



The Ark Community

93: God's expectations for you

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Dear Companions:

As humans, we tend to forget that God, a supreme being, has desires too. One of them is His desire to bless us. God, the father, sent Jesus so that we may have a life that is eternal and also a life that is more abundant. You may ask: *“More abundant than what?”* ... Than a life without God's victory, His favour, His love, His peace, His joy and His matchless, unbroken companionship. God's desire is to see us benefit in full from His own abundant life.

In the book of Isaiah, the prophet is remarkably consistent in his call to a “turn around” to the Will of God by his people, so as to place them in a position to receive God's blessing. In the first 39 chapters Isaiah speaks of God's justice, righteousness and holiness, the Messiah as a King, very much like the 39 books of the Old Testament. In the last 27 chapters, Isaiah portrays God's glory, compassion and grace, the Messiah as a Servant, King and Priest, much the same as the 27 books of the New Testament. Thus the book of Isaiah is often referred to as a “mini-bible” or as the “Mt. Everest of Hebrew Prophecy”. The prophet Isaiah is also referred to as the “St. Paul of the Old Testament”. His name depicts the purpose of the book and is translated from the Hebrew as “Yahweh is salvation” or “Salvation is of the Lord”. Most of the writers of the New Testament made reference, in their own words, to Isaiah's various prophetic accounts of the Messiah. Isaiah became a pillar of strength in scripture so much so that Jesus picked Isaiah's account of Himself in chapter 61:1-2 when announcing His calling to His town folk in Nazareth.

With great respect to the Word of God in Isaiah, we're reminded of God's strong drive to get His people back to His mercy and righteousness. In the past, religion taught us that God is interested more in judgment than grace. However, in the many passages of Isaiah's reference to God's expectations, we see the opposite. For example, in chapter 30 we read about *“the rebellious children who take council, not of the Lord, and carry out their own plans, going down to Egypt”* to seek refuge rather than turn to God for their safety. Even so, in verse 15, once again God encourages them to turn to His council by saying: *“In turning to Me and resting in Me you shall be saved; in quietness and in trusting confidence shall be your strength”* just as Jesus said; *“Come to me all you who labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest,”* and Isaiah said that the people would not!!! Even though they rebelled, we see God's grace in verse 18 as we read: *“And therefore the Lord earnestly waits, expecting, looking and longing to be gracious to you; and therefore He lifts Himself up, that He may have mercy on you and show loving-kindness to you. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed, happy, fortunate, to be envied are all those who earnestly wait for Him, who expect, look and long for Him, for His victory, His favour, His love, His peace, His joy and His matchless, unbroken companionship!”*

Our God of justice wants us to stay turned towards Him so that He may justify us of our own ways with His mercy, and by His grace bless us.

When you feel that you're far from Him or that you made your own plans, or that you haven't done enough for Him and His kingdom, remember that the Lord your God has a great desire, to bless you with His abundant life ... for that reason He sacrificed His own Son, so that through Him you may receive His mercy and grace, free of charge, because Jesus paid the price. He earnestly waits, expecting, looking and longing for your acknowledgment of His loving-kindness. In all your endeavors, praise Him and earnestly thank Him for all He has done for you, knowing that He wants to be a blessing and has you in His heart and mind, always expecting you to come to Him. Put all your trust on Him, for you have a great future.

God's peace be with you!!!

Ref.: John 3:16; John 10:10, Psalm 103:1-5, Luke 4:18-19, Matt. 11:28