



with love from God

enduring advent promises from Isaiah

Materials for lifegroup use & personal reflection

Written by Julie Douglas, Dawn Freeman,
Angela Chapman, David Rebel & Johnny Douglas

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Quoteable quotes

"Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer & reformation of our hearts." John Stott

"Advent confronts this corrosion of the heart with the insistence that God has not abandoned the world, hope is real and something is coming." Rob Bell.

"Advent subversively calls us to slow down to take Him in..." JWD

"He was created of a mother whom he created.

He was carried by hands that he had formed." Augustine

"The birth of Jesus made possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living it." Frederick Buechner

"The future belongs to God. Ours is an expectant faith for one more reason. We live in anticipation, because we also know God does not forget His own." JWD

"Advent is the recovery of how to live in a world of impatience as a patient people!" Stanley Hauerwas

"I want a Christmas that whispers — Jesus." Anne Graham Lotz

"Let every interruption this season be embraced by you as an invitation!" JWD

Advent is an intentional season of “preparedness.” We think of advent as a “journey”, however hackneyed or cliched. We think of advent as a progressive path we take in order to arrive at a destination — the sleepy village of Bethlehem.

Preparing. Making plans. Charting a way. Scouting and scoping the landscape. Assessing and foreseeing obstacles to avoid or override. Sounds like life as usual. Sounds like something we can get our heads and hands and hearts around. Sounds like something we can get down and get done. But wait a minute! Advent is not our journey. We are not in charge. Advent is not a journey we make, a journey we prepare for, a road that we navigate. No, advent is the journey God makes. advent isn't a trip we prepare to go on. Advent is the time we prepare for God's trip to us. Advent is the time we ready ourselves to receive God afresh. The God who, against all reason and for our redemption, is making a journey towards us.

Advent is when we prepare by unpacking and letting our baggage go — let go of the freight that weighs life down: let go of safety, let go of structures, let go of certainty, let go of control. We can only “prepare the way of the Lord” by preparing an environment that encourages our own openness and our own vulnerability.

Brene Brown has made the study of vulnerability, or its rejection is her life's work. Surprise! No one likes feeling vulnerable. We fight against it with every fibre of our being. After all, to be “vulnerable” is to be “weak,” right? If you are someone who is “vulnerable” you suffer from fear, from anxiety, from shame. Being “vulnerable” is an utterly negative label in our contemporary culture. Just as we don't want our electronic lives “vulnerable” to viruses that might threaten our identity, so we don't want our physical, emotional, spiritual lives to be vulnerable to any unauthorized access. Unless we say so, and unless we are in control..

No one gets close. No one comes near. No one is let in.

Brown believes that an intolerance for vulnerability yields a devastating harvest. For vulnerability is the incubator of almost all the good things of life. To be invulnerable is to be incapable of joy, of love, of belonging, of creativity. The paradox of life is this: a perfect immune system is a disaster. You can't grow with a perfect immune system. You need to be vulnerable and to be open to viruses to grow and mature.

Whatever it is you have faith in, when you subtract the human factor of vulnerability, you subtract the possibility of failure, yes, but also of joy, of anxiety and of creativity, of fear and of love. Subtracting vulnerability subtracts the part of the human being that is capable of “preparing the way” for God's influence and participation in human life. In Jesus' day, “preparing the way” for the arrival of a King didn't mean adding things to the road, but clearing away the dross and rubble that litter the way, and the overhanging branches that snag and impede the coming of the King.

The good news is that while Adam and Eve tried to subtract their vulnerability in the shrubbery of Eden, hiding their nakedness from God, God came looking for them. Just like God comes looking for us every year during the Season of advent. When God saw Adam and Eve hiding in the bushes, God didn't turn away in disgust and abandon them. God didn't throw them away and start over. When Adam and Eve were at their most vulnerable, when they were naked and they knew they were naked, that is exactly when God came walking in the garden looking for them, seeking them out, bringing the divine into their midst. When we mess up, God doesn't throw us away & start again. God comes looking for us: “Where are you?”

