

Wednesday, May 29, 2024 • Read Isaiah 59

Questions from the Scripture text: With what command does v1 begin? What two things have not (metaphorically) happened? What is the explanation for the circumstances in which Israel have found themselves (v2)? Whose body-parts are dysfunctional in what way (v3, cf. v7)? But what haven't they done in response to their sin (v4a-b)? In what have they trusted instead (v4c)? What comes from them (v4d-5)? How effectively will their works help (v6a-b)? Why (v6c-d)? In what sort of path do they walk, and to what two "places" can it never take them (v7-8)? Who are brought to agree with this assessment in v9? What are they admitting about themselves (v10)? What do even their attempts at confession sound like (v11a-b)? What cannot come from them (v11c-d)? Why (v12)? What has this sin done to their relationship to the Lord (v13a-b)? To their relationships with one another (v13c-15)? What happens to the righteous in such a society (v15b)? Who saw this (v15-16)? What did He think of it? What did He do about it? With what word picture does v17 describe Him doing this? What four attributes does He "put on"? Whom will He repay in what way in v18? With what result (v19)? But in what way does He come to whom in v20? To which specific people in Jacob (v20b)? What does YHWH say to the singular Person in v21? How does He covenant to produce Israelites who turn from transgression? Upon Whom is the Spirit? In Whose mouth are YHWH's words? From where (Where) shall this Spirit and these words not depart? From whose else's mouth? And from whose else's mouth? According to Whose proclamation? For how long?

What hope is there for sinners? Isaiah 59 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these twenty-one verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the triune God, Himself, is the only hope for sinners.**

A situation for which we have no solution, v1-15b. Apparently, there was some thinking that the Lord's ability to save or willingness to listen to them had somehow diminished (v1). But the problem was their sin that had fractured their relationship with the Lord (v2). Their sinful actions had so defiled their hands and fingers that nothing they did could be acceptable before the Lord (v3a-b), and their sinful words had so defiled their lips and tongue that nothing that they spoke could be acceptable before the Lord (v3c-d).

Rather than calling for repentance (v4a-b), they comforted themselves with words that turned out to be lies (v4c). This is a great danger for all men. We do not realize the greatness of our wickedness, and how it corrupts all of our thinking, acting, and speaking. People comfort themselves with religious-sounding things that are just lies and nonsense. But we are like that viper or spider of v5, from whom only death can come, and whose "good deeds" are like trying to wear a spider's web for clothing (v6). We are so sinful by nature, that there isn't even a path to peace from where we are in ourselves (v7-8).

v9, tells of a marvel. The people begin to answer in the direction of repentance! The problem is that sin has us so blind that we are unable to repent correctly (v9-10). If we open our mouths to confess, it is so flawed that v11 describes it as being animal sounds, rather than intelligible words—moans and groans. Unconverted sinfulness had so saturated Israel (v12-14a), and genuine conversion had become so rare, that anyone who experienced it (v15b) made himself prey.

The Lord Who is, Himself, the solution, v15c-20. One great problem, when no one is righteous, is that there isn't even anyone who can intercede (v16b). So the Lord, Who is pleased to save, is displeased with the condition in which there is no Savior, and He Himself brings that salvation (v15-16)! He is no prey but a mighty Warrior (v17). Some of us are familiar with Eph 6:13-17 and bring that knowledge back into v17, but that is backward. The wonder of the armor of God is that it is His own, but that He dresses us in it by Christ!

When the Lord delivers His people from that into which their sin has brought them (v18), He restores His people who see and trust to fearing His Name from west to east (v19). Thus, the Redeemer comes to Zion (v20a). In the context of this chapter, we see something greater in v20b than even the destroying of all of the enemies of God and His people: repentance in Jacob! Using his original name (heel-grabber, deceiver), the Lord announces the marvel that He will have a nation filled with genuinely repentant worshipers! His mouth has said this, and His arm will do this!

