

Salvation for Idolaters (Part 2)

Isaiah 57:14-21

Halifax: 6 March 2011

Introduction

Last week, I preached Part 1 of a sermon entitled “Salvation for Idolaters” from Isaiah 56:9 – 57:21.

- I concluded that message with a solemn warning to you in these words:
 - “We are ripe for judgement, just as the people were in Isaiah’s day.
 - All the signs are there—we are steeped in idolatry just like they were...
 - But if you will trust in the LORD, you will inherit the kingdom of God.”

In the sermon, I showed you various signs or indicators that we are ripe for judgement.

- First, that we have blind watchmen and blind shepherds, both in the church and in the civil magistrate.
 - They are blind because they do not see that we are doing those things that provoke God Almighty to wrath and that cause Him to send beasts to devour us.
 - All the men in our society who ought to be leading are becoming like puppy dogs (only not as cute) who never grow up and whose souls are filled with gel.
 - They are full of their pornography, their drugs, their beer, their movies, their psychological problems, their toys, their video games...
 - Rather than guarding us and warning us against the encroachment of idolatry and corruption, they become a part of the problem.
 - God takes away leadership so that the enemies can easily come in and nobody will even notice.
- Second, we saw that there is a huge problem with discernment of what God is doing.
 - In particular, Isaiah spoke about Judah’s inability to see that God was taking away many of the godly members of the society to spare them from coming judgement.
 - In our particular day, we lack discernment when God sends storms and economic troubles and terrorists against us.
 - These things ought to wake us up, but we don’t even recognise that He has sent them or that He is displeased with us.
 - Everyone is just wrapped up in their own little world.
- Third, we saw that we are ripe for judgement because of widespread idolatry in the church.
 - We turn to idolatry because we don’t like God the way He is.
 - In idolatry, we try to swap Him out for the god that we want Him to be rather than accepting Him for the God that He is.
 - It is a very stupid thing to do and it provokes Him to wrath...

- We saw three ways that we do this...
 - First, we change the way we worship Him—we pretend that He is a God who likes what we think He ought to like!
 - We present our own works, our own rituals, our own ceremonies and activities of praise...
 - And we often do this with great zeal—we love our traditions, we love our innovations, we love our bands and our worship teams and our power point and our skits and our interviews and whatever else we invent...
 - but God is not impressed.
 - But when we change the way we approach Him in worship, it is not long until we take it upon ourselves to decide how to approach Him in salvation...
 - We come with our own works or rituals, or with a Christ who is nothing more than an example;
 - rather than by faith in Him as the One who made His soul and offering for our sins—surely He would not require *that*.
- And when we have done that, our idolatry soon degenerates into the worship of other gods in addition to Him.
 - Like a brazen adulterous woman, we widen our bed to make room for these gods.
 - There is no difference between the true God and other gods if He can be approached apart from the blood of Jesus...
 - So we conclude that these other gods are the same God—just with different names...
- And once we go there, we also start to look to human government—power politics—to save us!
 - We no longer have the true God, so we make an idol out of rulers and kings and we turn them to save us, but they swallow us up instead.
 - We even start to think the government can control climate change
 - or that they can generate jobs and wealth,
 - or that they can keep us safe from foreign enemies!
 - We become desperate! We become slaves to human rulers.

And we saw in verse 11 that the reason we become so desperate is because we have forgotten the true and living God who is able to save us!

- We forget what He has done—in our case, even the cross and then we stop looking to Him as our Lord and Saviour.
- In verse 12-13 the LORD tells us that He will expose the emptiness of our own righteousness and the utter inadequacy of all the things we have put our trust in.

- A mere breath will blow all of our idols away—our false worship, our false gods, and our trust in political machinery!
- God will expose all of this.
 - And I solemnly warned that when He does, it may be too late.
 - Many will not be awakened to see their folly until the day of judgement!
 - And then it will be too late to repent!
- And so I urged you last week as I urge you today to hear God’s Word about your idolatry before it is too late!
 - He is able to deliver you, even after you have given yourself to idols, if only you will put your trust in Him.
 - He will save you and give you an inheritance in His house forever and ever if you will but come to Jesus Christ.
 - Verse 13 says:
 - **Isa 57:13: When you cry out, Let your collection of idols deliver you. But the wind will carry them all away, A breath will take them. But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, And shall inherit My holy mountain."**
 - That is His sure promise to you.