Every year during advent we need to rediscover our nakedness. Advent season is an invitation into vulnerability. For it is our nakedness, our openness, our exposure, our vulnerability—getting rid of the baggage and clutter -that “prepares the way of the Lord.” Only when you are open can you be fully alive. Only when you risk a broken heart can you truly love.

We are being charged during advent: charged and prepared for the greatest act of love the world has ever known. But to receive it we need to have the courage to make ourselves vulnerable, as vulnerable as a baby in a stable. What will you receive this Advent-time? *You want to prepare the way of the Lord? How vulnerable are you?*



Who and what then... Isaiah was a Hebrew prophet who was born in Jerusalem, Israel. He was believed to have lived about 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ and was said to have found his calling as a prophet when he saw a vision in the year of King Uzziah's death. At this time, although the throne of Judah was then vacant, the throne of God was never unoccupied, the Lord God reigned.

Isaiah has been described as 'the evangelical prophet' and he lived at a time of well-documented active prophetic activity (also Amos, Hosea, Micah and others lived in this century). Isaiah's ministry was to Judah (the Southern Kingdom), and he spoke to a rebellious nation who had internally rejected the Holy One of Israel at this time. These were difficult times and the writings speak of people's loss of faith in God and their failure to rely utterly on Him. This is a key theme in the first half of the book of Isaiah.

The whole book of Isaiah is focussed on the main role of Jerusalem in God's plan for the world, seeing centuries of history through the vision of this prophet. The book draws on three main sections which appear to address their message to three specific periods in the history of God's people.

And three great 'evangelical' themes emerge through the writing and teaching of Isaiah's writing:

- **Condemnation** (chapters 1-39) – talks about sinful rebellion and false worship. That God prefers righteous behaviour to ceremonial ritual. National judgement (1-12), universal judgement (13-23), eternal judgement (24-27) and imminent judgement (38-39) are spoken of.
- **Consolidation** (chapters 40-55) – talks about hope being restored, the judgement is over and God is preparing a highway for His people to return across the desert wastelands. The good news of the promised return, under the leadership of a good shepherd, is presented.
- **Correction** (chapters 55-66) – the final section seems to envisage the Israelite people back in their own land observing their familiar ceremonies and feasts (although the temple is not yet rebuilt). The book ends on a note of rich expectation of God's love, kindness and grace, and it anticipates a time when people of all nations will come to the purified Jerusalem and bow down before the Lord God. The message is that God would save them if they remain faithful.

Points to look out for and ponder on ...

Remember books set in this period (of old testament), refer to two Kingdoms in Israel – the northern Kingdom (called Israel or Ephraim) and the southern Kingdom (called Judah).

Isaiah is a book that stresses monotheism (I am the only Lord) more than any other in the bible. Reflect on why this was so important for Isaiah at this point in history. Salvation is a theme that runs all the way through the book of Isaiah. Reflect on what salvation looks like in this book and how it is described.

What are God's people being saved from? What are God's people being saved for?

One of the key titles for God in Isaiah is the 'Holy One of Israel'. How else is God described throughout this book? **From chapter forty onwards, one of the main themes is of 'comfort and hope'. Reflect on where you need' comfort and hope' in your life right now** – do the prophecies of Isaiah offer any of these for you?



Waiting... in hope!

Week 1 Isaiah 40 v 27-31.

The middle section of the Isaiah 40-55 covers the following ideas ...

- Comfort for God's people
- The judgement is over
- The sins are pardoned
- Hope is being restored
- The glory of the Lord will be revealed to man.

