

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 59

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 59

Theme: "The Way of Peace They
Know Not!"

THEME VERSES

Isaiah 59:1-2 (KJV) "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: **2** But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."

INTRODUCTION

It is always a privilege to be used by God for His glory. To be part of God's plan of salvation is the highest honour that God could have bestowed upon sinful man on this earth. Israel was given this honour as no other nation was. The sad part was that Israel kept failing the LORD from the time of her birth when she was brought out of Egypt by God's powerful hand. Israel had been a complainer from day one. There were more years of failures and stumbling than blessings as Israel was supposed to witness for the LORD to a world in spiritual darkness. The light of Christ

was supposed to shine through her so that the world would find salvation.

In order to shine for the LORD, God gave to Israel the perfect Word of God to guide her. She cannot fail unless she deliberately chooses to fail. God had promised Israel protection and abundant blessings if she obeyed Him. Nothing on this earth could hurt or harm Israel, if Israel would live her life according to God's Word. This was an easy request to comply as God had blessed Israel with the Tabernacle and later on the Temple as a symbol of His favour and abiding presence to protect and provide for all of Israel's needs. Israel need only to shine for Christ and even that she did not have to do it alone for the LORD never left Israel. But when Israel sins and refuses to repent of her sins, God will not help Israel. Israel will be subjected to oppression and sufferings just as God promised.

The LORD is no respecter of persons, not even towards Israel. God will deal with Israel according to the standard that He has set for her according to Holy Scriptures. Sadly, God had to chastise Israel more than He could have blessed her because Israel was like a stubborn and unyielding mule refusing to bend her stiff neck. God had to punish Israel. When this happens, when Israel fails the LORD, does it mean that God's plan of salvation would be thwarted? If this can happen, then Israel is more powerful than God and God is no longer sovereign. In this chapter of Isaiah, we see that God is merciful to Israel and despite her refusal to repent

of her sins, God's plan of salvation through Israel will not be thwarted. If Israel does not wish to enter into the cooperative will of God then she shall enter into the punitive will of God.

Israel will lose the blessings from God. But God's plan of salvation for mankind will remain on track and will not be jettisoned because of Israel's failure.

OUTLINE

1. Iniquities Can Separate! (vv.1-2);
2. Iniquities Exposed (vv. 3-8);
3. No Help In Iniquities (vv. 9-15);
4. God Will Never Fail (vv. 16-21).

COMMENTARY

Iniquities Can Separate! – 59:1-2

Sometimes it can be disturbing when God does not seem to answer our prayers, especially in times of need. More often than not, we question why God does not help, why God does not answer our prayers; that the problem must be with God! These seem to be the pet answers that have been bandied around for many decades within Christendom. Such an approach to prayer is not only wrong and sinful but also very detrimental to the spiritual health of the believer.

For one thing, the believer, whose prayer is not answered, could be the problem. To put the onus on God as the One who delays or fails to answer a prayer is to assume that the one who prays is right and right with God. Such an assumption, spoken or

otherwise, is a very fallacious assumption. The focus when a prayer is not answered should always begin with the "pray-er" rather than God. This was the case in Isaiah chapter 59. Israel was in dire straits to say the least for her sins were great and the punishment from the LORD was directly commensurate with the sins of Israel.

No deliverance or help came to Israel when Israel suffered under the might of her many enemies. The hand of the LORD is never too short to help was Isaiah's reply. The LORD's hearing is still very clear. He is not deaf! Then why does the LORD not come to Israel's aid? The reason is that Israel had committed many sins and refused to repent of them. It was Israel's many iniquities that have separated her from the LORD so that the LORD will not hear! If the LORD had answered Israel's prayers when Israel was still steeped in sin then the LORD would be encouraging Israel to sin more and more. The LORD would never do that for He is not a derelict Heavenly Father!

This characteristic of God has not changed. When a believer prays and his prayers are not answered, the first thing the believer must do is a self-examination and not to blame God. After that, he has to examine his prayers to see where he has prayed wrongly for if he also prays amiss, the LORD will also not answer! Beware of the popular theology of prayer where the "blame" is on God. This popular theology teaches incorrectly that the answer from God is either, "wait, or no

or yes!" Such kind of theology is most detrimental to the prayer life of the child of God.

Iniquities Exposed – 59:3-8

The sins of Israel are listed in this section as a warning to future generations and also functions as a present indictment against Israel. God reveals to Israel the specific reasons for not hearing all of Israel's prayers especially Israel's prayer for deliverance from her oppressors. The sins of Israel described by the LORD were more symptomatic than foundational. It was Israel's idolatrous worship and turning away from the LORD that resulted in these heinous sins. These were the fruits of idolatrous worship. The hands of the Israelites were stained by blood. They committed murder to get what they wanted from their fellow Israelites. Their fingers committed iniquities, which definitely included thefts. Their lips were covered with lies and their tongues spoke perverse things including character assassination, mouthing lewd, uncouth and blasphemous things against God including using the name of God in vain.

