

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #87

Isaiah 59:1-21

I read a story of a medical doctor who was a believer, who had a surgeon friend who was not a believer. The medical doctor would challenge his surgeon friend to start thinking seriously about God. His surgeon friend would say something like this - "I have no time for God and I spend my Sundays in the hospital making money." One day the surgeon was bragging about how much money he had made and the medical doctor said: "When you die, you'll probably be the richest surgeon in the cemetery." Not long after this happened, the surgeon had a heart attack and died. He made his money but he lost his eternity.

God is able to save any nation and any person from any sin. God can deliver any one from any thing. But a question arises and that is why doesn't God do it? Why doesn't God intervene and deliver Israel and save all the people of the world? The answer is because **people refuse to face their sin**. **God will not save any one or do any thing for any one who is not willing to face Him and admit their sin**. That is exactly what Isaiah says in this chapter

As **Isaiah 58** ended, God said that if Israel would start honoring God and turn from her religious hypocrisy, God would start doing wonderful things for her. **Isaiah 59** explains why God isn't presently doing wonderful things for Israel. Every negative thing that Israel has suffered and every negative thing that we have suffered is due to the seeming inactivity of God on our behalf.

That point is really stressed in **Isaiah 59:1**. God says, I can save any one who will turn to Me and cry out to Me. God has the sovereign power to save any one from any thing. When God uses the noun "face" (**verse 2**), He is saying, My eye sees everything and My ear hears everything and My hand can reach into any person's life.

So the obvious question arises, "Why doesn't God intervene and deliver His people?" The answer is because of their sin. They refuse to see and deal with their depraved sins. What Isaiah says here is:

**GOD HAS THE ABILITY TO SAVE ANY ONE FROM ANY THING, WHICH HE DELIGHTS IN DOING; AND IF HE IS NOT INTERVENING, THEN HIS PEOPLE NEED TO TAKE A SERIOUS LOOK AT THEMSELVES TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT IT IS DUE TO THEIR OWN SIN.**

Some believe that Isaiah is looking forward to the Babylonian captivity and the future time when Cyrus and his Persian army would deliver Israel. But I don't think we can limit it to this. God wants all His people to realize at all times that He has the power to save and deliver if His people will come to terms with their sin. His hand can and will deliver Israel and you.

**Isaiah 59** is a chapter in the Bible that is aimed straight at God's people, and it is designed to inform them why God, at times, doesn't deliver His people when He has the power to do it. These charges are aimed straight at Israel, but we know from Paul's use of these verses in Romans 3:9-20 that these verses also have Grace Age application.

From an eschatological perspective, this describes the Tribulation just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. God will permit Israel to experience horrific things and this explains why. From a practical perspective, God has the capability of saving us and delivering us from everything, and if He does not do it then we better take a serious and honest look at ourselves.

There are five critical facts that Isaiah reveals here to the people of God.

**CRITICAL FACT #1** – Sin keeps God from hearing and helping His people. **59:2-8**

Israel is a very religious nation as we said in chapter 58, but she has used her religion to cover up her sin. J. Vernon McGee says in this chapter Israel's sins is referred to some thirty-two times which bring about some twenty-three sin charges (*Isaiah*, p. 330).

When we go down through this text, we see that there are four different nouns used for sin:

- 1) “iniquity” that refers to the depraved sins (**59:2, 3, 4, 6, 7**);
- 2) “sins” that refers to all of the times we have missed the mark of the righteousness of God (**59:2**);
- 3) “wickedness” which refers to a turning aside to that which is evil (**59:3**);
- 4) “transgression” which refers to rebelling against God and His Word (**59:20**).

The noun used the most is “iniquity” that refers to depraved sins. **God's own people were involved in depraved things and God says, this is the reason I am not doing wonderful things for you.**

Now there are **nine different types of specific sins** mentioned here of which God had complete knowledge and of which He was trying to get His people to face. As one writer said, here is a discouraging picture of the human family and of you and me:

**(Sin Type #1)** - God's people were doing wicked things with their hands. **59:3a**

There is an article “the” before blood and iniquity which refers to something specific.

I wonder how many times our hands have actually been involved in doing wicked things. We may be sure God knows.

**(Sin Type #2)** - God's people were saying wicked things with their mouth. **59:3b**

The word “mutter” means they meditated on wicked things then growled (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 215).

I wonder how many times our mouths have spoken wicked things. We may be sure God knows.

**(Sin Type #3)** - God's people were dishonest liars . **59:4a**

Young says they would not even approach God honestly (*Isaiah*, Vol. 3, p. 431).

I wonder how many times we have stretched the truth and said what is false. We may be sure God knows.

**(Sin Type #4)** - God's people conceive evil in their minds and act it out in their lives .  
**59:4b**

I wonder how many times we used our minds to think about something evil and then did it. We may be sure God knows.

**(Sin Type #5)** - God's people weave plans to prosper but will be destroyed. **59:5-6**

Isaiah uses two metaphorical pictures to describe the effects of people who live in sin. They are poisonous like an adder who puts people on a continual path of death and produces other vipers and they are like a spider's web which traps people. The verb "hatch" is perfect tense; action started at some point and continued. It is interesting that false religions trap people by their works which God views as filthy rags iniquity.

Harry Bultema said that many years ago some people in France tried to make cloth out of spiders' webs, but it proved to be an effort in futility and totally useless. That is exactly what works of people in sin are - they are useless.

I wonder how many times we have been involved in producing rotten fruit. We may be certain God knows.