The Servant Who is the Lord, the Savior, v21. The concluding verse answers the question of how the Lord comes to be Intercessor and Savior. YHWH speaks to the Savior, Who is also YHWH (cf. v16), about His Spirit Who is also YHWH, being upon Him. How can God's covenant with sinners be made to stand? God Himself must comprise both parties in the covenant. The Lord Jesus's mouth will never be defiled like in v3c-d, or impotent like in v11a-b. By the same almighty Spirit Who lifts up the standard against the enemies (v19d), the Lord Jesus speaks the words of the Lord. And, by His Spirit, He has spiritual offspring who speak His words. And He even makes promise of His Spirit to His offspring's offspring for the same purpose. Will there be branches that are cut out? Yes. But the covenant is genuine for those who remain in or are grafted in (v20, cf. Rom 11:26), and the method of salvation is the same for all, forever (end of v21).

What works or words are you tempted to hope in, when you realize that you are in trouble, or that things are not right between you and the Lord? Why can your own words and works never help? What hope can you have, then? What would it look like to lay hold of that hope before the Lord?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us, for our iniquities separate us from You, and our sins hide Your face from us. Our hands and fingers are defiled, and our tongue and lips corrupted. What comes from us, ourselves, is deadly like viper's poison and useless like spiders' webs. Words that we thought were so wise and sincere have been as spiritually useful as animal sounds. If we are to be helped, it will not be by our words or our works, but only by You, by Jesus Christ Your Servant, by Your Holy Spirit. So, grant unto us repentance from Christ by His Spirit, and save us in Christ by His Spirit, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH435 "Not What My Hands Have Done"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah 59. These are God's words. Behold, you always hand does not shorten that it cannot save nor his ear heavy. That it cannot hear but your iniquities have separated you from your God. And your sins have hit in his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity.

Your lips have spoken lies. Your tongue has muttered perversity. No one calls for justice nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies. They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity, they hatch vipers eggs and weave. The spider's web, he who eats of their eggs dies?

And from that we'll just crushed a Viper breaks out. Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works? Their works, our works of iniquity. And the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood.

Their thoughts, are thoughts of iniquity wasting in destruction, are in their paths, the way of Peace. They have not known There is no justice in their ways, they have made themselves crooked paths, who, whoever takes that way shall not know peace. Therefore Justice is far from us. Nor does righteousness overtake us.

We look for light but there is Darkness. We look for brightness, but we walk in Blackness We grope for the wall like the blind and we grope as if we add no eyes. We stumble at Noonday as at Twilight. We are as dead men and desolate places. We all growl like bears and moan, sadly, like doves.

We look for justice, but there is none for salvation but it is far from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before. And our sins testify against us. For our transgressions are with us. As for our iniquities, we know them. In transgressing and lying against Yahweh and departing from our God speaking, oppression and Revolt conceiving and uttering, from the heart words of falsehood, Justice is turned back and righteousness, stands afar off.

For truth has fallen in the street and Equity cannot enter. So, truth fails And he, who departs from Evil makes himself a prey. Then you always saw it and it displeased, That there was no justice. He saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no intercessor.

Therefore, his own arm brought salvation for him. And his own righteousness. It sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate. And a helmet of salvation on his head. He put on the garments of Vengeance for clothing and was clad with Zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds accordingly, he will repay Fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies.

The coastlines, he will fully repay. So, they shall fear. So, shall they fear the name of Yahweh from the west and as Glory from the rising of the When the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of Yahweh, We'll lift up a standard against him. The Redeemer will come to Zion.

And to those who turn, From transgression in Jacob. As for me, says Yahweh This is my Covenant with them. My spirit who is upon you. And my words, which I put in your mouth. Shall not depart from your mouth. Nor from the mouth of Your descendants nor from the mouth of your descendants.

Descendants says, Yahweh. From this time for and forevermore. Amen, that sends this reading of God's inspired. And an errandwort.

When centers discover that they are. Spiritually helpless. They've been Trying to come up ways to be better or Make their conscience feel better.