1. 'Isaiah describes God's power to create, His provision to sustain and His presence to help'. As we start our advent journey what is your concept of God as revealed in Jesus?
2. **Read this well-known passage in two different versions of the bible and reflect quietly for some minutes. What is God saying to you?**
3. **Chapter 40 starts with the words 'comfort, O comfort my people'. When have you known God's comfort? What does v 27 tell us about God's heart towards us?**
4. The concept of trust as 'waiting' appears throughout Isaiah – see 18 v 17, 25 v 9, 33 v 2, 49 v 23 & 64 v 4. What are we having to wait and trust God for at this time?
5. V28 – Why does it ask in the passage 'Have you never heard, or understood?' Can you get the idea that God is so great that He never tires or grows weary of helping us, or understanding what we need?
6. The Israelites didn't think they could trust God to deliver them from the nations so they trusted other nations instead – what do we believe in these COVID days? Has God forgotten or overlooked us? Has He grown weary of doing good?
7. **V 29 When we think about God's strength and power that is available to us, what comes to mind and why?**
8. V 31 Are you 'mounting up', 'running' or walking at this time? How can others feed and help you?
9. V31 – 'But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength.' What does this trust look like? Can you see it? What should you do if you want it?
10. **V31 – 'They will run and not grow weary' – how can this be? We know that if we try and run a marathon, we get very tired. If we train really well beforehand it helps greatly but as humans, we still run out of steam. How can God help us to keep running, find new strength?**
11. **What is God reminding you of as you approach advent? What might you need to do differently?**

Points to ponder

- 'To wait on God is not simply to mark time, rather it is to live in confident expectation of His action on our behalf'. Don Carson
- **"If I cannot 'believe God and hope in Him' in the sense of surrendering my life to Him in a kind of life that I know pleases Him, then His power cannot transform me". Bill Johnson**
- Song: Soar on Wings like Eagles – Don Moen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=do8-DZik_7c
- **'Waiting is an art that our impatient age has forgotten. It wants to break open the ripe fruit when it has hardly finished planting the shoot. But, all too often the greedy eyes are only deceived; the fruit that seemed so precious is still green on the inside, and disrespected hands ungratefully toss aside what has so disappointed them'. Dietrich Bonhoeffer**



Waiting – Listen to Gods voice

Week 2 Isaiah 55

In this passage we are told to listen to God's voice and his invitation to come to Him and receive blessing and restoration, as part of His everlasting covenant. God is merciful and forgives; He is mighty and His grace is far beyond our human comprehension.

The last section of Isaiah, 55-66 covers the following ideas...

- The Israelite people are back in their own land.
 - Expectation of God's love, kindness and grace.
 - Anticipation of a time when all will bow down before the Lord God.
 - God promises to save all those who are faithful to Him.
1. Chapter 54 announces that all is forgiven; chapter 55 is an invitation to experience that forgiveness. The offer is water (essential for life), milk (nourishment) and wine (a luxury, for celebration). This is an invitation to the Lord's salvation. Have you any idea then what this invitation does mean, or would mean? Reflect on this and note down your thoughts.
 2. **Read Jeremiah 29:13. In v6 there is a sense of urgency in seeking God. Do we have that sense of urgency in our witness and sharing Jesus?**
 3. V1-5 are an invitation to find not only our bodily needs being met but also our spiritual needs. What does this mean to us? God's invitation is always to come 'come buy' ... 'come hear' ... 'come see'. What is God's invitation to you today?
 4. **V1 – 'Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink ... it's all free! What does this mean? Where can we go and get free food and drink? But this talks of a different type of nourishment – 'you will enjoy the finest food'.**
 5. V3 – 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you'. Covenant means a 'solemn agreement' that is kept or promised. Have you ever promised something and kept that promise? Have you ever promised something and let the other person down? Read and reflect in VS 3-5 what that covenant was, that God promised to His people.
 6. V 6&7 have been described as the clearest OT invitation to come to God. It includes repentance, and promises God's mercy and pardon. Compare this with Rev 3:20 which we commonly use as a call to God for new Christians. Can we come to God without true repentance?
 7. **V6 – says 'Seek the Lord while you can find Him. Call on Him now while He is near'. Will He go missing at some point? Will time run out? Discuss this?**
 8. V 8&9 God is God and we are not. We cannot fully comprehend the greatness of God or His wisdom. Spurgeon says 'You may conclude that it is not intended that you should understand the infinite'. But one day we will be conformed to the image of God's Son. **Romans 8:29. Can you think of examples when we think that our understanding is better than God's? What does this mean for you?**
 9. V11 - God says this about His word, 'I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to'. What fruit will it produce? If we ignore God's word and go our own way, what fruit will there be then?
 10. **V 11 In this time of advent how do we understand this verse? Where all else changes the word of God is unchanging and enduring Matthew 24 v 35. Why is this especially significant now?**
 11. V 12-13 What is the hope that we have as seen in these verses that sustain us and can be used to encourage others?
 12. **Reflect on our earlier teaching series on 'Defiant Joy' and 'Jesus according to Jesus' – what might God be reminding you of especially in this study?**