**(Sin Type #6)** - God's people are quick to run to evil. **59:7a**

I wonder how many times we have been quick to run to evil. We may be certain God knows.

**(Sin Type #7)** - God's people are quick to attack those innocent . **59:7b**

I wonder how many times we have verbally attacked and verbally butchered one who was innocent. We may be certain God knows.

**(Sin Type #8)** - God's people continually think about iniquity . **59:7c**

I wonder how many evil thoughts we have ever had in our brains. We may be certain God knows.

**(Sin Type #9)** - God's people do not care about being at peace with themselves or God. **59:8**

I wonder how many times we have not chosen the way that keeps us at peace with God. We may be certain God knows.

God says the problem of Me not doing wonderful things for you is not Me; the problem is your sin. My own people are depraved sinners and I will not do anything until they face it. When God's people refuse to deal with sin, they block what God could do for them.

**Sin always separates men from God.**

If you are an unbeliever, you are separated from a relationship with God.

If you are a believer, you are separated from having fellowship with God.

When you are a believer in Jesus Christ and you sin, there is a very real sense that you have lost contact with God. There is a very real sense that you have lost fellowship with God. Have you ever been there as a believer? I have. When I have sinned and do not face it, it is almost like God is nowhere to be seen. It is like I have lost my connection and communication with Him. But when I face it and confess it, it isn't long before that sweet sense of fellowship with God is back in place.

**CRITICAL FACT #2** – Sin keeps His people in a depressed and depraved condition. **59:9-15**

Notice that **verse 9** begins with the conjunction “therefore” which presents to us the effect on one who chooses to live in sin. The end result of people living in sin will not be happy. If you are God's child and you refuse to deal with your sin, here is exactly what you can expect will happen in your world. Your life will not be pretty or easy. It will be a hard lonely road. Here is a graphic description of the misery that sin will bring you if you do not face the sin and turn to God.

Carefully observe in **verses 9-15** the change in the pronoun from “they” and “their” to “we” and “us.” We are getting a firsthand look from God's own people as to what happens when we do not deal with sin. Isaiah, himself, sensed these things. There are seven depressing effects that our life will have if we choose to live in sin and not face it before God.

**(Depressed Condition #1)** - God does not render His justice. **59:9a**

Bad things will happen to you and God will not lift one finger to get you out of them. Our enemies will have victory and God won't deliver us from them.

**(Depressed Condition #2)** - God does not give His righteousness. **59:9b**

You will not blossom in righteousness because God will not let it happen. As W. E. Vine said, God leaves His own people “undefended” (*Isaiah*, p. 192).

**(Depressed Condition #3)** - God does not give His people any hope. **59:9c**

You will see nothing but darkness in your world and will have no ray of light or hope. Those who persist in sin find no hope or help from the light of God's Word.

**(Depressed Condition #4)** - God does not give His people any direction. **59:10**

The word "grope" repeated twice means these people try to feel their way through life (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 183). You will stumble through life like one who cannot see his way. You will live your life in obscurity and you'll grope along like a blind man. You will act more like a dead man rather than a person who has any life.

**(Depressed Condition #5)** - God does not give His people any joy. **59:11a**

Life for one who does not deal with sin will not be happy. Growling bears and moaning doves picture a total desperation and despondency. Life is very sad for one in sin.

**(Depressed Condition #6)** - God does not give His people any deliverance. **59:11b**

One who does not face sin will discover God doesn't deliver them from anything. As Delitsch said, any thought of deliverance for one in sin is "self-delusion."

**(Depressed Condition #7)** - God does not give His people any relief from guilt and sin.  
**59:12-15**

When a person pursues a life of sin, the end result is total misery and total depression. There is no sense of the presence of God. People know they have denied God and turned away from God, but they will not face their sin.

As a result there is no sense of God's justice or righteousness or truth. In fact, truth is so lacking, as **verse 15** says, that one who turns away from evil makes himself a prey. If you turn to God and His Word, you will be at odds with most people of this world. During the Tribulation, any who turn to God will become a potential martyr.

**CRITICAL FACT #3** – Sin is the reason that God was displeased with everyone. **59:16a-b**

God looked at the world and saw that all were displeasing to Him. Look at what God saw:

**(Sight #1)** - There was no one given to righteousness. **59:16a**

**(Sight #2)** - There was no one to intercede for sinners. **59:16b**

**CRITICAL FACT #4** – Sin is the reason God will send His own Righteous Deliverer to pour out His wrath. **59:16c-19**

Since man is so corrupt in the sight of God, if there is going to be a remedy for sin, it will not come from man but will have to come from God.

God says I intend to bring My Righteousness into this world and I will send My own Servant/Son to pour out My wrath. I will repay all My enemies no matter where they are.

**CRITICAL FACT #5** – Sin is the reason God will send His Redeemer to save those who turn from their transgression . **59:20-21**

God's Redeemer will come to pour out wrath and to save. Now look carefully at what is said in **verse 20**. To be in a right relationship with God, people must "turn from transgression." Do you see that? You must come face-to-face with sin. You must admit it and confess it and turn to the Lord.

God is willing to help you. God is willing to forgive you. God is willing to bless you. But you must face sin. When you face sin and turn to the Lord, you will receive the help of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to understand His Word, and you will be blessed forever.

So here are the options - stay in a miserable sin condition that leaves you depressed, or face the sin and turn to a relationship with the Redeemer that will bring you all the blessings of God.

The only Person, who can get you out of your depression and get you into a relationship with God where He will bless you, is Jesus Christ.