And now, today, we have the wonderful privilege to look at what the LORD says about His most excellent way of salvation...

- a salvation that is even offered to idol worshippers like us if we will repent...
 - to give us a future and a hope,
 - to give us confidence that we may safely trust in Him!

I. Realise that the way to Him will be opened, even for idolaters.

A. God will send someone to call for the highway to God to be repaired!

1. Verse 14 says that it will be so!

- **Isa 57:14: And one shall say, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people."**
 - a. This is the language of road construction.
 - **“Heap it up! Heap it up!”** is a call for a highway to be raised.
 - And the words: **“Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people,”**
 - are a call to remove all the obstructions so that they can travel without being hindered.
 - b. This is the same sort of language that we saw in Isaiah 40:3-4 where it said:
 - **Isa 40:3-4: The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. Every valley**

shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;

- Of course we know from the gospels that this is referred to John the Baptist who announced the coming of Jesus Christ,
 - and who commanded the people to repent in preparation for His coming.

- 2. This is a tremendously encouraging thing for guilty idol worshippers to hear!
 - a. You need to think of it within the context of the whole scope of redemptive history!
 - Redemptive history presents God's saving work to us so that we can grasp it personally...
 - We see how God called Abraham...
 - And then how He redeemed the people from Egypt to be His people and how He brought them into the land and gave it to them...
 - And how He established His own tabernacle in the midst of them to dwell in their midst...
 - And how they turned to idolatry and so provoked Him and were cast out of the land, taken into exile, rejected and cut off...
 - removed from the land, removed from the place where God had caused His name to dwell.

 - But then there is this wonderful voice...
 - This one that God sends to call them to make a road back to Him!
 - The valleys or low places are to be filled in and the obstructions are all to be taken out of the way so that they can return to God!
 - Idol worshippers can return to God!
 - It is supremely good news!

 - b. Did the LORD not just now declare to His idolatrous people that those who trust in Him will be able to come back to Him?
 - Did He not just say:
 - **Isa 57:13: "he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, And shall inherit My holy mountain"?**

 - They were to be judged and cut off from the land and from God's Holy mountain because of their idols.
 - Because they had trusted in false ways to come to Him, in false gods, in political power!
 - But there is going to be voice proclaiming that there is a way back!
 - **Isa 57:14: And one shall say, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people."**

- c. What an encouragement for God's people in every age!
 - It is indeed descriptive of events that unfolded over the course of centuries of God's redemptive history—from Abraham until Christ,
 - but the message comes to every idol worshipper—
 - even to the whole church in our day that is one again estranged from God by idolatry—
 - and to all the nations of the world that are cut off from Him by their idols...
 - Do you see what I am saying?
 - Even though the call to build the road to Christ is the voice of John in the context of redemptive history,
 - The voice is heard in every prophet and preacher who has ever proclaimed the true gospel...
 - God Himself raises up preachers in every age to call His people to come back to Him...
 - to show them the way of salvation—the highway to Jesus Christ.
 - What a blessing it is for God's elect in every age when they are gripped with their sin and they see that there is a way to return to God!
- B. But what is the way of return?
- What is it to prepare the road and remove the stumbling blocks?
1. It is very simple—
 - John's message was a message of repentance.
 - The highway is prepared by repentance.
 - Isaiah described it in chapter 55 without figurative language in 55:6-7:
 - **Isa 55:6-7: Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.**
 - We have been following our own roads and going our own way,
 - And all the LORD asks us to do is turn from our idols to Him and to the way that He has appointed.
 - We have been trusting in our own way to God—
 - our own rituals, our own works, our own philosophy, our own excuses—whatever it may be...

