

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

GOD'S ETERNAL COVENANT: ISAIAH 59



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A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

God's Eternal Covenant: Isaiah 59
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Introduction to *Isaiah 59*

We can look at this chapter as a kind of summary of this whole section, Isaiah 40-59. Again, God rebukes the sins of His people, and again, He holds out the promise of His covenant. Isaiah intercedes for the sins of the people, and God responds with the promise of salvation and His covenant.

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1 Sin and Separation

Pray Psalm 77.13-15.

Your way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary;
Who *is* so great a God as *our* God?
You *are* the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength among the peoples.
You have with *Your* arm redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph.

Read Isaiah 59.1-3.

Reflect.

1. It seemed to the people of Judah and Jerusalem that God had abandoned them. Why?
2. Why was God holding back from helping them in their time of trouble?

Meditate.

The people of Judah and Jerusalem had begun to think that God had abandoned them. “Where is God when we need Him?” they must have cried often and loudly. “Can’t He do something to save us from the Babylonians?”

It’s not that He *could* not, but that He *would* not. God heard their groans, and He could easily have stretched out His hand against Nebuchadnezzar, as He had done against Pharaoh so many years before. But God *would* not save His people from their captivity. They had sinned against Him (v. 3), and as of Isaiah’s day, they had not confessed their sins and turned to the Lord again.

A brief moment of revival would ensue under Josiah, in the days after Isaiah’s ministry (cf. 2 Kgs. 22, 23), but it was a shallow season of turning to the Lord, and judgment followed shortly thereafter.

Sin *separates* us from God. How terrible is that? How terrible was it that Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, was *separated from His Father*, not because of *His* sins, but because of *ours*. We do not have to live in separation from God. We can see His face, we can know that He hears our prayers, we can experience His help in every season.

But not if we continue in sin before Him. Indeed, unconfessed sin in our hearts even cuts off our prayers from reaching the ears of our heavenly Father (Ps. 66.18). He simply “will not hear” us if we choose to continue in sin before Him (v. 2). Let us learn the lesson of Israel and Judah: To know the Lord’s Presence and favor, to dwell in His peace and love, we must keep short accounts where sin is concerned (1 Jn. 1.8-10).

Reflect.

1. How can we know when we might have sinned against the Lord?
2. What should we do when God convicts us of some sin?
3. Meditate on Psalm 139.23, 24. Do you think it might be a good idea to pray this at least daily? Explain.

Let us consider our sins, and reviewing the secrets of our action and mind, let us weigh the merits of our conscience. Cyprian of

Carthage (fl. 248-258 AD), *The Lapsed 21*

Show me my sins, Lord; and give me grace to confess, repent, and...

Pray Psalm 77.

Pray for repentance, for yourself and all God's people, that His hand of blessing may soon return to the Church and the world.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 77 (*Leoni: The God of Abraham Praise*)

My voice to God shall rise; I seek Him on His throne.
In days and nights of trouble I seek God alone!
When I remember Him, then am I sore distressed!
My spirit faints and longs to find in Him its rest.

I scarce a word can speak, so troubled is my soul;
Yet I recall Your grace to Israel long ago.
I sing Your praise by night; my heart will meditate;
My spirit ponders all Your grace and wonders great.

O Lord, will You reject Your people without end?
Has favor ceased, are You no more our heav'nly Friend?
Your promise and Your love in anger are obscured;
My sin has turned Your hand away, Your beauty blurred.

Now let us call to mind Your deeds and wonders, Lord,
And meditate on all Your works and praise Your Word.
Full holy is Your way, great God of earth and heav'n,
To You, O God of strength and pow'r all praise be giv'n!

The waters and the deeps all tremble 'neath Your hand.
The clouds give forth, the sky resounds across the land.
Your lightning flashes forth and lights the earth around;
We feel beneath our feet the trembling of the ground.

Your way leads through the sea; Your path the waters parts.
Your footprints are to us deep mysteries in our hearts.
As then by Moses' hand and Aaron's law-filled voice,
You led Your sheep, lead us that we may all rejoice!

2 Omission and Commission

Pray Psalm 102.1, 2.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And let my cry come to You.
Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day that I call, answer me speedily.

