

TAKE TIME OUT - Pastoral Retreat

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Monthly Message – December 2020

Reverend Janice A. Morgan MA. BSc.

Isaiah 62:1-12 ¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.

This month takes us on the familiar journey toward the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But what kind of journey does the Lord want to lead us on? This verse taken in the context of the whole chapter is God's prophetic Word of hope. Isaiah talks about a city not forsaken and a people not forgotten. Hopes were riding high after the downfall of Babylon but time went on and nothing changed. Isaiah proclaims God's reassurance of His intense love for the city and His chosen people. He will not 'keep silent' but expose the injustices done against His people. God 'will not rest' until His people are vindicated of all wrongful accusation and exonerated in their faithfulness to His Word. What is more, God will rescue His people from such corrupt oppression and demonstrate their salvation in a way none can miss. God will shine on His people with such brightness that all will see and know 'it is the Lord'. For any in situations that appear stagnant with no sign of resolution, this is an encouraging message indeed. In the midst of a world-wide pandemic, assurance of God's promise to deliver and bring His people through is a most welcome comfort.

We have the benefit of knowing that Jesus is our vindication for those who believe, trust and obey God's Word. The faithful remnant wait, standing in faith for the coming of the Lord. The 'root of Jesse' puts forth new shoots in every age and time, for God's promises will never be broken and His Word will never fade. At the time of Isaiah's prophetic proclamation, God's people only knew the Messiah as a hope for some unknown future of time and place. Isaiah presents God's assurances in terms of His understanding of their predicament and intensity of His divine love for them (vs4-5). The ravages and abuses of those without faith upon the people of God were evident. The wealth and food taken away by such foreigners in the past fed their disappointment and the corruption of the present stirred up frustration. This surely is a poignant message for God's people today. *What examples of frustrations and disappointments can we recognise in the news today? Are world leaders working together for the common good or looking to score points off each other?*

God's people are called not to despair but to pray; not to give up and give in but to stand. It is just when circumstances surrounding us seem at their worst that the people of God must trust in His promises. God loves us, He sent His only Son to be one of us and live among us; Jesus willingly took all our doubts and fears to the cross for us. What more could our Father in heaven have done to convince us of His love? Isaiah calls the people of God to pray that such injustices never again occur within His people (vs6-9). We too are called to pray against injustices and stand in faith for the Word of the Lord as a light of vindication for the faithful. *Who might need your support at this time? What Truth might you need to expose for God to vindicate the innocent?* Isaiah has a sense of urgency when he insists that God's promise will not fail (vs10-12). Perhaps he was reminding them to be ready to receive God's presence and not be found wanting? As we look toward celebrating the birth of God's only Son and reflect upon the vulnerability of God in the form of such a tiny baby, let us

remember the promises of God's Word. No matter what we are experiencing, no matter what the circumstance, God is in charge and will vindicate His people. He will not keep silent but speak out for Truth! He will not hide in the shadows but shine out with justice! He will not rest until His people become His delight, pure and spotless as the bride of His Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. May the Lord come quickly! **Amen!**

A happy and blessed Christmas to one and all.

Yours in Christ Jesus, Janice

Poem: Nothing Lost ©Janice Morgan 2020-November

Nothing lost and nothing gained
Is a saying that gets us nowhere!
Yet the world would speak in likewise circles
To get us all confused!

Nothing ventured; nothing gained
Makes more sense than the first
Yet it sounds as if we have to give
In order to get a return

Nothing given and nothing received
Is a depressing state of affairs!
What point can there be to life
If nothing equals nothing?

Nothing deserved but grace bestowed
Is the blessing of faith in eternity
A tiny baby born to save
Yet hunted, pursued, and derided

Nothing to fear is the Truth of God's Word
When we listen for His inner whisper
An infant divine learning all of our ways
Yet teaching us heavenly wisdom

Nothing lost and everything given
Is the promise we have from our Father
When Christ was born He shone with hope
For the faithful He saved forever.

December Calendar:

Sunday 6 th	2 nd Sunday in ADVENT
Sunday 13 th	3 rd Sunday in ADVENT
Sunday 20 th	4 th Sunday in ADVENT
Thursday 24 th – 26 th	Christmas Eve/Day/Boxing Day
Sunday 27 th	St John the apostle & evangelist
Monday 28 th	Holy Innocents – Herod's murderous massacre