

## ***Advent Meditation Moments***

**This Advent Time of Meditation is meant to offer you an opportunity to escape from the mad rush of the world for a few moments, and to focus on God, God's attentiveness to you, and your response to God's activity in your life. Each week Beautiful Savior will offer a different meditation, based on the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, hallmarks of the abundant life that Jesus offers us.**

### **Advent II: PEACE**

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. . . .Do not fear, for I am with you. Isaiah 43:1-3a, 5a.

**Context:** After David and Solomon, the united kingdom of Israel was split into two: Israel in the north, and Judah in the south. In the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC, the Assyrians attacked and wiped out the 10 northern tribes. Now, in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC the Babylonians have attacked and destroyed the southern kingdom. Jerusalem was destroyed, including the holy Temple. The people were dragged off into exile in Babylon (today's Iraq). As is typical in history, Babylon was in turn overthrown by the Persians (today's Iran). The king, Cyrus, gave an edict that the former exiles were

free to return to their homeland. The passage from Isaiah looks forward to that homecoming. But things were desperate among the people, who languished in a foreign land and were giving up hope. Yahweh, their God, promised them divine presence in their exile, their difficult return, and their more difficult return to a devastated city. That is, God offers them not just hope, but peace: that because God is the author of their freedom, they will indeed go home. And although the history of Judah was difficult and oftentimes dangerous, the people could rest assured that God was still with them.

**To think about:** Have you ever, in moments of great personal despair and turmoil, ever felt at peace with the matter? Was it perhaps God's peace that you were experiencing?

**Psalm of Peace:** 4:1-2, 8

Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?  
How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?  
I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone,  
O LORD, make me lie down in safety.

**Closing Prayer**

How often do we cry out to you, Lord God, in the midst of our turmoil? Help us to hear your Word of peace, that that peace is already surrounding us even before we ask. Grant us peace in our hearts, so that we may offer thanks and praise for your gifts to help us in our distress. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

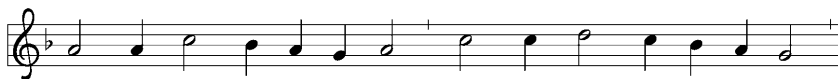
## Comfort, Comfort Now My People



- 1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
- 2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.  
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.  
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!  
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.  
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.  
 Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.  
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

## *Peace*

My soul, there is a country  
    Far beyond the stars,  
Where stands a wingéd sentry  
    All skillful in the wars;  
There above the noise and danger,  
    Sweet Peace sits crown'd with smiles,  
And One born in a manger  
    Commands the beauteous files.  
He is thy gracious Friend,  
    And—O my Soul awake!—  
Did in pure love descend  
    To die here for thy sake.  
If thou canst get but thither,  
    There grows the flower of Peace,  
The Rose that cannot wither,  
    Thy fortress and thy ease.  
Leave then thy foolish ranges,  
    For none can thee secure  
But One, who never changes,  
    Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

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Henry Vaughan was born on April 17, 1622,  
in Llansantffraed, Breconshire, Wales.

He was educated in Oxford,  
studied law in London  
before being recalled home  
after the English Civil War broke out.