Read Isaiah 59.4, 5.

Reflect.

1. God indicts His people for sins of commission *and* omission. How do you see that?
2. What was the cause of their sins?

Meditate.

It can seem as if Isaiah is overworking this theme of sin. He keeps returning to it and looking at it from different angles. Here he calls out the people for their sins of *omission* – things they should have done, but failed to do (v. 4). There is counsel for us here: Whenever injustice is occurring, or truth is being ignored, God expects His people to step up, speak out, and lead the way to justice and truth. The people of Judah and Jerusalem did not, and the nation slid down the slippery slope into idolatry and sin.

The people of God had put their trust in lies and empty words (v. 4), rather than the sure and unchanging Word of God. Winds of false teaching are always blowing through the Lord's camp (Eph. 4.14, 15). We need to test every spirit by the Word of God (1 Jn. 4.1), and believe only what is in line with Scripture. Here again, Israel failed in this most fundamental calling, and evil and iniquity abounded as a result. Their sins of *commission* were as evil as their sins of omission.

And we never sin alone; that is, our sins never affect us only. They are like snake's eggs, releasing vipers into the souls of those around us. Or they're like spider's webs that ensnare (v. 5). When we sin – whether by omission or commission – we fail to love God and our neighbors, and we also fail to love ourselves with the love God has for us, since we turn away from His truth and prefer lies instead.

Isaiah understood the destructive power of sin, so he kept coming at the subject, trying to lead the people to repent and return to the Lord. We should expect the same from those who minister the Word of God in our day.

Prepare.

1. What would be some examples of *lies* that people trust in today? How can we recognize when we're being tempted to believe a lie?
2. How can believers prepare themselves to stand for justice and truth?
3. What can we expect if we fail to deal with the sin in our lives? In our churches?

It is not enough that we abstain from violence, if we do not, as far as lies in our power, hinder it from being committed by others. And, indeed, whoever permits what he is able to hinder does in some sense command it; so that silence is a sort of consent. John Calvin (1509-1564 AD), *Commentary on Isaiah 59.4*

Let no sin grip my soul, O Lord; instead, help me to deal with my sins as You convict me of it, then by...

Pray Psalm 102.

This psalm leads us to admit our weakness before the Lord, to acknowledge, confess, and repent of our sins, and to seek His renewing grace for ourselves and all His children.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 102 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!
My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.
My heart, like wilted, withered grass bends low to earth again.

With loudest groans and cries, and leanness in my soul,
No sheltring place arrests my eyes, no rest to make me whole.
My enemies grow strong; I weep with bitter tears;
My days are like a shadow, long; God's face is no more near.

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!
Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones
be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

Then let the nations fear the glory of the Lord!
For He shall in His Church appear to heed our sighing words.
Then let our children learn to praise the Lord above.
He hears their groans and knows they yearn to dwell within His love.

Yet let us tell God's Name and praise His glorious grace;
Let all as one His love proclaim together in this place.
Though now our strength is low; though shortened grow our days,
Our God will not forsake us so, but keep us in His ways!

Of old You made the earth and heavens by Your hand.
Though they shall perish You endure; forever shall You stand.
They change, yet You remain the same, without an end.
Our children shall Your favor gain, and theirs shall be Your friend.

3 No Justice, No Peace

Pray Psalm 72.12-15.

For He will deliver the needy when he cries,
The poor also, and *him* who has no helper.
He will spare the poor and needy,
And will save the souls of the needy.
He will redeem their life from oppression and violence;
And precious shall be their blood in His sight.
And He shall live;
And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him;
Prayer also will be made for Him continually,
And daily He shall be praised.

Read Isaiah 59.6-8.

Reflect.

1. How is what we think about related to what we actually do?
2. What is justice? How is justice related to peace?

Meditate.

The sins that ensnare us and move us to evil begin within, in the soul, in our mind and heart. What we think about most often becomes what we desire, and what we desire is what we do. If we fill our minds with sinful thoughts, sinful desires will grow, and we will cover our lives with sinful works (v. 6).

