

Series: Isaiah

Title: Our Need for the Redeemer

Text: Isaiah 59: 1-21

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The things recorded here really happened in Israel. But in Romans 3, the Holy Spirit quotes this chapter, showing it is meant to declare the depravity of all men by nature. The main point of the chapter is that except God sovereignly interrupts some and saves us by Christ Jesus, we are a world of spiritually ignorant and hateful sinners who shall perish in our sins. Our subject is “Our Need for the Redeemer.” Our divisions each begin with the letter “C”: character, cause, confession, Christ, and covenant.

CHARACTER

In verse 1, compared with verse 2, we see the character of God, “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.” (Isa 59:1-2)

How often have we heard the question, “How could a sovereign God allow such suffering in the world?” The suffering in this world can never be blamed on God—“Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.” Earlier, God asked, “Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.” (Is 50: 2) Listen to Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 32: 17: Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee: 18: Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, *is* his name, 19: Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes *are* open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

The LORD’s hand is mighty to save and his ear is ready to hear all who call upon him. But God is ready to save only those who call upon God for mercy. God only hears those who call upon God to do all the saving. Those who call for mercy, God shall give to that man “according to his ways.” “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.” (Mic 7:18)

But the problem is that our sins have separated us from God. We will not call upon God for mercy because of our iniquities and our sins. God says to each of us personally, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.” (Is 59: 2) It is not someone else’s fault; it is not some other things fault; it is “Your iniquities” and “Your sins.”

God will not hear us except we call upon him confessing our sins, our total inability, and our need for Christ alone to save us from our sins. But due to our sin and separation from God, God said, “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?” (Is 50: 2) To the sinner who prefers to stand in his own so-called righteousness, God will give to that man “according to his ways.” And you will perish!

Sinner, cease blaming God! God delights in mercy and grace! The one and only problem is that your iniquities and your sins have separated you from God so that you will not call on God for mercy in Christ Jesus.

So the first point to get is this: all who are saved are saved solely due to God's gift of grace, God's work, and God's glory. But all who refuse to call on Christ and die in their sins shall perish solely because they earned it by their own iniquities and their own sins. "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Ro 6:23)

CAUSE

In verses 3-8, God declares that the cause of all suffering in this world is due to man's own sin. As we look at these verses, remember Isaiah is declaring the sins of Israel in Isaiah's day. But the apostle Paul, writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, applies this to us all. (In your own time you can read Romans 3:9-18 and see that Paul quotes from this passage.) You and I do all of these things in the thoughts of our hearts, if not outwardly. (Jer. 17:9; Mk. 7:21-23).

God describes our hands and fingers, "For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity." (Is 59: 3) It means innocent blood. Since we are sinners, we conceive children dead in sins. We are guilty of murder by conceiving children. And unless God teach us the gospel in our hearts so that we can have our children under the sound of the gospel, we will murder our children by teaching them false religion and/or by teaching them to seek life in this world. It is the same as casting them into the fire. Worst of all, until God has mercy on us, we are guilty of the blood of Christ Jesus the Innocent! After hearing the truth of Christ preached, all who forsake assembling with God's saints under the gospel, all who forsake salvation in and by Christ, all who forsake being ministered to by Christ himself, sin willfully, crucifying Christ all over again by treading underfoot the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 10: 25: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. 26: For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27: But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28: He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Then God declares the cause is due to the sinful condition of our lip and tongue, "your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness." (Isa 59:3) This is an indictment first and foremost against all false preachers. They are number one in this crime. But included are all fathers and mothers, all educators, all philosophers, all politicians who speak their own word rather than God's word. In the church, the home, the school, in the laws and in all forms of media our generation is taught to speak perverse things. If this world teaches it and embraces it you can be sure it is not God's word. God says,

Isaiah 5: 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21: Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! 22: Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: 23: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! 24: Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore, God says because of our sins there is no justice in the land, "None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity." (Isa

59:4) God's law declares what is holy, just and good. God's word is the only truth in this world. But instead of trusting in God and his word, as a society, we trust in vanity and speak lies—by trusting in our way and speaking what we think. At the heart of every one of us is our “special interest: self. What will benefit me?” Therefore we “conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.” As we behold injustice in the world, we all point the finger. We blame this group and that group. We even become enflamed about it. But God says that a society of sinners can only produce a corrupt judicial system. The problem is all of us.

