
Arise

Arise Part 6 - Have Mercy, God

Isaiah So Far

We are drawing close to the end of Isaiah.

What we are going to cover today, is not only a passage of Scripture, it also is a prayer in Scripture.

Isaiah is interceding and petitioning on behalf of himself and the nation.

Where is God?

"Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me." (63:15 ESV)

It's more a question of who God is, rather than where He is.

Does God change His mind throughout Scripture?

The Triune God that we follow never changes. However, our experience of Him does change. And what is even harder to understand is that sometimes, He is the one who changes it.

"...You, Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer, from of old is your name". (Isaiah 63:16).

Amidst the chaos and destruction of his day, Isaiah remembers the true nature of God. Who is God? He is our Father and Redeemer.

As children, we need to know His voice and know His ways. We need to pray.

Powerful prayer is when we align ourselves with God's kingdom, rather than forcing God to align with our kingdom.

Isaiah's Answer: Rend the Heavens

“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.” Isaiah 64:1-3

God's presence is greater than our problems!

Isaiah isn't just talking about revival and theorising about God's kingdom coming, he is praying! And more than just praying, he is longing for it!

The Incarnation of Christ

But more than a 'theophany' or a momentary encounter with God's presence, this passage is speaking forth the gospel.

“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Picture a ladder climbing into the heavens.

Many of us try to climb up through activities and motives, but we never make it. Because of humanity's fallen state, we slip and fall back towards the earth. Nobody in history has ever been able to reach this heavenly place on their own.

Whereas through the broken world nobody was able to reach God, now the full presence of God is made available to whoever would believe in Jesus, the Son of God. For in the life, death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we now have full access by grace, through faith, to the Father.

Formation

Communion and intimacy with Jesus is what He desires.

"If we do not make formation in Christ the priority, then we're just going to keep on producing Christians that are indistinguishable in their character from many non-Christians." – Dallas Willard

"Yet you, Lord are our Father. We are the clay; you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand." Isaiah 64:8

God as the potter takes us on a sanctification process, where He redeems, repairs and restores our lives.

When the clay works against the potter, the pot is bound to collapse.

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10

Discussion Questions

1. Isaiah is broken up into three main sections (chapters 1-39, chapters 40-55 and chapters 56-66). Can you recognise any consistent themes that continue to pop up in each section?
2. The passage today from Isaiah 52:13-53:12 describes a suffering servant. Have you ever recognised Jesus as this person? How does that make you feel?
3. It's clear that suffering is still in our world. If Jesus has defeated sin and death forever (1 Corinthians 15:54-57), why do we continue to see the power of sin and death in our world?

4. Jesus came to serve humanity, primarily by giving up His life to give life to those who would believe in Him. It can be said that He has justified us, by putting us in right standing with the Father, exchanging our unrighteousness, for Jesus' righteousness. To what extent is this true? Do we need to live with our sin anymore? Or has Jesus healed us and our fallen nature by His blood shed on the cross?

5. How can you serve those around you this week as you follow Jesus' example as the suffering servant?