



Dear friends,

For a Methodist minister, my knowledge of Mr Wesley's writings is possibly more limited than many, so I was very grateful when our Chair of District shared this quote with us at our recent Synod:

When John Wesley was asked what he would do with the people to whom he preached he replied "I would make them virtuous and happy, easy in themselves, and useful to others." He, of course, then went on to also speak of God, of Jesus and of love...

I wonder how many of us would recognise ourselves as "virtuous, happy, easy in ourselves and useful to others"? I think maybe the first and last of these are high on our list...but what about the other two? What does it take to be or to become happy, and easy in ourselves?

Some of this is, I think about perspective, but it is also about priority and expectation. It can be hard to be 'easy in oneself' when priorities and expectations are out of sync. In my mind, this connects with the words of Jesus we are often coming back to at present from John chapter 10 – "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." To be full of life holds within it an element of being 'easy in oneself'. We will have many conversations about priorities and expectations over the coming weeks and months as we continue to seek a sustainable and life-giving way forward for churches and the circuit. Maybe we need to include in our conversations reflection on what it means for us as individuals and community to be "virtuous and happy, easy in [our]selves, and useful to others."

As we approach Bible Month, and our opportunity to spend some time in worship and reflection in the company of Isaiah, you will find links to a couple of different 'ways in' to reading the whole book below. If anyone would like these in printed format, please do let me know as soon as possible (07528 359341, leaving a postal address in any message), and we will endeavour to get them to you as soon as possible. We hope that you enjoy both the thematic invitation into Isaiah in Sunday worship, and the opportunities offered to read the whole book, and maybe to talk about what you find with others. There is also the opportunity to receive daily devotions (1st-30th June) including a prompt to read two or three chapters of Isaiah, and a poem as a commentary. These have been prepared by one of our Local Preachers, Vince Gilbert – thank you, Vince. If you would like to receive them, please let him know by emailing Randompoet52@gmail.com (this isn't his normal email address(!); all contacts will be deleted at the end of the project).

Peace, Jo

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/bible-book-club/isaiah/>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/25591/bible-month-2022-isaiah-daily-reading-guide.pdf>