- and we have been looking to other gods and to political power instead of to Him...
 - and He simply calls us to leave our own ways and our own thoughts and come back to His way.
2. And when we come back to His way, we make the necessary repairs of the road to Him by His grace.
- We have ignorance and doubts keeping us from Christ that need to be filled in:
 - **“Heap it up, Heap it up, prepare the way.”**
 - And we have our sins and our pride that needs to be taken out of the way so that we will not stumble as we come to Him.
 - **“Take the stumbling block out of the way of my people.”**
 - It is not that we are made perfect or righteous by removing these things.
 - It is rather that we remove these things so that we can come to Him.
 - We come to Him to be made righteous.
 - He is the one who makes the kingdom to be a kingdom of righteousness by His obedience and suffering...
 - But we are able to come to His kingdom by repentance and faith, by turning from idols (that we have wrongly trusted in) and by putting our trust in Him.
3. God’s call to us is made effectual by the working of the Holy Spirit.
- The call goes forth from the preacher and then the Spirit works through the word:
 - to convict us of our sin—of our guilt and our need for forgiveness...
 - to show us our need of Jesus Christ—of the sufficiency of His work to secure our pardon and our righteousness...
 - and then to turn our hearts to forsake our idols and to receive and rest upon Christ alone for our salvation.
 - You will never take the way that God has appointed unless the Holy Spirit gives you a new heart and a new spirit to hear and obey the gospel.
 - You would remain in your lost, blind, condition forever if not for His working in you.
 - You will hold to your idols until His powerful breaks in to your life.

TRANS> It is all of God’s doing that we are able to answer the call and take the road that leads to our Saviour.

- And what a glorious salvation it is—yes, even for idolaters who were once cut off from Him!

- Now I want you to consider what He does to save us... Isaiah tells us in verse 15!

II. Realise that in salvation, the LORD Himself comes to dwell among us.

- It is a most wonderful, most extraordinary thing!
 - This is what it says:
 - **Isa 57:15: For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

A. The One who is *so* high comes to dwell with those who are *so* low!

- Look at how He is described here!
 1. He is the High and Lofty One!
 - What a contrast to our idols which are like us.
 - He is exalted far above all things...
 - Here is glory that makes us shut our mouths in awe and terror!
 - He towers over all that claims any glory, any power, any fear.
 - Here is the true numinous before which all else is reduced to weakness and insignificance.
 - In His presence there is not night, there is no drowsiness, there is nothing but pure glory that causes angels to worship without ceasing.

TRANS> Isaiah goes on...

2. He inhabits eternity!
 - He has no beginning and no ending...
 - He is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last!
 - He has no boundaries as we do.
 - He is the ancient of days.
 - As such, He is the origin all else that is...
 - All things were created by Him and for Him and He is before all things.
 - Nothing has its being but through Him.
 - And nothing remains unless He sustains it,
 - All things flourish if He causes them to flourish,
 - and all things suffer if He causes them to suffer.
 - When you see Him, you know that your destiny is in His hands...
 - He is the potter and you are the clay.

TRANS> Isaiah goes on...

3. His name is Holy!

- He is without spot or blemish, without fault, without imperfection...
 - Everything about Him is holy and pure—
 - He has a holy righteousness, a holy love, a holy wrath, a holy justice, a holy beauty, a holy mercy, a holy grace, a holy Son, a holy Spirit, holy angels, and holy people.
- All that is not holy feels the shame of His holy rejection forever when He is once encountered!
 - There is the shame of not measuring up at all and knowing that you don't.
 - There is the terror of His indignation against you in your corruption and idolatry.
- There are many who recoil at a God like this—
 - indeed—we are not holy—so it is to be expected that we should recoil!
 - Men reject Him and make idols to worship because they cannot deal with such glory and perfection.
 - They make God to be like a creature instead of the Creator.
 - But the fact remains that He is still just as holy and perfect and pure, despite what men may wish to think.

TRANS> But look!

B. He is said to “ **dwell in a high and holy place with Him who has a contrite and humble spirit!**”

- This great God comes to dwell with lowly men!
- 1. He comes to dwell with those among the sons of men who see what they are before Him as wretched idolatrous sinners and are broken because of it...
 - He dwells with them!
 - He Himself—the high and lofty one whose name in holy dwells with *them!!!* in a high and holy place.
 - And He does not destroy them, but He rather *revives them!*
 - He dwells with them in order...
 - **“to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones!”**
 - This is absolutely astounding!
 - He dwells with the likes of us to revive us!
 - What wonderful news!

