

The Adopted Life

Third Sunday of Advent ~ 12.12.2010

Good News For Jerks

In this week's Old Testament reading, Isaiah has some harsh words for bullies (35.4), the unclean (35.8), and ravenous beasts (35.7,9). This always sounded like good news to me, until I started getting in touch with my inner unclean ravenous bully.

When I look honestly at my past, I see a path littered with the casualties of ambition, manipulation, and not-always-so-subtle unkindness. But my victims are to be encouraged that God "will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save" them (35.4). The gospel is that everyone will be made safe from ME, in the same way that they will be made safe from broken bodies (35.3,5-6) and damaged ecosystems (35.1,6-7).

But the gospel is ALSO for us unclean ravenous-types, for the vengeance of the LORD is a healing discipline from a Father who embraces jerks. I have been placed on "the Holy Highway," but my unhealthy patterns of thinking/feeling/behaving cannot survive here (35.8a). This is bad news for my neuroses, but good news for me. Because "no traveler, not even [us] fools, shall go astray" (35.8b).

~ John Stonecypher