



# DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

## Week of December 11, 2022 (Isaiah 42:1-9)

### Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

In the midst of a chaotic world, a chaotic time of year, a chaotic life. We take time to be still once more.

Pause

With minds full of things to be done, with hearts burdened with issues both personal and global, with souls weary with anxiety and concern we take time to bring ourselves before you once more.

In a world of plenty yet with so many doing without; in a world of abundant love yet overshadowed by hate and indifference; in a world craving peace yet tainted by war and mindless brutality we take time to pray for our world once more. In a time of quiet, we bring before you places and people known to us who live under such darkness.

As we bring these prayers before you, may we remember that we all have...

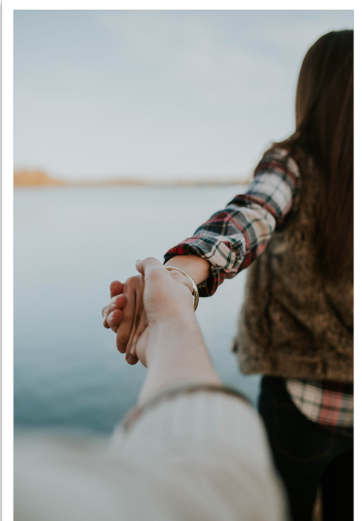


## Devotions for Life, Advent III

The Story: Isaiah 42:1-9

**Context:** This week is our last week in the Hebrew Bible, and we close with probably the most well known Prophet, Isaiah. Isaiah is a long book, and most scholars actually think of it being 2 books (some even say 3), First Isaiah and Second Isaiah, or the latter "Deutero Isaiah". The two halves are so different in language, style, and content that some even think whoever actually penned Isaiah is two different people. This week's text is from Second Isaiah.

This text takes place towards the end of the Babylonian exile, probably sometime around 540 bce. This means that at this point Israel has been exile for as much as 50 years, which means many, if not most, Jews at this time were born into exile. How would a distressed exilic people hear these words? And how might a distressed exilic people inform what God has for them? As you read the passage today, keep that in mind, as well as Advent themes.



...a part to play in bringing light to the dark corners of this world. Use us to bring hope, peace and love to those known to us and those we may never meet. Through our words and actions may your light be shown. Amen.



### **Advent at Home III :**

*[Light the candles you lit last week]*

The candles of hope and peace are lit. May hope and peace burn deep in our hearts, minds, and souls.

*[light the next candle]*

Today we light the candle of joy! We sing "joy to the world" because even when times are hard, God's Spirit can still bring us joy, and we can spread joy to others. The world needs more joy!

Let us Pray: Come, Lord Jesus, the true joy-giver. Help us to find joy in our hearts, our homes, and our world. When times are hard, help us to be bringers of joy to others, just as you bring joy to us. And may every heart prepare room for you. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection & Discussion:**

1. Why do you think this story is prescribed for Advent in our lectionary?
2. The passage begins, "here is my servant..." Who is the servant? Many scholars outline 3 possibilities: King Cyrus of Persia, who ultimately calls the Jews back to Israel and restores them; The prophet himself; Or the Messiah, whomever he may be. Which of these do you think it is? Or is it someone else?
3. What does "justice to the nations" mean? What does it mean in the text's context, and what does it mean in a more general sense?
4. What do you think verses 2 and 3 are about? What do they say in terms of how this "servant" will bring about "justice to the nations"?
5. As we think about Jesus as the Messiah, how might we understand verse 5?
6. What do you think "and the coastlands wait for his teaching" means? What coastlands? Is this literal or metaphorical? Both?
7. Why do you think God harkens back to the beginning of creation?
8. Why do you think the first thing God says about God's call to the people is "I have taken you by the hand"? Explore that image and what it might communicate.
9. What do you think the "former things" in verse 8 are? What are the "new things" to come?
10. After reflecting on all of this, ask again, "why is this an Advent text?"

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