Which is why it's a good idea to keep a close watch on our thought life (Prov. 4.20-27). The people of Isaiah's day left off meditating on the Law of God (Ps. 1). They preferred to think about themselves, what might make them comfortable, and how they might enjoy more of the material blessings of the day. They became ensnared in their own sinful webs, and they gave in to every wicked thought and evil desire, shedding innocent blood, and leaving a wake of waste and destruction in their paths (v. 7).

Consequently, what God desired for them – justice and peace (v. 8) – eluded them, and they followed crooked paths instead. But God loves His people too much to allow them to continue straying from His righteous paths. As He disciplined Israel and Judah of old, so He will discipline us if, failing to fix our minds on Him and to dwell in His Word, we desire instead the ways of this materialistic and narcissistic age (Heb. 12.3-11).

Paul reminds us that these things, written so long ago, are meant to comfort and give us hope (Rom. 15.4). By setting our minds on Jesus, exalted in glory, and learning to think with His mind (1 Cor. 2.16), we can desire what Jesus desires, and live in the justice and peace God intends for His people.

Prepare.

1. Explain the role of Scripture and prayer in helping us to keep our thought life in check.
2. What is our responsibility toward one another as believers, when it comes to walking in the Lord's path?
3. How can we make sure, in every situation, that we are following the path that leads to justice and peace?

They sin with all parts of the body, through hands, feet, tongue. But it is the life inside their minds that sins before all of these

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once it has fallen into imprudence, so that it cannot recognize the peace that is at hand. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD),
Commentary on Isaiah 18.59.6-8

Guard my thoughts, O Lord, so that I may always desire what You desire, and may...

Pray Psalm 72.

Pray that Jesus would reign more and more in your mind and heart, so that you would seek His Kingdom and righteousness in all you do.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 72.7-14 (*Martyrdom: Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*)

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures;

Let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low;

Let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

The Lord the needy rescues when he cries to Him for grace;

All they who suffer violence find mercy before His face.

4 The Darkness of Sin

Pray Psalm 38.9.

Lord, all my desire is before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.

Read Isaiah 59.9-15.

Reflect.

1. How does Isaiah describe the effects of unconfessed sin?
2. Notice the shift in pronouns: from second person plural (vv. 1-3), to third person plural (vv. 4-8), to first person plural (vv. 9-15). What is the significance of this?

Meditate.

Imagine this chapter as a sermon Isaiah might have preached to the people of his day. In the first part, verses 1-3, he addresses them directly, confronting them with their sins (“you”, “your”). In the second part (vv. 4-8), he appears to be pleading with the Lord, complaining to Him about Israel’s (“they”, “their”) sins, and outlining the consequences of those sins. In today’s verses (9-15), Isaiah puts himself among the people, and presents their sad condition before the Lord, including himself among the sinful people of Jerusalem (“our”, “us”). As we shall see, the final section (16-21) focuses on what the Lord intends to do about this whole situation.

A true prophet empathizes with those to whom he proclaims the Word of God. He knows that we are all sinners, and, while he must point the finger at times, he embraces his fellow sinners and seeks to draw them with him before the throne of God, that they might together find mercy and grace to help in their time of need.

And what a dark time it is! Justice and righteousness are nowhere in sight (v. 9). Darkness and confusion on every hand (vv. 9, 10). Groaning, complaining, moaning, and growling on the part of all the people (v. 11). All this because of unconfessed sin (v. 12). God’s people have been “lying” to Him by their phony worship and half-hearted attempts to follow His Word (v. 13). Their wicked and oppressive ways show that justice and righteousness are nowhere to be found, and truth is “fallen in the street” (v. 14). When Isaiah says that “truth fails” (v. 15), he does not mean that you can’t rely on truth. He means that they fail to see truth anywhere, because everyone is living in lies and rebellion against the Lord (v. 13). So wicked are the times, that anyone who does not join in with the wicked, but who seeks to keep the way of the Lord, becomes subject to the wrath and violence of their wicked neighbors (v. 15).

And yet here is Isaiah, standing before these people, embracing them as one with him in need of the mercy and grace of the Lord. What a picture of Christ the prophet shows us in these verses!

Prepare.

1. Why does sin have such deleterious effects on people?
2. What happens to truth when people choose to live in lies?
3. How do verses 9-15 make you feel? How should they make us feel about sin?

