

9th April 2022

Peace

“You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace.”

Bible, Isaiah 55:12

Following my piece on “joy” yesterday, I went back to the writings of Isaiah, and reread the amazing affirmation of faith that’s found in chapter 55. For here you have God’s reassurances to his prophet and Isaiah’s reinforcement of God’s promises to his people. I can do no better today than to quote the chapter in full here. For, despite our times of despair, we can always believe that joy and peace will be possible. That is God’s “everlasting covenant” with us. We *can* “go out in joy and be led forth in peace” and live with the belief that even the trees of their fields will clap their hands again – in joy!

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.

I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples. Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour.”

Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD’s renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever.”

A prayer for today

*Today, let my thoughts be your thoughts, and my ways your ways,
that joy and peace might prevail. Amen*