

## Thanksgiving – Isaiah 12

Is 12. I trust you’ve had a good Thanksgiving. I know we have. Our family is in town, the grandkids are here, our hearts are full, and our bellies are stuffed. Thanksgiving is a good time.

But it’s not just a time for family. Or food, or fun, or football. It’s *way* more than that. And this short chapter in Isaiah clues us in to some of those things. Things that make Thanksgiving special. And not just the day, but every day. So let’s read the chapter through and see what God has for us.

Is 12:1 – *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.”* (ESV)

### Background

Isaiah is writing about 725BC, just before the Assyrians overthrew northern Israel. And after *prophesying* such judgment in chapter 8, he looks even further ahead in chapter 11. To God’s salvation and restoration. And not just then, but now and yet to come. He looks to Jesus and eternity.

Saying things in 11:1-2 like: *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse* (11:1), the royal line of David, *and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him* (2). Obviously referring to Jesus. Whose *delight shall be in the fear of the LORD* (3) it says; *and in that day*, or at that time . . . *he shall stand as a signal for* (10) . . . *the nations* (12). A sign of salvation. That’s chapter 11.

There will come a *day* Isaiah said, when a Messiah, an anointed one of God, would save his people from the consequences of their sin. Consequences of death and destruction. A time of great salvation when people seek the Lord and find him (Jer 29:13). Receive his righteousness and walk with him (Is 35:8).

And it’s here. *That day* in 12:1 is not just past. When God saved and restored ancient Israel from their exile in 516BC. Nor is it just future when *he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth* (Is 11:4), ushering in the Millennium. *That day*, that time of salvation in this chapter, is now. As God saves more and more people from their sin.

And because of that, there will be some things that come out of our mouth. Or should. Just like it says in v1 – *You will say in that day*. And Thanksgiving is a particularly good time for it. A good time to take your cues from Is 12, and respond accordingly.

Starting with thanks.

**Thanksgiving is a good time:**

**To give thanks (v1)**

And if you’re thinking “Hello, Captain Obvious,” so be it. Because that’s what v1 says. *You will say in that day* [the day of your salvation; the time of God’s redemption in this world]: *“I will give thanks.”* You’ll say it. “Easy-schmeazy.” At least you’d think so. At *Thanks*-giving. You’d think that such a simple response to God’s amazing grace would go without saying.

But it doesn’t. Think about the past few days in your house. Were your expressions of gratitude lame? Or lacking? Did they consist of somebody’s prayer over the meal and that was it? On to football? On to games? On to shopping?

That’s how it was for *my* family growing up. Grandpa would pray a phenomenal prayer of thanks before the big feast, and that was it. Nobody else would pray and nobody else would say. Nobody would *talk* about their thankfulness. And it wasn’t much better in *our* early years of marriage.

If that’s you, that’s not right. Especially so, given the lives we lead and the blessings we have. Thanksgiving is a good time to not just *be* thankful, but say it. Not just *feel* thankful, but express it.

*You will say*, it says. Twice in the text; v1 and v4. You will *say* and you will *say*. It’s one thing to *pray*, and we’ll get to that; it’s another thing to *say*. To express your thanks. Verbalize it. Openly.

➤ Men, let me just say it like it is. We’re lame at this. At least most of us. And this time of year is a golden opportunity to make a change. To step up and stay up. Out with silent stoicism, where you let your wife do all the talking, and in with verbal thanks. Where *you* do the talking. *You* express your gratitude.

You say, “Come on, Pastor. That’s not me. I don’t *do* that. I don’t talk about that stuff.” Really? Come on, man. You *should* talk about it. You *should* give thanks. And God’s saying, if you’re truly saved, and remotely aware of his work of salvation in others, you will. You *will* give thanks. And there’s no better time than Thanksgiving. Where the opportunity is served up on a platter.

➤ So if you haven’t already, seize it. Get over your awkwardness or embarrassment or feelings of vulnerability, and say something. Start with your family, and then some key people in your life, and then your church; your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thank them for who they are and what they do. Thank them for their love and support; their blessing and encouragement.

For me, that’s you. Thank *you*. All of you. For your love, your prayer, your encouragement, your grace, your hunger for the Word, all of it. You bless me immensely, and I’m deeply grateful.

That’s the first thing Thanksgiving is good for. To give thanks. Captain obvious or not.

Second, it’s a good time . . .

**To thank God especially (v1-2)**

*You will say in that day* [v1]: “*I will give thanks to you, O LORD.*” Oh Yahweh. God in heaven. What a difference a prepositional phrase makes. *I will give thanks to you.* Not just in general; not just to your family or friends; but to God. That’s the emphasis. Especially thank God.

And Isaiah tells us why. [1] *You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for [or because] though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.* It’s the first of 6 reasons to thank God. At Thanksgiving and always. Starting with mercy.

1. Thank God **for his mercy**. So you see it? “*I will give thanks to you* [v1], *for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away.* God’s anger for our sin. Withholding what we deserve.

That’s mercy. Turning his anger away from us and his face toward us. Thank God for that. Especially on this side of the cross. Where Jesus has completely *appeased* God’s wrath toward us (1 Jn 2:2). Thank God for his mercy this Thanksgiving.

2. Second, thank God **for his comfort**. V1 again. “*I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.* Console me; reassure me. Thank God for his comfort. Comfort in your heart and comfort that lasts.

Like it 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 and good hope through grace, [17] comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.* God’s comfort is *e*-ternal and *i*n-ternal. And Thanksgiving is a good time to thank him for it.