It was not you who failed to be concerned for us, but it was our life of iniquity that deprived us of your care and concern.
Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD), *Commentary on Isaiah 18.59.12*

Lord, we need revival in our souls! We need You to convict us of our sins and lead us to repentance so that we...

Pray Psalm 38.

Use this psalm of confession to renew your fellowship with the Lord. Pray it slowly, listening for the Spirit to convict you of any sins in your life. Confess and repent as the Lord leads, and give Him abundant thanks and praise.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 38 (*Leoni: The God of Abraham Praise*)

O Lord, rebuke me not, nor chasten me in wrath!
Your arrows pierce my sinful heart and fill my path.
Your heavy hand weighs down; my flesh and bones grow weak.
My sins oppress, confuse, confound – I cannot speak!

My sinful wounds grow foul, and fester painfully;
I bend and groan within my soul most mournfully!
Sin fills my every part; conviction stings my breast.
Lord, ease my numbed and burning heart and grant me rest!

You know all my desire, my sighs You know full well.
My strength fails and light's holy fire my eyes dispel.
My friends and loved ones fail; the wicked do me wrong.
My life they seek, my soul assail the whole day long.

Their threats I will not heed, nor speak to their reproof;
To hear or speak I have no need – I claim Your truth!
Lord, hear my fervent prayer! Let not my foes rejoice;
Redeem me from their traps and snares – Lord, hear my voice!

My sins I now confess; my anxious soul relieve!
Though foes are strong, Lord, heal and bless all who believe!
Forsake me not, O Lord! Repay my foes with wrath.
Stand by me with Your saving Word and guard my path!

5 His Own Arm

Pray Psalm 69.13.

But as for me, my prayer *is* to You,
O LORD, *in* the acceptable time;
O God, in the multitude of Your mercy,
Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.

Read Isaiah 59.15-20.

Reflect.

1. How is it evident that the people of Israel could not save themselves?
2. What does God promise to do for them?

Meditate.

It is not the good pleasure of God that His people should languish in sin, without justice, righteousness, or peace (v. 15). But what can be done? Israel cannot save herself, and no one could intercede for the people (v. 16). If Israel was to be saved from sin, God would have to do it Himself (v. 16). Let's look at the various aspects of the salvation God promises here.

First, by "His own arm" God promised to satisfy His people's need for righteousness (vv. 16, 17). The Law of God is righteous, but God's people demonstrated throughout the period of the Old Testament that they could not keep the Law unto salvation. The righteousness the Law requires will be satisfied by God Himself in the day when He brings His salvation to His people (v. 17).

Second, God must enact vengeance against the wicked deeds of His people, to repay Himself, as it were, for the debt of sin they had incurred (vv. 17, 18). God Himself would "put on the garments of vengeance for clothing," taking His people's debt upon Himself, and repaying Himself by His own arm.

Third, the enemies that have constantly plagued, deceived, misled, and devoured His people must be destroyed (v 18). The salvation God promises here includes "Fury to His adversaries, Recompense to His enemies", so that they will no longer have power to harass and destroy His people.

Finally, God will extend this great salvation even to the "coastlands" and all the peoples from west to east. The Spirit of the LORD will stand in the gap as Intercessor for all the people of God, and the Redeemer will come to the people of God, so that all "who turn from transgression" may know the blessings of His saving work (vv. 19, 20).

The promised Redeemer is the Servant Who will come to suffer and die for the sins of God's people. Through Him, the Spirit of God will bring salvation to the world.

Isaiah's sermon is almost finished. One more glorious promise remains to be declared.

Reflect.

1. How does this promised salvation of God apply to you?
2. Why can only God accomplish the salvation we need?
3. What does it mean to "turn from transgression"? What does God promise those who do turn?

[Isaiah] says that God shares salvation, which is exchanged for repentance and understanding with those deserving, who put on righteousness just as if it were their garment. Theodore of Heraclea (d.ca. 355), Fragments on Isaiah

Thank You for salvation, Father! Help me to grow in Your great salvation today as I...

Pray Psalm 69.

