

Sermon Study Questions

Sunday, October 25, 2026

1. Read Isaiah 56:9-57:21
2. At the beginning of our passage Isaiah is addressing the leaders in post-exilic Judah. Who are these leaders, and how does he describe them?
3. As he moves into ch.57, Isaiah describes the impact of these wicked leaders upon the society, saying, "The righteous man perishes and no one takes it to heart; devout men are taken away and no one understands." What is he saying about society and about societies response to the righteous being removed? Why is this a problem?
4. Beginning in v.3 Isaiah begins to speak to the people under the leadership, referring to them as "sons of the sorceress, offspring of the adulterer and the loose woman," which is a reference to their involvement in idolatry. Why is idolatry spoken of metaphorically as adultery by the prophets? Where else in the text do you see allusions to idolatry as spiritual adultery?
5. What is idolatry? Look up Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 95 and discuss.
6. Why was the worship of the Canaanite god, Baal such an important part of Canaanite worship? According to our text, what did worshipping Baal involve?
7. What lessons do you learn about leadership from this text?

8. As is so often the case in Isaiah, when rebuking the people and speaking about judgment he always injects the gospel into his message, which is the very thing he does here beginning at the end of v.13. In v.14 he says, "And it shall be said, 'Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way.'" What is the Lord saying here, and how does it point to Christ and His gospel?

9. One of the key themes here in this final section (v.13b-21) is humility (v.15). What does he say about humility? Why is humility so important in light of the gospel? What does the Lord promise the humble in v.18-19? In contrast, what does He say is the lot of the wicked?

10. Pray!

Reading of Law: Galatians 5:16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Prayer of Confession:

Our gracious Father in heaven, blessed be your glorious and holy name. We thank you for your steadfast love and faithfulness to us as your people. We come before you this morning acknowledging that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Father, life in the body is difficult, as we constantly feel the sinful urges within us pulling us away from you and from doing that which is pleasing to you. We confess we often cave in to these sinful urges and go the way of our flesh, doing that which you forbid us from doing, and failing to do that which you command us to do. We do not walk by the Spirit, living by His power within us; the very power that rose Christ from the grave, but instead we give in to the flesh and succumb to those sinful desires which arise from our old nature. Father, we make no excuses. We do not seek to rationalize or justify our sin, but we confess our sin to you and ask for your forgiveness, knowing that you alone have the authority to forgive sins. We thank you that you are an exceedingly gracious God, One who stands ready to forgive and pardon us. We thank you that in Christ you remove our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west. It is in Jesus' name we pray and give thanks, Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness: Romans 5:6-10

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if ^awhile we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

[Rom. 5:12, 19](#); [Rom. 5:10-20](#); [Eph. 2:1-3](#); [Jas. 1:14-15](#); [Matt. 15:19](#).

Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

[Gen. 3:8, 10, 24](#); [Eph. 2:2-3](#); [Gal. 3:10](#); [Lam. 3:39](#); [Rom. 6:23](#); [Matt. 25:41, 46](#).

NT Reading: 1 Peter 5:1-7

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.