

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 57

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 57

Theme: "What is so good about this Earth!"

THEME VERSES

Isaiah 57:15-16 (KJV) "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. **16** For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls *which* I have made."

INTRODUCTION

Life and death are in the hands of the LORD. The LORD decides who dies and who lives on this earth. He decides who goes to heaven and who ends in Hell. The sovereignty of God is never in doubt throughout the Bible. This is clearly taught from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation. It is the most wonderful and reassuring truth taught in the Bible. The knowledge that there is a good God in the world controlling the heavens and the earth gives meaning to life and to

everything that exists in this world, including the evil. The end will be good because there is a good God who knows exactly what He is doing even though things might appear out of control to human eyes.

However, the sovereignty of God does not deny or diminish human responsibilities. Man is still held accountable for everything that he does on this earth and in this life. If he sins, he has to pay for his sins. If he dies in his sins, he will end up in Hell. Man is responsible for the consequences of his wrong doings and he cannot blame God for them. Owning up to one's responsibility is a truth that is also taught throughout the Bible. The truth of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are twin parallel lines sewn carefully by God into the fabrics of the perfect Bible. Isaiah 57 teaches the significance of the responsibility of man.

The righteous and the sinner on this earth are emphasized here. The righteous must remain righteous regardless of what happens to him on this earth even if he has to die in the course of holding on to his righteousness. He has nothing to be afraid of. God takes care of him on this earth and in this life as well as in the life to come after death! On the other hand, the sinner has to stop sinning or else he will face the severe consequences of his sins. There is no one who will escape the justice and judgement of the LORD whom Isaiah called "my God" in this chapter!

The sinner must have his sins dealt with. He has to stop sinning. He

needs to repent of all his sins. He needs to confess his sins to God and accept Christ as his Lord and Saviour. There is no other way to save himself from his sins. The way of righteousness according to God's terms is open to all. There is no other way he can get out of his sins.

Isaiah 57 appeals to this group of sinners to return to the LORD or be prepared to face the consequences. Isaiah 57 also encourages the righteous not to worry for they will be well taken care of by God almighty even unto eternity.

OUTLINE

1. Good to Die Righteous! (vv.1-2);
2. Pandemic Idolatry Rebuked! (vv. 3-12);
3. Repent and Be Restored (vv. 13-21);

COMMENTARY

An OUTLINE

Good to Die Righteous! – 57:1-2

The declarative statement by Isaiah in this chapter says it all. There was no beating around the bush. He declares that the righteous perishes and no man lays it to heart i.e. no man seems to care enough and ponder why the righteous are permitted by God to die for they have not done anything wrong! Merciful men are taken away i.e. gathered together for a purpose. These are the same people. The righteous are also the merciful. They are gathered to heaven by the LORD

and no one seems to take notice of this. When the LORD gathers the righteous together in heaven, what remain on earth would be the evil ones. If the only ones that remain are evil men, this means that the world would be filled with evil men only. Whatever these evil men think of and want to do would be done with impunity. There would be no law and nothing to restrain the continuous and unending wickedness of sinful men. They would not know or care that there is a God in heaven who is about to pour down His wrath on the earth the way He judged and condemned Sodom and Gomorrah after all the righteous were taken out. The removal of the righteous from the earth is a clear sign of impending judgement because God will not send His wrath upon the righteous.

The righteous and merciful will enter into peace. They shall rest in their beds. Each and every one of them would walk in his uprightness in the presence of God. The peace they have is to be with God in heaven. In heaven, everyone is righteous. There are no sinners to harass them anymore. The righteous will feel at ease and peace would prevail for eternity in heaven. The end of the righteous is blissful. That is why it is good to die righteous! He simply goes home and the evil that persecuted him is over forever. He is free to walk in righteousness in the presence of God.

Pandemic Idolatry Rebuked! – 57:3-12

The adversative "but" begins the next section of Isaiah 57 for

contrast. The evil ones would not get away with their evil. They would be justly punished by God. Not one of them would escape His wrath. Before they are judged, God wants them to turn from their sins. The cry to them is to draw near hither. The imperative is used here to emphasize the urgency of the call. Draw near to God means to go to Him on His terms. When a sinner draws near to God, judgement will be far from Him. The identity of these individuals that this call was issued includes "the sons of sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore." These are the children of wickedness. In other words, stop following in the footsteps of your parents. Do something about the sinful state that you are brought up in. You do not need to follow in their footsteps even though an environment of wickedness surrounds you.

