



Sermon Discussion Questions
October 22, 2023,
The Gospel According to Isaiah
THE LORD WELCOMES EVERY OUTCAST
Isaiah 56:1-8

1. **Opening Discussion Questions** (Caution: if using this as an opening for a group be particularly sensitive to differing opinions and do not allow the discussion to degenerate into an argument)

The unfolding events in the Middle East once again bring to the surface centuries old debates about justice for various people groups in the region. Spend some time discussing how the concept of justice is used to frame the debate between Israel and its neighbors. When you listen to the two sides does it really seem that justice is the issue or are there some more fundamental issues involved? If so, what? How do you feel a Christian should respond?

If this subject seems too controversial for your group, consider one of the following instead:

- a. When have you felt the most unwelcome? Have you ever been to a family gathering, a party, or maybe even a work event where you just felt completely out of place and that absolutely no one wanted you to be there? If so, how did you respond and what did you do about it? If you have never had such an experience, have you seen others go through such an experience? How would you respond to such a person?
- b. In your opinion, why do you think college students join sororities or fraternities? Why do adults join similar organizations (i.e., Kiwanis, Lions Clubs, Rotary, etc.)? In what ways do you think this is different or like joining a church?

2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**

- a. Practice Justice and Righteousness (Isaiah 56:1-2)
 - i. God's revelation and salvation come through Jesus.
 - ii. In the meantime, God's people must live just and righteous lives.
- b. God Is Gathering Those Distant from Him for Life and Blessing (Isaiah 56:3-7)
 - i. God welcomes those viewed as outsiders under Mosaic Law.
 - ii. Through Jesus, every believer is fully grafted into God's people.
- c. God Gathers the Outcasts Through the Efforts of His People (Isaiah 56:8)
 - i. God generally reaches people through people.
 - ii. We have work to do! Jesus told us over and over again!

3. **Study/Discussion Points:**

- a. *Sunday Afternoon* – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to prayerfully ponder these questions:

- i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
- ii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
- iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
- iv. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. *Monday – Practice Justice and Righteousness (Isaiah 56:1-2)*

- i. What two virtues are identified in verse 1 as basic requirements for behavior by an Israelite?
 1. How do you see the two to be related?
 2. How do you see them differ?
- ii. Read these passages about justice:
 1. Leviticus 25:17
 2. Psalms 9:8; 11:7; 33:5; 99:4
 3. Isaiah 1:17; 9:7; 28:17; 30:18; 61:8
 4. Jeremiah 9:24; 22:3
 5. Ezekiel 33:14; 45:9
 6. Micah 6:8
 7. Matthew 12:18-21; 23:23
 8. 2 Corinthians 7:11
 9. Hebrews 1:8

c. *Tuesday – Practice Justice and Righteousness (Isaiah 56:1-2)*

- i. Read these passages about righteousness:
 1. Genesis 6:9; 15:6; 18:25
 2. Psalms 31:1; 119:137; 119:142
 3. Isaiah 1:26; 11:5; 51:1; 62:1-2
 4. Jeremiah 23:6
 5. Matthew 5:6; 6:33
 6. Romans 3:21-26; 4:3&9
 7. Galatians 3:6
 8. James 2:23-24
 9. 2 Peter 3:13
- ii. After reading these verses about justice and righteousness would you answer the two questions presented yesterday any differently?
- iii. Read verse 1-2 again.

1. Does the Lord say that righteous behavior will earn us salvation or that it should be our response to our salvation? How can you tell?
 2. What did James say in James 2:14-26?
- d. **Wednesday** – *God Is Gathering Those Distant from Him for Life and Blessing* (Isaiah 56:3-7)
- i. Read Isaiah 56:3-7 and James 2:1-5.
 1. What relationship do you see between the two passages?
 2. If you were at the LON movie night and saw “Jesus Revolution” how did the concepts of these passages play out?
 - ii. To the Jews who were in exile because of their failure to keep God’s law the two examples used by God in Isaiah 56 would have been striking. Read these background passages: Exodus 12:43; Deuteronomy 23:1-3; and Leviticus 21:16-21.
 1. How does the story of Ruth (see Ruth 1:4; 2:2, 4:13 & 4:21-22) show us that God is looking at the attitude of the heart as stated in Isaiah 56?
 2. How does the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch show us that God is still looking at the attitude of the heart as stated in Isaiah 56?
 3. What truths can we learn from these two stories that we should apply in the life of our church in today’s age?
- e. **Thursday** – *God Is Gathering Those Distant from Him for Life and Blessing* (Isaiah 56:3-7)
- i. Read the account of Jesus’ healing of the centurion’s servant in Matthew 8:5-13 or Luke 7:1-10.
 1. In what way (sense) is the centurion identifiable with the two figures described in Isaiah 56:3-7?
 2. What other times in Jesus’ life can you think of where He deliberately associated with those others in His society would avoid?
 - ii. In Matthew’s account Jesus says “many will come from the east and the west” to the kingdom of Heaven. Revelation 7:9 confirms that “every nation, tribe, people and language” will be present in heaven.
 1. What does that truth say to you as a Christian in America today?
 2. How does it shape your view of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20?
- f. **Friday** – *God Gathers the Outcasts Through the Efforts of His People* (Isaiah 56:8)
- i. The focal passage ends with a divine utterance or proclamation. Read verse 8 in as many translations as you have available.

1. How is God described? What is He credited with doing?
2. In your own words, what does God proclaim – what does He promise will happen?
3. Why is this proclamation of particular importance to us?
- ii. Compare verse 8 with John 10:14-16. How do Jesus' words help you understand verse 8?
- iii. In John 17:20-26 Jesus prays for us who now believe because of the Good News that has been passed on to us. Read these verses. What aspect of John 10:17 does He stress in His prayer?
- g. **Saturday** – *God Gathers the Outcasts Through the Efforts of His People (Isaiah 56:8)*
 - i. Finish this week's review by reading and meditating on the Great Commission passages: Mark 16:15, Luke 24:45-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8 and, of course, Matthew 28:18-20
4. **Application:** Billy Graham famously said, "Eleven o'clock Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America." While in some ways much progress has been made to eliminate this unfortunate distinction, the churches of America remain far more homogeneous than our surrounding communities. The Great Commission tells us to "Go and make disciples of all nations (people groups)" and God has made that easy by bringing people from every country in the world to live in the US. Spend time this week prayerfully considering what more you individually, and we as a church, should be doing to obey the Great Commission. Be practical! Jesus said, "Where your treasures is, there your heart will be also." Over the next several weeks LRBC will be finalizing our budget for 2024. Will it reflect that the heart of LRBC is committed to "making disciples of all nations"?

5. Prayer Points:

- a. **A**doration – 1 Peter 4:16
- b. **C**onfession – James 5:16
- c. **T**hanksgiving – Philippians 4:6
- d. **S**upplications – James 4:2-3
 - i. Read the Special Focus Prayer Request Pastor Neil distributed on October 19th and pray for the situation in the Middle East.
 - ii. Pray that God will provide many opportunities for each of us to share His invitation with others this week – especially with someone from a different background or culture.
 - iii. Pray that the increasing enrollment in the Awana program will lead to many kids coming to know Christ as their personal Savior and that the witness will extend to their families and communities.
 - iv. Pray for the new Grow Deeper Thrive groups that have started – that God will use them for His glory.