especially with their words; They proclaim the name
And on this side of the cross, it's the name of Jesus

That's why we sing songs like – “Lift up the name, lift up the name – Jesus!”

B/c he's the one God raised from the dead and seated at his right hand *in the heavenly places* [the Bible says], *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come* (Eph 1:20-21)

True believers take every chance they can get to proclaim that

- And they aren't *ashamed* to do so; They're not ashamed to *say the name Jesus*
They're not ashamed to give credit where credit is due
How else are you going to *proclaim that his name is exalted*? You have to say it

We experienced that about a year ago when we were at an all-star banquet for the state of Iowa; A bunch of volleyball players and their parents were gathered to celebrate . . .
And before the meal, the emcee opened in prayer; And instead of just praying to *God*, and being all generic and vague and politically correct . . .
He named the name of Jesus in his *prayer*, and *closed* in his name

We were thrilled; B/c he exalted the Lord by proclaiming his name, and proclaimed that his name is exalted, by praying in it; Praying according to his power and authority
The very thing true believers do

9. They worship (v5)

Look at v5 – *Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth*. Singing praises to the Lord is a form of worship
And true believers do it; They let the glorious things he has done be made known, by lifting up their voice in song

It's one of the reasons *we* sing every single week; And *during* the week in Small Groups, and Alive & Free, and AWANA, and Student Ministries, and Bible Studies, and so on
True believers worship in song; Even if they can't sing; They *still* make a joyful noise
B/c God's not concerned with the quality of your *voice*, but the quality of your *heart*

So if you think singing in church is dumb – you better take stock of your heart; B/c something's wrong; True believers worship

And then last, and closely related . . .

10. They overflow (v6)

Like Isaiah says in v6 – *Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion* [child of God], *for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*”

Recognizing the greatness of God among them, and *in* them on this side of the cross – true believers can't *keep* it in; They can't contain themselves
They overflow with shouts, and celebration, and joy, and singing
B/c that's what springs of living water do – they well up and overflow
If they don't – something's wrong

Does that mean we won't have dry spells, when our overflow is a trickle? No; We will

Does it mean there's no room for grief? No; There is

There's *a time to weep, and a time to laugh* [the Bible says]; *a time to mourn, and a time to dance* – Eccl 3:4

But that doesn't mean our *overflow* stops; It just looks different; B/c the one in our midst, the one in our heart – is still *great*, and greatly to be praised (**Counterfeit bill**)

- So how about it? Are you real, or counterfeit? Do you display the marks of authenticity, or fakery?
Do you give thanks, and trust God's Word, God's grace, God's power, God's provision, and God's people? (**Summary**)
How's your courage, and joy; Are you contagious?
Do you pray, spread the word, and exalt the Lord?
What about your worship and overflow?

Pray – Lord Jesus, I'm so thankful that you overflowed to us, so that we could overflow to you – exalting you in joyful worship and praise; Thank you; We trust you, and we give to your work now – to proclaim your name, all the more