The sorceress dabbles in black magic and demonic arts like necromancy. They play with potions and mixed them into concoctions to deceive the naïve and unsuspecting. The children of such mothers are prone to follow in their mothers' footsteps. The seed of an adulterer father (masculine gender) and the whore (feminine gender) is a son with no identity. They are very common today. They lack natural affections. Their family life is broken and very confused. They might not even know who their real biological father or mother is. These are the outcasts of societies. But the LORD wanted them to realize their need to stop sinning and repent and not follow in their parents' footsteps.

What are the things that you find pleasure in? Who are the exemplary people for you to emulate? Do you not realize that you are children of transgression and a seed of falsehood? They are brought up in sin and have in their lives numerous bad examples and not one of them good that they ought to use as examples to emulate. Idolatry was rampant and of pandemic proportions. Idols were found under every green tree and in the valleys, streams, lofty and high mountains, behind the doors and the posts inside their homes. The idols were found everywhere inside and outside of their homes. There was no way anyone could avoid seeing and worshipping idols! They were everywhere.

Israel has made her bed with these idols and not with her God. Israel has made a covenant with them and love her bed i.e. Israel did not mind sleeping with them as if these have become her spouses. Israel has become weak in that Israel has gone to foreign kings and paid homage to them with gifts. Israel is tired of her idolatrous ways and yet she refuses to repent and come back to the LORD. Why would Israel remain so stubborn and not admit that there is no hope in what she is worshipping! Israel is weak and helpless before her enemies. Israel thought that she had found her life by her idolatrous ways and going to Gentile kings for help and that is why Israel would not grieve for her sins! Speaking ironically, the LORD says that He will declare out loud the righteousness of Israel and her works but they shall not profit her. Israel's

sense of righteousness is based upon her worship of idols. Whatever sense of peace and prosperity she obtained for herself was based upon carnal treaties with Gentile kings which are worthless before God.

Repent and Be Restored – 57:13-21

When Israel is in trouble and she cries to her many idols to deliver her, no help will come. These idols are useless and cannot deliver Israel. But the LORD is different. The ones who put their trust in the LORD will possess the land i.e. have safety in the Land of Promise. The LORD lives in the high and holy place for He is the One who lives in eternity. The ones who will live with Him are the ones with a contrite and humble spirit. They will repent of their sins and repudiate all forms of idolatry and wicked ways. Israel must return on God's terms in order for the LORD to bless them.

Israel has to realize that the LORD's contention with them is for their own good. However, there will come a point in time when the LORD will stop contending with her. The time when the LORD stops punishing her is when she stops sinning. The LORD is very desirous of Israel to come back to Him. The LORD wants to bless and not punish Israel! He wants to stop being angry with Israel! He wants to heal Israel. He wants to lead Israel and restore comforts to her. The LORD wants peace for Israel. But Israel must repent!

But the ones who remain in sin are wicked in the eyes of the LORD. They are like the troubled sea where they will never find rest in their idols

and from the peace treaties they make with Gentile kings. They are on guard all the time. The picture is that the turbulent sea would stir up the mire and dirt on the ocean floor like the lives of these wicked ones. They have no rest in their soul! There will never be peace for the wicked says Isaiah's God! Amen.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 57:1-12

TUESDAY: Isaiah 57:1-21

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 57:1-21

THURSDAY: Isaiah 57:1-21

FRIDAY: Isaiah 57:1-21

Discussion Questions

- 1. When the LORD comes for His church, will the world that remains be made of evil men only? What kind of world would it be where righteous and merciful men are taken away?

2. How significant is the impact of your parent's life on you? How significant is your impact on your children's character and lives?

3. What is the measure of a successful Christian life? What is the measure of a successful church?

4. Do you know of churches that make "treaties" with the world and have become large and wealthy? Is there anything wrong with being a large church?

5. Did you know that the LORD wants to bless us more than punish us? Do you know of wayward believers who have gone the way of the world? What would you say to them in light of the truth taught in Isaiah 57?

6. What is the best way to cause a disobedient child to return to the LORD?

7. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?