2. This has been His message to His people all along—
 - a. In the OT economy everything was structured to show that God dwelt among His people even though they were not fit to dwell before Him!
 - There were many sacrifices to atone for sin, there were cleansing rituals, washings, circumcision, exclusions of those who had contacted the dead, sacrifices representing the dedication they ought to have had.
 - And they were excluded from the high and holy place in the midst of the tabernacle—except for the high priest who only entered to offer sacrifices for Himself and for the people once a year.
 - Yet, God made His dwelling there in the midst of them through all these symbols and ceremonies.
 - b. But Isaiah 57:15 says that He who dwells in the high and holy place also *dwells* with the humble and contrite ones!
 - This has come to reality in Jesus Christ!
 - Hebrews 10 tells us that the way into holiest is opened by the blood of Jesus.
 - He has washed us with His own blood so that we are cleansed and able to go into the holy place where God is!
 - Already His Spirit has come to dwell with us...
 - Already, we are called to assemble before Him for worship
 - And the promise is that we will be brought into His immediate presence when Jesus returns at the end of the age!
 - c. Jesus Himself is the High and Holy One,
 - And He has humbled Himself and come down,
 - not to stay down,
 - but to lift up those who are humble and contrite to be with He and the Father in glory forever!
 - He dwells with us in order to revive us—
 - to give us life who were dead in our trespasses and sins!
3. Now you can see why it is so important to prepare the way—
 - to repent of your sin and to turn to the LORD!
 - Don't let anything keep you from Him!
 - Don't let anything cause you to stumble.
 - He comes only to those who are humble and contrite!

- So don't try to come before Him with your denials, your excuses, your pretences, your claims, your gifts.
 - Just be broken and contrite...
 - Be poor in spirit...
 - Come with mourning about your sin and with hunger and thirst for righteousness.
 - That is the One He says that He will dwell with in the high and holy place!
 - with the humble and contrite one!

TRANS> Whatever are you holding on to your idols for?

- They are not high and lofty, they do not inhabit eternity, they are not holy!
 - Be broken of all that you are—give it all up and turn to Him!
 - Jesus did not come to destroy you in judgement,
 - but to heal and to save—to give life and to pardon.

III. See His most gracious and tender words to you who come to Him.

A. He tells you that He will not always contend with you in anger!

- Look at verses 16
 - **Isa 57:16: For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made.**
- 1. The LORD knows that we cannot bear up under His anger for long...
 - a. If He were to punish us as we deserve, we would be utterly consumed in His hot wrath and displeasure.
 - Remember Psalm 130:3?
 - **Ps 130:3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?**
 - It would be the end of us—the complete undoing!
 - b. Even though He had to chasten His people and deliver them into exile,
 - He soon heard the prayers of those who turned to Him and restored them again.
 - He is very tender with us.
- 2. But what does the LORD does with His anger against us?
 - a. His anger always goes out against sin.
 - It is part of His revealed glory that He will, “by no means clear the guilty.”
 - Where there is sin, there must be punishment, for He is of purer eyes than to behold evil.
 - So what does He do with His anger?

- b. His anger is diverted from us and made to fall on Jesus Christ.
 - We saw this clearly set forth in Isaiah 53 and we must not forget it...
 - **Isa 53:5: He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.**
 - **Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**
 - **Isa 53:8: For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.**
 - **Isa 53:12: He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.**
 - You see very clearly that God's anger did not just evaporate!
 - It was rather diverted from us to our dear Saviour who bore our iniquities when He made His soul an offering for sin.
3. Do you realise what this means for us!
- It means that instead of ending up in the Lake of Fire with the Devil and his angels,
 - God's anger is completely turned away and He comforts us!
 - Just think—
 - By Jesus we are released from everlasting misery and suffering!

TRANS> His tender words continue...

- B. He tells you that even though He knows all about your sin,
- He will heal you and comfort you!
1. It is not that our wickedness when unnoticed by Him...or that He has not yet seen the depth of it...
- Verse 17 makes it clear that He knows all about it...
 - He knows that even though He punished His people, they still went on backsliding—like a stubborn child who will not be corrected!
 - **Isaiah 57:17: For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.**
 - Such impertinence before the High and lofty one!
 - There may be forgiveness for sin, but is there forgiveness for **such** sin?
 - What could be worse than to harden your heart like this?
 - Who among you can say that you have not resisted His correction?