Points to ponder

- You may conclude that it is not intended that you should understand the infinite, for you are told that his thoughts and ways are far above you, but you are required to seek him while he may be found and call upon him while he is near. CH Spurgeon.
- **Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46 v 10**
- 'A banquet table is worse than useless to the person who is too proud or ashamed to come and eat from it' J N Oswart

- **'While it is good that we seek to know the Holy One; it is probably not so good to presume that we ever complete the task'.** Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
- Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. Barak Obama
- **Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening, when you would rather have talked.** Mark Twain.
- Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak, courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. Winston Churchill.



Walking – in the Light of the Lord

Week 3 Isaiah 2 v 1-5

As in Advent we remember the first coming of Christ as a baby, so we also look forward to his second coming in glory at the end of the world. In Isaiah's vision he sees the future time when we shall walk in the Light of the Lord

- 1. Isaiah 2 v1-5. Read and reflect on this message of hope and expectation? What strikes you?**
- V2-3 What is the significance of the repetition of 'mountain'. Isaiah prophesies that the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains (v2) and refers in verse 3 to Mount Zion and the temple in Jerusalem, which is sometimes seen as a reference to Jerusalem as the capital of the world. What do mountains represent for you?
- V 3 & 5 How might we put Gods ways into practice so that we 'may walk in His paths'?
- 4. Given advent reminds that Jesus is the Prince of peace, how do we understand v 4?**
- Isaiah refers to the wars and power struggles going on at the time and encourages the people to give up their desires for self in order to unite and surrender to God. How is this message as relevant today to us as it was to the people over 2000 years ago. (v4)?
- Isaiah was also encouraging the people to look forward to the future and imagine a world where God would be the centre. Advent encourages us to do the same, but we have to be awake, ready and listening to receive it. Discuss.
- 7. What comfort do you take in the current times from Isaiah's message, the hope of advent, and this time in global history?**
- 8. V5 – 'Come descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the Light of the Lord'. What does it mean for us to 'walk in the Lord's light'?**
- 9. Obeying God means walking in His paths – is that easy? It means giving up what we may want to do and doing as He asks of us. Can we humble ourselves to do this? It means sacrificing things for Him.**

Points to ponder

- The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry & not ask for the great beam that would take all shadows away. Henri Nouwen
- For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, live as children of light. Ephesians 5 v 8**
- Arise, shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. Isaiah 60 v 1
- If you are walking with Jesus, in the spirit, you need not fear going too far. No believer has gone as far as God wants him to go. AA Allen.**
- Song: Humble King – Brenton Brown https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YV_3I6Ng5IA



With us – God is love

Week 4 Isaiah 7 v 10-15

During the time that this passage was written, King Ahaz was going through a difficult time, his kingdom was under threat. Ahaz was unsure of his beliefs and did not want to admit to believing and trusting in God. Isaiah challenged him to test God and he refused, probably because he didn't want to admit to trusting God or for Isaiah to prove that God was real. This is a contrast to Gideon, who tested God to strengthen his trust in his own abilities, rather than his trust in

God. Ahaz refuses to put his trust in God and will not listen to the clear words of the prophet Isaiah. God therefore gives him a message through Isaiah which is veiled and difficult for him to understand. It has meaning for his present situation (near fulfilment) but a future more wonderful meaning in the birth of Jesus. (far fulfilment).

During these difficult times of Covid, many of us experience times of feeling hopeless or feel the future looks bleak, particularly when we can't see our friends and loved ones, or maybe meet together as church family. Isaiah's prophecy of the coming of Jesus is our hope in these times. This is a word for us too and we only have to listen and accept it and know that God is at work in every situation. He walks these paths with us, and as the footsteps poem tells us, he walks alongside us and carries us when times are difficult. Jesus came to us at Christmas to redeem us, restore us and reconcile us with God.

The first section of the book (Ch 1-39) covers the following ideas ...

