

Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' ²¹And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' ²²Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' ²³He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' ²⁶John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

On Jordan's Bank, the Baptist's Cry

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh.
Awake and harken, for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings!

3 We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward.
O let Your face upon us shine
And fill the world with love divine.

2 Then cleansed be every life from sin:
Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.

4 All praise to You, eternal Son,
Whose advent has our freedom won,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Spirit, evermore.

I've Got Peace Like a River

1 I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in-a my soul.
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in-a my soul.

2 I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul.
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul

3 I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul.
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul.

Prepare the Way

1 Prepare the way, O Zion,
Your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley
A level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory,
Foretold in sacred story.
[Refrain]

3 Fling wide your gates, O Zion;
Your Savior's rule embrace.
His tidings of salvation
Proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing,
Their adoration voicing. [Refrain]

2 Christ brings God's rule, O Zion;
He comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom,
And justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding,
For grace and joy abounding.
[Refrain]

Refrain:
O blest is Christ that came
in God's most holy name.