As you pray, let this psalm bring to mind the work Christ has done, and the suffering He endured, so that we might be saved. Give Him thanks and praise.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 69 (selected) (*Greensleeves: What Child Is This?*)

“Save Me, O God, deep waters rise and threaten to undo Me!
No foothold in the mire I find; the floods must soon subdue Me.
Hear, Lord, My weary cry; My throat is parched, unclear My eye.
Foes long for Me to die and others’ debts are upon Me.”

O God, our folly all You know, our wrongs from You are not hidden;
Let those who in Your mercy go not by our shame be smitten.
“Let none dishonored be because, O Lord, because of Me!
You make Me dishonor see; on Me reproach is written.”

O Lord, we make our prayer to You; receive our words, O Savior!
Let lovingkindness see us through, and answer us with favor!
Lord, lift us above the mire; deliv’rance is our one desire!
Let not the floods conspire to swallow us forever!

Let heav’n and earth now praise You, Lord, the seas and all their creatures,
For You will save us by Your Word and build Your City’s features.
There we will with Jesus dwell and know His blessings full and well.
His glorious Name we’ll tell to every man and creature!

6 The Eternal Covenant

Pray Psalm 105.1-4.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!

Read Isaiah 58.21.

Reflect.

1. What is God's covenant? What role do His Word and Spirit have in that covenant?
2. With whom does God make this covenant? To what ends?

Meditate.

God's covenant is a recurrent theme in the book of Isaiah, both in looking back and in looking forward. God judged His people and sent them into captivity because they broke the "everlasting covenant" He had made with their fathers and Moses (Is. 24.5). The results of this disobedience were waste, ruin, weeping, and loss of peace (33.8).

But God would not abandon His people or His covenant. He promised to send His Servant as a new covenant with His people, a covenant which will include the Gentiles, to bring all His people to the light of life and the freedom of salvation (42.6). The Servant is the linchpin of God's covenant. He makes the covenant effectual for the salvation of God's people (49.8). He will bring God's people into the sure and lasting peace they so earnestly desire, the peace of God, which is a primary feature of His covenant (54.10). This covenant is an eternal covenant and, thus, a firm renewal of the covenant Israel had broken, but which now they would keep because of the work of the Servant (55.3) This covenant is all of God's grace, but His people must "hold fast" to it in order to gain the promised blessings of the Lord (56.6-8). In this covenant, God will bring His people into the justice and love for which He chose and redeemed them (61.8).

That's an awful lot for God to promise. We might be inclined to wonder, How does He intend to do this? How will the Servant accomplish such a great salvation, and inaugurate such a new and everlasting covenant with God's people? The Lord tells us in our passage for today: By His Word and Spirit. The Spirit and Word of God are the blueprint and power of the everlasting covenant. He grants them to His people, puts His Word in their mouths and His Spirit in their hearts, and empowers them to know Him and to keep His Word through all generations. Isaiah's sermon thus ends with a glorious promise of a new, eternal covenant, to be accomplished by the Servant in His eternal Kingdom.

We would have no benefit from God or His covenant whatsoever, unless by His Word and Spirit. He makes the promises effectual for us. It is the Spirit Who gives life. The Word of God is Spirit and life (Jn. 6.63). The life for which God redeemed us, He grants us by His Servant, within His covenant, in the power of His Word and Spirit.

Prepare.

1. God's covenant is all of grace. What does that mean?
2. The covenant is all of grace, but we must "hold fast" to it to gain its promises. What does that entail?
3. How does God's covenant come to be transferred to our descendants?

And we ought carefully to observe the word covenant, by which the Prophet points out the greatness and excellence of this promise; for the promises are more extensive, and may be regarded as the stones of the building, while the foundation of it is the covenant, which upholds the whole mass. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Isaiah 59.21

Thank You for Your covenant, Lord! Help me to hold fast to Your promises today by...

Pray Psalm 105.

This is a psalm of praise for our covenant-keeping God. His covenant with Abraham is His covenant with us as well. Thank Him for His faithfulness, and let the final verses lead you to a renewed focus on serving God with gladness.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 105 (*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, You chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations' land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

7 A Glorious New Covenant

Pray Psalm 50.1-3.

The Mighty One, God the LORD,
Has spoken and called the earth
From the rising of the sun to its going down.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God will shine forth.
Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent;
A fire shall devour before Him,
And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

Review Isaiah chapter 59.