- God sees this—what will He do with us?
2. Even though He knows all about this, He still heals us, and leads us, and comforts us—when we are once broken...
- Verse 18 says
 - **Isa 57:18: I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, And restore comforts to him And to his mourners.**
 - Once again, you see, all He requires of us is a broken and contrite heart which He works in us by His Spirit...
 - We come to Him as mourners and He heals us and leads us and comforts us!
 - That is His gracious way.
 - You see that there are three things involved—healing, leading, and comforting.
 - a. The **healing** refers either to healing us from the blows we have received, or from the disease of sin itself...
 - I think it is the from the disease of sin—from the stubbornness that keeps us from repenting.
 - If God did not heal you, you would never repent.
 - b. And the **leading** surely refers to His leading us back to Him and to His way.
 - He is the one that raises up the voice in the wilderness that calls us to repent and turn to Christ...
 - He gracious leads us to Him as the source of our salvation.
 - c. And the **comfort** speaks of the assurance that He gives us to us that He has accepted us and that our sins truly are forgiven.
 - He shows us the sufficiency of our gracious Saviour and His work so that there is no occasion to doubt again.
 - Think of Jesus, taking the cup and declaring,
 - **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many!”**
 - What could give us greater comfort than to know that such provision has been made for us who mourn for our sin?

TRANS> What tender words He speaks to us!

- But there is still more...
 - He is so gracious...

C. He tells you that He creates words of peace on your very lips!

- Look at verse 19:

- **Isa 57:19: “I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,” Says the LORD, “And I will heal him.”**
1. This is an absolutely beautiful picture!
 - a. It is a picture of you, God’s church, swallowed up with despair and anguish because of your sin—without hope.
 - It is a picture of you in terror before God because you have been gripped by His wrath and curse.
 - It is a picture of you, without hope—without any possibility that there could be any deliverance...
 - as one entirely shut up to condemnation.
 - You have no words of comfort on your lips—only words of falsehood.
 - b. But then God creates something upon your lips where there was nothing!
 - 1) The Hebrew word *bara* is used to show that it is creation by God out of nothing.
 - *Bara* is always uses of such creation—never of something that is formed out of pre-existing materials.
 - It is a calling forth by divine power what was not there at all.
 - 2) And that which is created is called fruit of your lips...
 - This speaks of words—words that you speak—words that come forth from your lips...
 - And those words are wonderful words of peace!
 - **“Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near;”**
 - Whether those are the actual words that are found on your lips or a description of your words, I cannot say...
 - But it does not matter which it is!
 - The point is that you had no words like this to speak in truth,
 - but now that Christ has come you have the gospel of peace to proclaim.
 2. These words belong to the body of Christ as a whole.
 - They are put on our lips by God when the saving work of Jesus has been accomplished!
 - It is the words of the gospel for the covenant people and for the whole world!
 - **“Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near;”**

- God is the One who created these words upon our lips by His gracious saving work in Jesus Christ!
 - We speak them to each other to encourage one another that we have hope in Jesus Christ who were once without hope...
 - That there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared!
 - That there is peace—reconciliation, wholeness, fullness of blessing for us!
 - And we speak these words to the nations—
 - Declaring to them that if they will repent and believe, they can be reconciled to God and given eternal life in glory.
 - What a privilege to have such a message, created on our lips!
 - My dear hearers, is this gospel of peace on your lips?
 - Do you know this way of peace in Christ?
 - Is this your message of hope—that there is peace by the blood of the cross for you and for all who will come?
3. And look—just for extra measure, the Lord adds that He will heal those on whose lips He creates this message of peace...
- “And I will heal Him.”
 - It is no empty message of peace!
 - It is peace that brings true healing to the people of God!
 - It is peace that not only comforts them, but also fills them with the fullness of life—
 - Truly He revives the spirit of the humble and revives the heart of the contrite ones.

TRANS> You see what tremendous blessing and comfort and hope there is for you if you have turned to Him for salvation!

- The Lord Himself becomes your salvation instead of your avenger and destroyer.
 - Everything is changed!
 - There is true peace forever.

IV. But what a dreadful difference there is for you if you will not repent!

- A. We might have preferred it if Isaiah had simply ended on the positive note, but he does not.
1. He adds two more verses of dreadful warning for the many who, although they hear the gospel, continue in their sin without repentance.
 - Verse 20 & 21 say:

- **Isa 57:20-21: But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," Says my God, "for the wicked."**
 - We may not like to be reminded of this,
 - but remember, we are not here to make up our own religion.
 - It is not for us to remove what we don't like, the way idol worshippers do.
 - This is the message of the Lord, and it is essential for us to hear the warnings.
 - Warnings do us a lot of good.
2. Here are four ways that warnings help us:
- a. First, God uses warnings to wake you up if you have not repented and turned to the LORD.
 - These warnings may be used to jar you from your foolishness today if you are still in your sin...
 - they may wake you to realise what a dreadful condition you are in.
 - And even if these warnings do not move you at all, they will still bring great glory to God when He judges you...
 - They will make it clear how just His judgement is that you, although warned, although offered so great a salvation, would not come to Him!
 - He will be fully justified when He sends you to the lowest Hell.
 - b. Secondly, God uses warnings for you if you are among those who once repented, but who have now grown sluggish and cold in your walk...
 - Jesus used warnings like this for the churches He wrote to in Revelation.
 - It may be that these warnings will awaken you to the danger of what you are doing in departing from God.
 - In Hebrews, we are told that if any man draw back, the Lord will have no pleasure in Him.
 - It is a great mockery of Christ to come to Him for salvation from sin and then to return to your sin!
 - The Bible does not teach that those who are truly born again can turn away from the Lord,
 - but if you are turning away, it may be that you are not born again.
 - There is one way to know...
 - If you are indeed born again,
 - God will indeed use the warnings like this one to alert you and to effectually call you back to Himself.

- Those who are not born again do not respond to warnings.
 - They depart from the living God.
- c. Thirdly, if you have repented and are walking faithfully with God,
- then warnings like this will help you to be all the more thankful to Him for the deliverance you have received from His grace!
 - Just think!
 - The dreadful things that are said here would be true of you if it were not God's gracious saving work in Jesus Christ!
 - You have so much to be thankful for!
 - Renew your gratitude when you hear these warnings!
 - Be humbled!
 - Remember where you came from!
 - Be zealous for the LORD.
- d. And fourthly, these warnings will help you to have a concern for others who are not in Christ...
- They are a reminder of the urgency about which you ought to pray for your children or your parents who do not know the Lord...
 - They ought to spur you on to look for opportunities to speak to those who are still in their sin.
 - To tell them of the salvation that is to be found in Him—of peace for those who are near and for those who far away.
 - To tell them of the danger they are in and how they must flee from the wrath to come.
 - These warnings ought to stimulate you to pray for missions and for the ministry of the word and for our city with so many lost in sin.

TRANS> May they do good in your life!

B. Now consider what these warnings are!

1. The first one is about you present condition if you will not repent.
 - It says
 - **Isa 57:20: But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.**
- a. You are like the ocean in a storm—where the waves are constantly crashing and churning up the ground.
 - There is no rest for you—
 - You have your idols, but there is no comfort in them.
 - You pursue them, but there is no satisfaction in them.

- You are full of bitterness and strife.
 - Everywhere you go, you churn up mud and dirt.
 - This is your life.
 - Restless and incomplete.
 - Forever unsatisfying.
- b. Perhaps you will try to console yourself and say,
- Ah, but it is not all that bad.
 - I have my pleasure like any one else.
 - I have times of rest and ease.
 - I have my successes.
 - My life is not all storms.
 - But I will tell you that if you are outside of Christ and you feel this way, it is all the worse for you!
 - You have managed to blind yourself to your danger!
 - You ought to be distressed and agitated!
 - If you knew what awaits you—you would see that you have no rest at all.
 - Any peace that you have is only temporary.
 - It comes from denying the real danger that you are in.

TRANS> And that brings us to the second warning in verse 21:

2. The second one is about your future condition if you will not repent.
- **Isa 57:21: “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”**
 - a. **“No peace!”**
 - This is a terrible thing!
 - It means that there is no future for you, no prospering, no wellness, no happiness...
 - only misery and sorrow and distress.
 - only darkness and despair and ruin.
 - b. Words cannot describe what it will be like to come before the living God still in your sin!
 - You may justify yourself now, but then you will be exposed for what you truly are and you will be terribly ashamed...so ashamed!
 - What terror will grip you when you stand before the one that caused holy men who stood before him to wish they were dead on account of their sin!

- What dread and regret will sink into you for spurning the call of God.
 - There will be no peace....
 - And this will be your condition forever!
 - No end to your sorrows, no end to your misery, no relief.

- c. I plead with you—it does not have to come to this!
 - Remember the LORD's gracious words in verse 13:
 - **Isa 57:13: But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, And shall inherit My holy mountain."**
 - We have seen what this means today—
 - That the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity will Himself dwell with us to revive us and comfort us and give us peace!
 - Why go on in your sin when you can enter life by turning from your idols to trust in Him?
 - Why not?
 - There is no peace for the wicked.
 - But what peace for you if you will humble yourself and turn to the Lord!