They often. Will blame God instead of themselves. And they. Their spirituality quote, unquote doesn't work. And so they speak against God as if He doesn't exist or as if he his word isn't true, or if he isn't faithful to it. And that's the sort of thinking and complaining that the Lord is answering here.

When he says behold, ye always and hand is not shortened that it cannot save nor his ear heavy. That it cannot hear. The Lord is powerful to save, the Lord is willing. To save, but we are unwilling to be his He says, it's your iniquities. It's your sins, your transgressions.

That have separated you from your God and hidden his face from you. So that he will not. Let's see, we need repentance but we can't even give ourselves repentance. Notice. Various animal images here of our efforts. And our virtue. And even. Uh, our confessing or teaching. Our efforts are Described as eggs.

The problem is that they are Vipers eggs. They're not chicken eggs or Duck eggs or ostrich eggs. As may have been the case. But they're vipers eggs, he who eats of their eggs dies. Such as all man's attempt at producing his own goodness. We have this idea that it's going to Uh, nourish us, strengthen us, give us life, but Nourishment and strength in life, cannot come from us.

And so man, in his self-wisdom self-righteousness, self-goodness,

Or the spider's web. The idea that we can cover our nakedness, cover our guiltiness It's even worse than Adam. His wife's fig leaves. Which the Lord replaced with skins. In this case, it's a spiderweb. In verse five, he says, in verse six, their webs will not become garments. Nor will they cover themselves with their works?

With what good works. Could we cover ourselves? We don't have good works. Our works or works of iniquity. The only place we can get any goodness is God in Christ. And so even the best things that we would do to make it up. Perhaps, you could do things to Uh, to make up to someone.

And it would be tolerable in their sight. Although that. Almost always a losing. Effort. To begin with. But, God is Holy and everything we offer him has sinned in it. So, Are trying to be covered by your own works is like Trying to be clothed in a spider's web.

Two blind. The light in us is Darkness. And therefore, How great is the darkness? The Lord Jesus warns against. In Matthew chapter 5. Even our trying to Speak rightly, whether it's Uh to say right things about God or to say right things about ourselves to confess. Uh, Verse 11.

Describes how ineffective and inarticulate. Our words are We open our mouths to speak words, but what comes out is animal. Sounds the Of a bear or of moaning Dove. Uh, How valuable and effective and articulate. Our words are The problem is everything we speak. Is full of Verse 12 and verse 13 problem.

The reason everything we speak. Is full of sin. Verse 13, has come as it comes out of a heart, full of sin. Conceiving and uttering from the heart, towards a falsehood. So this is what we mean by total depravity. Yes, God is merciful and restraining. The expression of our sin and the effect of our sin.

But, We are sinful to in every part of our being and there's no goodness. That can come from us at all. This was not only true. Uh, individually in a particular. Uh, individuals case in Israel in EV in every particular individual's case. In Ezreal so that they needed to be saved by Sovereign Grace.

But there were, there were so few at the time who were genuinely converted, that if someone did become converted, he immediately became a Target. He immediately became prey. Verse 15. So, truth fails And he who departs from Evil. Makes himself a prey. So, our sin is a predicament. For which we have no solution.

Which is why the Lord himself in his Mercy. Makes himself the solution. Uh, he sees that there's no man. The language here of wondering not wandering. Uh, surprise. Uh, but the Offense of God, that they're not being any savior because he had created us to be redeemed. He had created us to glorify and enjoy him forever.

And so it was his intention that he would save. And he's the one who. Uh, permitted ordained. That we would be in such a predicament that there would be no hope anywhere else. That he might be glorified that he might. Um, satisfy his generosity to give Uh, himself for us and to us in Christ.

In the picture here is of him as a mighty warrior. Some of the armor is exactly the armor that we're told about in Ephesians 6, which makes the armor of God in Ephesians 6 even more amazing. Because it was, Uh, it is that which is in God himself that in which he himself.

