

WITNESS – Reaching out to others ***(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)***

Heavenly Father we take upon ourselves the mantle of authority that Jesus delegates to us and in His name we speak to every household in Hungerford and say to you:-

1 Relationships

We bless you in the Name of the Lord. We bless your marriages that they may be strong and whole. We bless the relationship between each marriage partner that it may be loving, forgiving, merciful and strong. We bless every intergenerational relationship within each household that there may be peace and love and understanding flowing between each one.

In Jesus' name we bless every network of wholesome and supportive friendship.

2 Health

We bless your health that you may be strong and well. In Jesus' name we resist any sickness or disease which seeks to invade this parish and to every person in the parish we say, be well, be strong, be healthy. To any who are sick right now we say we bless you in Jesus' name with a speedy recovery.

3 Wealth

We bless your wealth that you may have plenty to replace poverty. We bless you to have enough to live and enough to give. We bless the work of your hands that whatever you turn your hand to which is wholesome may be profitable. We bless every wholesome enterprise that is conducted by you that it may prosper and be successful. We bless the local businesses that they may be successful and profitable.

4 Education

We bless the local schools that they may be secure, safe places for teachers and pupils alike. We bless the children's capacity to learn and develop relationships and we bless their simple trust in Jesus that their trust may grow and become enriched.

5 Church

We speak to the Church and we say we bless you in the Name of the Lord that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God may flow out from you in power. We bless the hearts of all who live in the parish that they may be quickened to hear and respond to the Voice of the Living God. We bless all who live and work here, that the overflow of the blessings of the presence of the kingdom of God may fall upon you. **Amen**

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Isaiah 43:1-7

3

3 Peace

Purpose: The thrust of this study in Isaiah is to get to know God better, to see that he is always with us no matter what happens to us and that he will love and care for us because we are precious to him. Knowing and trusting this kind of God produces the fruit of peace within us.

Peace in the New Testament is related to the Old Testament concept of shalom. It denotes wholeness, well-being and harmony with God and others.

WELCOME – Breaking the ice ***(Aim for 10 minutes)***

When or where have you been aware of God's peace in your life?

WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord ***(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)***

What has been the best thing that has happened since our last meeting?

OR

When have you felt closest to God since our last meeting?

Pray your “thank yous” to God

WORD – Applying the truth
(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)

We live in tense anxious times. Stress-related illnesses have reached epidemic proportions. Nightly news reports give vivid details of the latest power struggles, illicit drug deals, hostage takings and suicides. How can we know the peace of God when the world seems to be falling to pieces? How can we experience the calm, quiet fruit that God's Spirit offers?

Isaiah 43 reveals the love and care of the One whose Spirit lives in us. Israel had sinned greatly by going after other gods and by seeking alliances with heathen powers instead of resting quietly on God. This is why the people found themselves in exile in Babylon (about 540 B.C.). Isaiah 42:23–25 describes something of Israel's sin. Then Isaiah 43 begins: “But now ... ” The time of exile was almost over, and God was ready to bring his people to safety and security.

1. Read Isaiah 43:1–7. What words and phrases indicate God's special relationship with Israel?

2. What dangers might God's people face (v. 2)? If the peace of God does not depend on freedom from adversity (v. 2), on what does it depend?

3. What role then can adversity play in developing peace?

4. How do verses 3–4 foreshadow what God eventually does for his people?

5. If you knew nothing about God except what you learned from this passage, what would you find him to be like?

6. What relation do you see between knowing who God is and being able to receive the peace he offers?

7. Think of the most significant human being in your life, someone you love, trust and understand (and who understands you). How did you get to know this person so intimately?

8. In what similar ways can you get to know God?

9. Consider the things you are anxious about currently. How can knowing God intimately produce his Spirit's peace in you?

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