

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening

Week 13: Isaiah hears words of encouragement and hope from God. He hears what the Kingdom of God will be like "then" -- in all its fullness.

**Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God...
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water...
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

Isaiah 35:3-4a, 5-7a, 10

*Be strong,
do not fear!*

God tells Isaiah to say, "Do not fear. Here is your God." When the angel Gabriel comes to Mary, he says, "Do not be afraid. The Lord is with you." It seems that God does not want us to be afraid. Good! We do not like to be afraid. If God is with us, do we have to fear? Isaiah knows. Mary knows. Now we know, too.

Ages 3-6

When Isaiah describes the Kingdom of God complete he says that all those who need healing will be whole. What will the eyes of the blind see? What will the ear of the deaf hear? What song of joy will the speechless sing?

Ages 6-9

Choose the reflective questions that suit your family:

At the end of the prophecy, Isaiah speaks of the "ransomed of the LORD." Who are these hostages that return to the Kingdom singing? In what way are we hostages? What holds us hostage and prevents us from everlasting joy? Who will ransom us? How?

teenagers

Waters in the wilderness, streams in the desert, pools of water in burning sand...all this water. In Canada we are blessed with so much water. What do we know about water? What does it do for us? We use it to wash clean, to play in, to drink. We need it to live. This image of water tells us something about the Kingdom of God. What will life be like when the Kingdom of God is complete?

Ages 9-12

Read the scripture.

Ask questions.

Listen to each other's answers.

Then pray the prayer together on page 2.

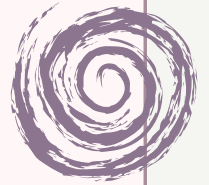
Listen Prayer

One person leads and everyone else responds (R.)

Lord, our God,

We praise you for the wisdom of your will that unfolds all around us. We desire to enter more profoundly into this mystery, to root ourselves firmly in your will, to listen ever more deeply to you.

R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.



Teach us to listen closely to your Word—to the words on the page and the meaning they invoke, to the human author and to the divine, to the spaces between the letters where your Spirit dwells.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen attentively to Creation—to the voice of the earth, to the whispering of wind and waves, to the silence of the rocks and soil and swarms of voiceless creatures.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen respectfully to the culture that surrounds us—to its wisdom and its folly, to the loud voices and the quiet, to that which can teach us and form us and expand our thinking.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

And teach us, Lord, to listen deeply to one another—to what we speak aloud and to what we leave unsaid, to our needs and to our concerns, to the love and the longing and desires of our hearts.

**R. We come before you.
We make ourselves still.
We listen to understand.
Amen.**

