

Isaiah 51:1–6: REMEMBER THE GOD WHO HAS BEEN FAITHFUL

Saints of Advent, before we say anything about this text, let us listen to these words from Isaiah:

**“Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,
you that seek the LORD.
Look to the rock from which you were hewn...
Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.”**

And then God makes this promise:

**“My salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never be ended.”**

I am struck by how God addresses these people: **“You who seek the LORD.”**

I am sure that among us sitting here today, we are seeking God for different reasons.

Some are seeking God for guidance. Some for healing. Some for strength for something you are carrying.

Some are seeking wisdom about what comes next. Some have come with thanksgiving because God has been good to you. And perhaps some are simply saying, **“Lord, I want to know you more deeply.”**

We do not seek God only when life is falling apart. **We seek God because life itself is lived in relationship with God.**

We seek God in sorrow and in joy. In uncertainty and in thanksgiving. In our questions and in our praise. And to all who seek him, God says something interesting:

“Look.” Look to the rock from which you were hewn. Look to Abraham. Look to Sarah. In other words: **Remember.**

Look Back

God takes his people backward before he takes them forward. “Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you.” Why Abraham? Why Sarah? Because their story is a story of God's faithfulness.

God is saying: **Remember what I did.** Remember when there was only Abraham. Remember Sarah. Remember the promise. Remember what seemed impossible.

“I called him.” “I blessed him.” “I made him many.” Notice who is acting. **God called. God blessed. God multiplied.** Their future rested not upon what Abraham and Sarah could accomplish, but upon what **God could do.**

And God says to his people: **Remember.** Moses gave Israel the same instruction “**Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you.**” — **Deuteronomy 8:2**

Remember

And perhaps God says the same thing to us today. Look back over your own life. There were times when God acted directly. There were times when God answered a prayer. There were times when a door opened that you could not have opened yourself.

But sometimes God's faithfulness came through **other people.** Someone encouraged you when you needed encouragement. Someone gave you an opportunity. Someone prayed for you. Someone stood beside you. Someone believed in you. Someone showed up at exactly the right moment. And perhaps only later did you realize:

God was there.

That is why remembering is a spiritual discipline. We do not remember simply to celebrate yesterday.

We remember yesterday so that we can recognize who God is today. The God who called Abraham is still God. The God who blessed Sarah is still God.

The God who has carried you is still God. Scripture puts it beautifully: “**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**” — **Hebrews 13:8**

God Is Still the Same

Then Isaiah says: “**The LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden.**” Do you hear the movement? God points backward:

Remember what I did. Then God points to the present: **See who I am.** And then God points forward: **Trust what I will do.** That is the movement of faith.

Remember. Recognize. Trust. Our circumstances may change. People come and go. Doors open and close. Seasons begin and seasons end. We ourselves change.

But God says: “**My salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.** What God has done becomes testimony to who God is. And who God is gives us confidence for what lies ahead.

Remember Christ

And for us as Christians, our remembering takes us finally to Jesus Christ. At the table, Jesus says: **“Do this in remembrance of me.”** Remember. Remember the bread. Remember the cup. Remember the cross. Remember the empty tomb.

But Christian remembering does not mean that Jesus belongs to the past.

We remember because **the Christ who died is risen.** The One who was faithful at the cross is faithful today. The One who conquered death is still Lord. And today, we will see another sign of God's faithfulness among us:

the waters of baptism.

As we bring a child to the font, we are reminded that before this child can understand God's promises, **God makes a promise.**

God says: **“I have called you by name, you are mine.” — Isaiah 43:1** And as we witness this baptism, perhaps we should remember our own. The water reminds us: **God called us. God claimed us. God is still faithful.**

Our Challenge This Week

So, Saints of Advent, when you leave here today, I invite you to do one thing: **Remember.**

Remember one moment when God was faithful to you. Remember one person through whom God blessed you. Remember one door God opened. Remember one prayer God answered. Remember one wilderness through which God carried you.

And when you remember it, do not stop with: **“Look what happened to me.”** Go one step further and say: **“Look who God has been to me.”**

Because that is Isaiah's message. **Remember what God has done. Recognize who God is. Trust God with what is ahead.**

The God who was faithful then **is still God now.** The hands that held you yesterday **have not let you go today.**

And the God who has brought you this far **will still be God tomorrow.** So look back. Remember. And then turn your face toward tomorrow with faith.

Because **our memories may fade, our circumstances may change, but the faithfulness of God endures forever. Remember. God is still the same.** Amen.