Next, is God's description of our feet, along with the thoughts and intents of our hearts. This is God's description of our natural religion, as well as our government of ourselves. God describes us as a secretly conniving, self-serving people, “They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.” (Isa 59: 5) Our fruit is the fruit of poisonous snakes—cockatrice eggs. If a man eats of our fruit, he dies. And if our fruit lives on, it is a poisonous viper. We weave spider's webs. The web comes from within the spider—so does our sin and conniving schemes; the web appears attractive but is meant to trap the pray—so is man's religion and man's government; the web can be torn down easily—so can our web. God declares that we will never prosper by our vain schemes, “Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works *are* works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. The way of peace [Christ] they know not; and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. (Isa 59:5-8) God says, “they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.” (Job 4: 8) “They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.” (Ho 8: 7)

Hear what God says! The cause of all trouble and sorrow in this world is us—our sins, our iniquities. What we sow, we shall reap! And we all sow corruption by nature! The sins mentioned here cover our hands, fingers, lips, tongues, feet and minds. No amount of outward discipline will change us.

Isaiah 1: 5: Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6: From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

God must send forth his Holy Spirit and create within us an entirely new man. That is when grace begins to work in our hearts.

CONFESSION

In verses 9-15, Isaiah speaks for the people confessing his and our guilt. We must be brought to confess our spiritual blindness and total helplessness.

Isaiah confesses to God, “Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, *but* we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; *we are* in desolate places as dead *men*. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but *there is* none; for salvation, *but* it is far off from us. (Isa 59:9-11)

We must be brought to confess the reason judgment and salvation is far from us is because of our own iniquity, transgression and sin. Isaiah confesses, “For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions *are* with us; and *as for* our iniquities, we know them; In

transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.” (Isa 59:12-13)

We must confess it is not God’s fault but it is our fault because we have turned away from the truth of God. Isaiah confesses, “And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:” (Isa 59:14-15)

This is so true in our day. This whole generation is so self-professedly righteous that if a man dare renounce all our ways as sinful and turn to God, that man is marked by this generation as their prey. The whole world will hate you and call you mad and bigoted if you dare speak for God against their sins. But understand, the first thing the Holy Spirit does when converting a sinner is to convince us of our personal sins against God. (John 16:8-11) The confession of sin is always goes before forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1Jn 1: 9)

CHRIST

In verses 15-18, God declares Christ is the only salvation of his people, “and the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him that *there was* no judgment.” (Is 59: 15) God looked upon this whole world and saw that there was no man who was just.

Therefore, God sent his Son to do the work no one else could do, “And he saw that *there was* no man, and wondered that *there was* no intercessor.” (Isa 59:16) Here is the work of the Lord Jesus which he accomplished during his earthly ministry.

First, Christ accomplished the salvation of his people, “therefore his arm brought salvation unto him.” (Is 59: 16) The Son of God himself became a Man to save his people from our sins. God’s arm—Christ Jesus, his Son—brought salvation unto him. “Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Mt 1:21) “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Heb 9:26) Christ said to the Father, “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” (Jn 17: 2)

Secondly, Christ upheld the righteousness of God, “and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head.” (Is 59: 16-17) His righteousness—Christ Jesus, his Son—sustained him. “The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; he will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable.” (Isa 42:21) “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Ga 4:4-6)

Thirdly, Christ came to destroy his enemies and ours, “and he put on the garments of vengeance *for* clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to *their* deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.” (Isa 59:17-18) As he went to the cross, Christ said, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” (Joh 12:31) He said, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” (Mt 12:30) If you fight against Christ you will not win!

Fourthly, Christ came to establish his kingdom in the hearts of his people all over the world through the preaching of the gospel. As those first three accomplishments of Christ are declared in his gospel, “So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.” (Isa 59:19) As the

gospel is declared, the enemy comes in like a flood to steal away the word. But the Spirit of the Lord lifts up Christ—our ensign, our standard, our banner—in our hearts. In our heart, Christ overcomes our enemy, bringing each of his blood-bought saints to rest in him through faith.

COVENANT

In verses 20-21, God describes the covenant which Christ establishes in the heart of each child he brings to rest in Christ, “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.” Zion is his church, each individual believer that makes up his church. Christ comes to his assembly and into the heart of his redeemed.

Through faith, Christ makes this covenant in our hearts, “As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” (Isa 59:20-21) Here are four things promised to every chosen, regenerated, repentant sinner who turns to Christ in faith: “The Redeemer shall come to them!”, “My Spirit shall not depart from them!”, “My Word shall not depart from them!, and every elect child shall be called “thy seed, and thy seeds seed.”

Now, hear what God speaks. Turn from your transgressions, turn from the course of this world, believe God and rest in Christ by faith. “And the Redeemer shall come “to you!” All these promises shall be yours for when Christ has turned you and then you shall be saved.

Amen!