3. Thank God **for your salvation**. V2. *You will say in that day . . . [2] “Behold, God is my salvation.”* And at the end of the verse, *he has become my salvation.* God not only saves us, but *is* our salvation. Like a fireman who rescues a person from a burning building. In that moment the fireman *is* that person’s salvation.

How about you? Do *you* know God like that? Is he *your* salvation? Personally? Has he rescued you from the fires of hell? Saved your soul and made you whole? If so, thank him.

4. Thanksgiving is a good time to thank God **for your convictions**. The deep-seated, rock-solid beliefs on which you base your entire life. Including your decision to trust God and not be afraid. V2b – *I will trust, and will not be afraid.* It’s an expression of a conviction. A conviction based on the trust-*worthiness* of God. That no matter what comes your way in this world, your good. Safe and secure because God loves you and knows you. Thank him for that. Today and every day.

5. Thank God **for his strength**. *I will trust* [v2], *and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength.* My defense. My means of standing firm (Eph 6:13). My means of weathering the storms when all seems lost.

Like the first pilgrims did at Plymouth Rock. Having undertaken their voyage in 1620 “for the glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith” like it says in The Mayflower

Compact, they weathered storms and established their settlement in the strength that *God* supplied. Seeking him and worshipping him despite their loss of life and possessions.

You may not have settled a new land, but I’m pretty sure God has given you strength for what you *have* done. And for that, Thanksgiving is a good time to thank him.

6. It’s a good time to thank God **for his encouragement**. *I will trust* [v2], *and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD* [that’s Yah-Yahweh; a term of particular endearment and nearness] *is my strength and my song.* My source of encouragement. My fuel for the journey. The wind in my sail. The cry of my heart.

Do you have a chorus or song that the Lord seems to bring back to your mind in times of stress or discouragement or fatigue? One that ministers to the depths of your soul as if God *himself* is singing it?

*My Jesus, I Love Thee* Me is one of those songs for me. “My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art thou; If ever I loved thee, my Jesus ‘tis now.” He not only *puts* a song in our heart, but *is* our song. The one of *whom* we sing, and the one who sings with us. Even *for* us at times.

What an encouragement. And the 6<sup>th</sup> reason to thank God especially at Thanksgiving.

Third, Thanksgiving is a good time . . .

#### **To fill up and overflow (v3-4)**

V3. In the day of God’s rescue and restoration – *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.*

Thanksgiving is a good, good time to fill up on the inexhaustible riches of your salvation. To draw sustenance from the wells of God’s living water, and drink deeply of his grace.

Like the grace of his forgiveness; full and final. When was the last time you filled up on that? The last time you filled up on the wellspring of his life, free and forever? The riches of his presence; precious and constant. The blessing of his peace. His patient sanctification. Inexpressible joy. Inexhaustible goodness. Unexplainable favor. Unending love. Unfailing hope.

When was the last time you drank deeply of those things? The last time you parked yourself next to the water cooler of salvation? Giddy that you could drink any time you want. Thrilled to be a water boy the rest of your life.

Draw on the wells of salvation and you’ll be the happiest person alive. Drink from Jesus and you’ll never thirst again. Immerse yourself in his word and you’ll never be empty.

➤ What you will do, is overflow. Fill up on all that God has done in your life to save and keep you, and you’ll bust out. You won’t be able to help it. You’ll run over. With the goodness of God, the greatness of God, the love of God, and the word of God.

Fill up on him, and you'll talk of him. Proclaiming his work and declaring his glory with more passion than you thought existed. Fill up, and you'll overflow from the depths of your soul, at the top of your lungs.

It's inevitable. V4 is the inevitable, unstoppable result, of v3. Draw water from the wells of salvation, v3; *and you will say in that day* [v4]: "*Give thanks to the LORD*. Fill up, and you'll overflow. Urging anybody and everybody you can, to thank God for anything and everything they can.

Fill up, and you'll say to anyone who will listen – *call upon his name*; because he's good and he's waiting; he loves you and died for you. Fill up, and you'll spur people on to *make known his deeds among the peoples* until they can go no further and talk no more. Fill up, and you'll urge people to *proclaim that his name is exalted*. High and lifted up, and worthy of praise.

Fill up and overflow. It's a good time.

And last, Thanksgiving is a good time . . .

### **To worship in song**

Like Isaiah says in v5. You will say in that day . . . [5] "*Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth* [his work of grace to save us and keep us]. [6] *Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion* [follower of God], *for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*"

Little could they have imagined the fulfillment of that. That *the Holy One of Israel* would come as a man, and literally *live* in our midst. And not just 2000 years ago, but now. In the hearts of those who love and follow him. And the churches of those who worship him. *For where two or three are gathered in my name* [Jesus said] *there am I among them* (Mt 18:20). In the midst of them.

If that's not cause for loud shouts and joyful songs of praise, I don't know what is. He's come, he's here, and he's *done gloriously*. Dying for us, rising for us, forgiving us, and saving us. Not to mention providing for us, protecting us, filling us, and blessing us. It's cause for worship. Cause for singing at the top of our lungs to make it *known in all the earth* (5). (Worship Team)

Which means worship isn't just adoration, it's witness. Do you see it? "*Sing praises to the LORD* [v5], *for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.*" Sing to the Lord, to make the Lord *known*. Worship is witness.

Which means we don't have the option of going through the motions. There's too much at stake. And with so much to be thankful for, Thanksgiving is a *great* time to do it. A great time to praise him, sing for joy, and worship in song.

Let's stand and get at it. (I Thank God)

**You Are Loved**