Reflect.

1. How does Isaiah present the Lord to His people? What kind of response is he hoping to elicit from them?
2. Why is it so important that we keep short accounts with God where sin is concerned?

Meditate.

Chapter 59 ends the section that began in chapter 40, in which God, through Isaiah, explained the reason for His judgment of the people, and promised restoration in the short-term and long-term, first through His servant Cyrus, and then through the suffering Servant Who brings the salvation of the Lord to His people.

This section takes as its foundation chapters 7-39, in which Isaiah displayed his credentials as a prophet by speaking the Word of God against Israel, Syria, Assyria, and other nations – prophecies which came true, and which therefore showed that the Word of God through Isaiah could be trusted.

Over and over in chapters 40-59, God admonished His people to repent of their sins, and He comforted them with the hope of deliverance and salvation to come, even promising to bring His covenant to the Gentiles, and to renew the creation as well. Isaiah was preparing the people of Judah and Jerusalem to stand firm on the Word of God while in captivity in Babylon, and not to lose hope. Jeremiah and Ezekiel would continue this emphasis in the generation following Isaiah.

Chapter 59 thus recapitulates the themes of this section of the book, culminating in the glorious promise of a new covenant, sustained by the power of God's Word and Spirit, and reaching to all succeeding generations of God's people, all because of the faithful and saving work of the suffering Servant.

Chapters 60-66, the concluding section of Isaiah's prophesy, offer astounding insights and promises into the coming salvation of the Lord, and its implications for the rest of history and beyond.

Prepare.

1. Summarize Isaiah's message to the people of God in chapter 59. How is this message relevant for God's people today?
2. Why was it important that God repeat this message over and over?
3. What's your primary takeaway from Isaiah 59?

But punishments lead us back to God... Suppose anyone has a wound, which is the more deserving of fear—gangrene or the surgeon's knife? The steel or the devouring progress of the ulcer? Sin is gangrene; punishment is the surgeon's knife. John Chrysostom (344-407 AD), Homilies Concerning the Statutes 6.14

Lead me ever to repent of my sin, Lord, and to hold fast to Your promises, so that I...

Pray Psalm 50.

As you pray Psalm 50, ask God to make of your times of corporate worship a greater experience of His Presence and love, and of your daily life of worship, greater obedience and gratitude.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 50 (*Austrian Hymn: Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*)

God, the Lord, the mighty Savior, summons all from east to west:
Out of Zion, rich with favor, shines He, of all things the best.
Come, O God, and keep not silence; fire devours before Your way!
He His Church, steeped in defiance, comes to judge this awful day.

“Gather now My children holy, those bound close to Me by blood.”
Let the heav'ns declare His glory, for the Lord Himself is Judge:
“Hear, My people, I will charge you; I alone am God, your God!
I will bring a solemn charge to gain you to Me for your good.

“Not for rituals I accuse you – let your worship to Me rise.
Naught to Me is any use, Who dwells in glory in the skies.
All is mine throughout creation; I your help do not require.
Offer Me no vain oblation: hear what I from you desire:

“Sacrifice of thanks now render; pay to God your solemn vows;
Let the troubled, each offender, seek Him in the midst of woes.
In the day of strife draw near Him; He will hear, and He will save.
Honor God, rejoice, and fear Him, give to Him your grateful praise.

“All of you My Word despising, who are you to claim My grace?
Praise may from your lips be rising, but you scorn Me to My face.
You approve of all transgressions, scheme against your mother's son!
I will crush your vain aggressions and destroy what you have done.

“Reckon this, My sinful people, lest My wrath consume you whole:
None shall thwart Me when I seek to crush and break your sin-stiff soul.
He who thanks to Me addressing, follows after what is good,
He shall know the way of blessing coming from the hand of God.”

God's Eternal Covenant: Isaiah 59

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. How does Isaiah use pronouns in the chapter? Why?
2. What were the people of God missing because of their disobedience to God?
3. Why will God not hear us when we harbor sin in our lives (Ps. 66.18)?
4. How would you explain the role of confession and repentance to a new believer?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Isaiah 59? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.