- Talks about sinful rebellion, and false worship.
- That God prefers righteous behaviour to ceremonial ritual.
- Judgement is spoken of.

- 1. At times God graciously gave a sign to confirm His word or His work. King Ahaz's refusal to ask (for a sign) was an affront to God's gracious offer. Do we ever refuse to take a generous offer from someone? Why is that?**
2. Prayer is a trusting communication which God welcomes. ~~Let us try praying first and see what God does.~~ Ahaz was having a difficult time when Isaiah asked him to test God, do we ever reject God when we go through difficult times or is this the time that we turn to him? Do we pray to God at the beginning of a problem, or only when we are at the end of our tether, having exhausted all our resources?
- 3. v 11 God encourages boldness in our praying. He wants us to reach out to Him in faith. In light of this how do we then pray and for what? The message translation of this passage tells us to be extravagant in what we ask God for. Are we extravagant enough in what we ask him to do? Do we really believe that God can do anything?**
4. v 12 Ahaz appeared righteous by refusing to 'test' God by asking for a sign but was it an excuse so that he didn't want to know what God would say? What excuses do we use for not accepting God's invitation to us?
5. These verses remind us of the differences between the long view, which is God's, and the short view, which is ours. The short view often leads to fear. How have we held onto God's view during lockdown?
- 6. Piety is the appearance of religion while trust in God is the substance of living faith. What other examples of both can we recall in Scripture?**
- 7. V13 – Isaiah said '...Isn't it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well? How is your patience? Do you take time over things and with people, or are you quick to frazzle?**
- 8. V14 – Isaiah says, 'Alright then, the Lord Himself will give you the sign. The virgin will conceive a child and give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God with us'. Wow! What a prophecy that was for what was to come. How does the prediction of Jesus' birth (700 years before) make you feel? Does it help you to believe in the story, to have faith in your future and what hope do you have in Him, from this promise?**
9. v 14 What is the difference between the sign that God promises and the ones we often ask for?
10. Reading v 14-15 this advent season what is God saying to us as individuals, households and as a church?
- 11. What does it mean today that God is 'with' us; one of the most profound truths of all scripture? Would we have said anything different this time last year? Can you share an example of God being 'with' you this week?**

Points to ponder

- During our congregational life, in mid-November, someone had a very vivid picture of a group of people exploring underground caves. They were roped together and the guide at the front, had a light. The group were following the directions of the guide and keeping close together for safety. *If we follow the directions of our guide, He will keep us safe and steer us out of the dark caves back to the light.*
- **The greater your knowledge of the goodness and grace of God on your life, the more likely you are to praise Him in the storm.** Matt Chandler.
- God does not give us everything we want but he does fulfil his promises leading us along the best and straight paths to Himself. Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
- **God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If he gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it.** Pope Francis.
- We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere incognito. C S Lewis.
- **'God is not a force or a principle but a person who wishes to be personally present with His creatures. That presence is protection; it is fulfilment, it is sustenance'.** J W Oswalt
- Song: What a Beautiful Name it is – Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEwDx8YJndU>



Wonder – Light has dawned

Week 5 Isaiah 9 v 2-7

A great light will shine and a child will be born who will fulfil all the prophecies in these verses, and this will be accomplished by the zeal of Almighty God. The message talks about the end of wars, the battle is over, hope has arrived.

1. Spend some time reflecting on the names of God in this Scripture.

Which offers most hope for you this advent and why?