As I'm only Warrior comes and saves us. And so, when we Are told to put on the whole armor of God there. Uh, we're basically told that His word and almost. All of the armor is some component of his word or belief in his word, or Um, himself by means of his word.

That, it's God himself. Uh who is saving us? Not like we put on the armor and save ourselves. No. In in putting on the armor of God. You are looking to him. To be the one who saves you, he is the one who is strong, When you notice that in God's power, Here, he not only Uh, saves us people gives us Repentance.

But also destroys. His enemies. He does both. It's the Same Spirit of Yahweh in verse 19. Who is the spirit of Yahweh in verse 21. And so God reserves salvation for himself. The Lord alone is the solution. To our predicament of sin. And, Here. Displays it in. The way that he redeems.

Uh, Zion redeems, Jacob. Not only in repelling their enemies, but especially In turning. Uh, Israelites verse 20 from their transgression. Turning Sinners from their But how can this be? If the people are the problem, While the Lord gives himself. To become a man. He makes this Covenant with those whom he is turning from sin.

He sends his son as the servant the servant that will suffer in sinner's place. Like we heard about in chapter 53, But then his son is our mediator. His son is our prophet, and priest and King. And when you receive the Holy Spirit, you don't receive a spirit who is like the spirit who is in Christ in with respect to his human nature,

You don't receive a spirit with assemble. You see receive the very same. And the words that are produced in your mouth, Are not produced from you. They're produced from the Lord Jesus. God Saves his people, he brings them into Covenant with himself and not only is there this individual salvation but there is a new season in the life of his church.

So, just like the problem in Isaiah, 59 is not just an individual problem, but a covenantal problem because of how few of them were converted, The solution is. The Eternal spiritual salvation in the Lord, Jesus. But it's also. The Lord Jesus by his Spirit. Uh, bringing our children. Uh, to himself making our children.

Visibly. His In the world in his church and promising that by his means. Uh, he will make those children who are in his church. He will bless his means to them and he will put his Spirit on them. And he will put his words in their mouths. And that he will do this.

To descendants descendants. Uh, forevermore. So, Jesus gets to have Offspring. And he says, This is my Covenant with them. My spirit is upon you. My words, which I put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth. Nor the mouth of your descendants. Nor the mouth of your now Jesus's.

Descendants are those who receive spiritual life in Christ. Uh, but then nor the mouth of your descendants descendants Says, Yahweh from this time. And forevermore. So, Just as Each of us looks to God's grace. God's Saving Grace. Quad saving power God. Saving goodness. Uh, in Christ, by his Spirit, according to his word for ourselves.

Individually for our eternal spiritual salvation. This is the same solution. For the church in her generations in the visible. That Christ's Spirit whom he pours out. Would be the Who gives our children repentance. Who gives our children. Uh, to have his word. In their mouth. And therefore, Uh, because by having his word in their heart, that by the changed heart, which overflows from the mouth, The word of Christ would come.

So, we cannot be our hope at all. God Alone is our hope and he is, especially Our Hope in Jesus. Who is our covenant with God? God gave himself to become a man. That he might be the keeper of both sides of the Covenant. And our side. Is kept by Christ.

And we are joined to him. And receive life and salvation from him. By the work of his Spirit. Let's ask him to help us to live by faith in him and to give us Whose spirit and abundance, let's pray. Our gracious Gardener Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have Gathered our family to you the beginning of a new day.

Given us to hear your word. Told us the truth about ourselves. And our helplessness in ourselves. But also told us the truth about yourself. And that you yourself are our help and salvation. And so, we pray that you would Give us your spirit and abundance. That you would stir up our faith in Christ.

That we might live by his life and do good by his goodness, be righteous with his righteousness. Be strong. In his strength. Thank you for giving yourself in the person of your son. To be our salvation. Thank you that this is Your Covenant with us. That you have covenanted with us in him.

We pray that you would, Forgive us our sins and help us. This day by your spirit in Jesus name, amen.