There was no justice in the land when Israel was supposed to be the nation of justice and equity for they had the Word of God to guide them in deciding what is right and what is wrong. The ones who can lie the best and had the best influence in society win. There was no one who cares for right and wrong in the land of God. The people of God conceived i.e. gave birth to new sins and they carried them

out on one another in the Land of Promise. Using emblems like "they hatch cockatrice' eggs" and "weave the spider's web", the LORD likened His own people as these deadly and poisonous creatures. A cockatrice is a poisonous viper with forked tongue. The spider's web has only one purpose and that was to snare its prey. Anyone who eats the eggs of the cockatrice will die and these eggs when grown will break forth into viper. They will invent dangerous and false doctrines and many who believe in them would die. Those who imbibed these false doctrines will become future teachers that will continue to teach them after their false teachers die. The evil continues from one generation to the next!

These evil sinners spread their sins all over the Land of Israel. Israel was filled with such sins from the north to the south! These evil men run to and fro, sowing their seeds of destruction into the hearts and lives of many Israelites for generations to come. They did not know the way of peace for their ways were of murder and violence. If they do not get what they want, they threaten and kill. There is no judgement in what they did. They made crooked paths to tread upon and as long as they walk on these crooked paths, they will never know peace!

How can the LORD answer the prayers of such wicked men! How can the LORD deliver such evil and wicked people of God! It is no wonder that they thought that the hand of the LORD was too short! Israel was so steeped in sin and wickedness that the

LORD had no choice but to ignore her and leave her to her own destruction.

No Help In Iniquities – 59:9-15

In this section, Isaiah used plenty of first personal plural pronouns ("we" and "us") to include himself. This is a common phenomenon even though Isaiah might not be the sinner but he identified himself with sinning Israel here. The LORD did not bring justice as Israel waited for light but darkness remained. Israel waited for deliverance from the LORD but deliverance did not come. When there is no sincere repentance from Israel, there can be no deliverance. God is not mocked by man's antics of crying crocodile tears. In this spiritual darkness, Israel groped about like blind men. She could not find her way out of her darkness. They stumbled around in noonday as if it were night. Isaiah was describing the spiritual state of Israel figuratively.

Israel roars loudly like bears and mourns like doves i.e. the cooing sounds of doves are often likened to the mourning of men. Combine the two imageries together we have a picture of a very loud audible mourning cry. Nothing seems to help in bringing any relief from the oppression that Israel experienced. There was no end in sight even as they cry to the LORD. Crying without any sense of genuine repentance, which demands a turning away from sin and not to have a light view of sin, was absent from Israel. God will not help in such conditions. For the LORD to help under such conditions would mean that sinful Israel could successfully mock God i.e.

fool Him. God would not let this happen. Isaiah called these words of falsehood.

Words of repentance must be back up with a life or turning away from sin. Truth and justice must prevail once more in Israel. Truth and justice must be obeyed according to God's Holy Word. Repentance is more than just "feeling" sorry for sin committed but a genuine commitment not to sin that sin again. The LORD sees and knows the heart of man.

God Will Never Fail – 59:16-21

If God were to use us only in times of obedience then God's work will never be completed. Thank God that the work of God continues on from strength to strength DESPITE our many failures and lives of sin and disobedience. Very often we forget that God uses us and make us a blessing to others not because of who we are but in spite of who we are! Therefore when the LORD blesses our ministry like Bible Study of fellowship groups all glory must go to Him. None of us must ever think that it was "I" who have done it. It has always been God alone and will always be God alone!

There was no one who was worthy to seek the LORD but the LORD's plan of salvation for mankind marches on according to God's sovereign design even in the midst of the oppression inside Israel. The deliverance of the LORD will be through the Messiah who is called the Redeemer here. He will come and bring forgiveness and deliverance from sin. Justice will prevail in Israel one

day when the Messiah comes. On that day when the LORD brings redemption, Israel would turn from her transgressions. The people of God would become people who have the Word of God inside of them. They will be believers in the heart as seen in their lives. Isaiah 59:21 (KJV) sums this up very well when the LORD says, "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." Amen.

2. Do you find these symptoms in BP Churches or other churches that you know of? Do you find them in the CPBPC?

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 59:1-8

TUESDAY: Isaiah 59:9-21

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 59:1-21

THURSDAY: Isaiah 59:1-21

FRIDAY: Isaiah 59:1-21

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think that the answer from God is "wait, no or yes" when it comes to the prayer life of the believer? Is this expectation from God when we pray, right or wrong?

3. How can one get rid of these sins described in verses 3-9 in one's life and in the church? How to ensure that these sins are not found in a church?

4. Have you ever faked repentance before like saying sorry to God after sinning but do not mean it? What it means is that you felt bad but also "planned" to succumb to the next temptation when it comes?

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

5. Have you ever genuinely repented before the LORD whereby the sin was dealt with permanently and you did not sin that sin ever again?

6. Have you witnessed people who said and boasted that it was because of them that their ministry is successful? Have you ever had this notion that it was because of "you" that the ministry under your charge has now increased? Is this a grievous sin?