2. V 2 We know the truths of this scripture that we will see a 'great light', as John teaches that Jesus is the 'Light of the world'. What is our story of walking in darkness and then responding to and walking in, the light?
3. **V3 – '...and its people will rejoice'. Christ is the one who brings us joy and increases our joy. In our series on 'Defiant Joy' at St Peters recently, Sue H said 'Happiness depends on happenings and Joy depends on Jesus'. This is so true – think of a difficult time in your life when you still felt the presence of the 'Joy of Jesus'.**
4. V 6-7 What does it mean to have God as our 'wonderful counsellor'? Who else's counsel do we trust and turn to?
5. V6 – 'For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.' The Kingdom of God is to be established. The earthly Kingdom of the Old Testament period would be replaced with the hoped-for Messianic Kingdom. And the government will rest on His shoulders – He will be called: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Can you imagine one person holding all of those attributes? Only Jesus can.
6. What does 'mighty God' mean to you and I? Hero? All powerful? All-conquering ... or what??
7. 'Mighty God' is the power we desperately want and need from the King of Kings. Here is power but not in terms of the world's expectations. Rather, this baby has power to forgive, to renew and to transform exhausted, lost and broken lives'. Discuss.
8. **'Everlasting father' speaks of the timelessness of God – what does that mean to us in this time of everything changing during COVID?**
9. Jesus birth and life weren't peaceful but He was, and is, the 'Prince of peace'. What does this mean for us and why?
10. **What of the four names is more significant for you and why?**
11. **How are you enabling God to reveal Himself to you in a new way this Christmas?**

Points to ponder

- "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg – or he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord, and God'. C S Lewis
- **'The message of Christmas is no matter how dark the night, there is hope a tunnel has light at both ends'. JWD**
- 'The great mystery of the manger is that God could translate deity into humanity without discarding the deity or distorting the humanity'. John Stott
- **'In total reality he comes in the form of a beggar, of the dissolute human child in ragged clothes, asking for help. He confronts you in every person that you meet. As long as there are people, Christ will walk the earth as your neighbour, as the one through whom God calls you, speaks to you, makes demands on you'. Dietrich Bonhoeffer**
- Song: Light of the World – Lauren Daigle https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cLhaZIBSpo

This writing by Gayle Irwin is food for thought...

"Politicians of this day look for what they can get from you. Jesus looks for what He can do for you. Leaders of this day surround themselves with servants. Jesus surrounds us with His servanthood. Leaders of this day use their power to build their empire. Jesus uses his power to wash our feet and make us clean and comfortable.

Leaders of this day trade their influence for money. *God so loved that he gave.*

Generals of this day need regular wars to keep their weapons and skills up to date and insure their own advancement. Jesus brings peace and rest to hearts. The higher the plane of importance one reaches in this world, the more inaccessible he becomes. Jesus was Emanuel, "God with us."

Leaders of this day are desperate to be seen and heard. Jesus sought anonymity so He could be useful. Obviously, Jesus is not in charge of the halls of Washington, London, Moscow, Baghdad, Paris or Bonn. So, how can we ever believe the "government will be upon His shoulders"?

Actually, His government shows its workings in wonderful ways. Whenever I see someone who miraculously leaves a life of drugs or alcohol and is restored to his family and work, I can see that he is now governed by God. Whenever I see loving Christians gently caring for orphans and those rejected by family, I know I am watching people governed by God. Whenever I see people eagerly learning the Bible and joyously praising, I know who the governor is. Whenever I see people give up lucrative careers simply to go and share the Good News of Jesus, I know they are governed by God. When I see pastors carefully teach and lead the flock God has given them, I know they are getting signals from the great King. When I see people leave family to live and teach in distant lands because they love the people who have not heard, I know they are governed by God.

So, indeed, the government is alive and working. Often silently, mostly unseen. We can be and are, by choice, governed by God. Hope and joy and peace and rest cover its subjects. Justice, mercy and grace, amazingly coexist. I like this Kingdom. The borders are open. Come on in!"

Afterward reflections on the book of Isaiah

- **Were there any parts of the book that you particularly liked or that inspired you?**
- Were there any parts of the book that you disliked or that troubled you?
- **What did you think the book was about?**
- Isaiah is a long book with many intertwining themes. After reading it which themes stand out most clearly in your mind?
- **Do you think Isaiah hangs together well as a book? Were there any sections that didn't feel as though they fitted with the rest?**
- Isaiah is sometimes called the 'fifth gospel'. By this people mean that its prophecies are so vital to the New Testament and to making sense of the life of Jesus, that it can be ranked alongside the four gospels. What do you think? Is this a good or a bad title for it?
- **What's your favourite verse or passage from Isaiah?**
- Did you read anything in the book that touched you, expanded your faith or made you think more deeply about your life and how you live it?
- **What three things are your big takeaways to apply & live out?**