



## STUDY GUIDE

**SERIES: Isaiah**

**TEXT: Isaiah 56:1-8**

*Hello! This guide is provided to help facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage that was preached the preceding Sunday with a focus on applying God's truths to our lives individually and corporately. As such we encourage you to budget sufficient time for application questions. A recommendation would be to spend at least half your time pondering and discussing questions that are application focused.*

### **Overview of Isaiah**

Isaiah ministered for more than 40 years, through the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. The first part of the book of Isaiah (chapters 1-35), focuses on God's judgement on Israel and Judah by Assyria. Isaiah railed against the leaders for their hypocrisy (1:10-15), greed (5:8), self-indulgence (5:11), and cynicism (5:19). The rich prospered while the poor was oppressed, and while the people confessed the Lord as their king with their lips, their hearts was as far from Him and their temple sacrifices were a mere sham. The second part of the book (chapters 40-66), focuses on the remnants' return from Babylon and their ultimate deliverance in the remote future. Isaiah predicted the fall of pagan Babylon (46:1-47:15) and the ultimate salvation of Israel's remnant. More than a century before Cyrus the Persian came to power, Isaiah named him as God's anointed agent to restore the remnant to the land (44:24-45:13). The prophet urged the remnant to flee from Babylon (48:20, 21). He challenged the people to renew their loyalty to the Lord after they return to the land (56:1-8) and to avoid repeating idolatry and evil acts (57:3-13). Beyond this future act of salvation Isaiah predicted the coming of a Servant and Savior much greater than Cyrus. This Servant would fulfill Israel's original destiny by bringing justice to the nations (42:1-4) and becoming a light to the Gentiles (49:1-7). The Servant would suffer willingly to take away the sins of His people (52:13-53:12) and thus establish a new covenant between the Lord

and the new Israel (42:5-7). The NT identifies the Servant as Jesus Christ, the true Israel and Savior (Matt. 12:15-21)<sup>1</sup>.

## **Big Idea of the Text**

The foreigners and eunuchs who were once excluded from God's presence in the temple are now promised that if they keep God's righteousness and hold fast to his covenant, they will be accepted as God's own people. God promises to gather to his people, Israel, the outcasts who were once excluded. He does this through his Son, Jesus who gathers the Gentiles who were not of the fold, to make his people one flock, under one shepherd (Jn 10:16). Jesus is the man who keeps God's justice where we have spurned his justice. Because Jesus is gathering his sheep to his fold, and is returning soon to complete his salvation, we must keep justice and do righteousness, especially to outsiders. Keeping justice is the mark of belonging to Jesus' fold.

## **Opening Question**

*How would you summarize the book of Isaiah so far? (Isaiah 1-55)*

## **Let's read: Isaiah 56:1-8**

*1 Thus says the Lord:*

*"Keep justice, and do righteousness,  
for soon my salvation will come,  
and my righteousness be revealed.*

*2 Blessed is the man who does this,  
and the son of man who holds it fast,  
who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it,  
and keeps his hand from doing any evil."*

*3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say,*

*"The Lord will surely separate me from his people";  
and let not the eunuch say,  
"Behold, I am a dry tree."*

*4 For thus says the Lord:*

*"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,*

*who choose the things that please me  
and hold fast my covenant,  
5 I will give in my house and within my walls  
a monument and a name  
better than sons and daughters;  
I will give them an everlasting name  
that shall not be cut off.*

*6 "And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,  
to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord,  
and to be his servants,  
everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it,  
and holds fast my covenant—  
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain,  
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;  
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
will be accepted on my altar;  
for my house shall be called a house of prayer  
for all peoples."*

*8 The Lord God,  
who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares,  
"I will gather yet others to him  
besides those already gathered."*

**Q1.** What is the motivation for keeping justice and doing righteousness?  
(v1)

**Q2a.** What do you think are some defining marks of a Christian in general?

**Q2b.** What are the marks that God's people should have, in this passage?  
(v1-2) Why are they important to God?

**Q3.** How is Sabbath-keeping related to righteousness?

**Q4.** What promises are given to eunuchs and foreigners? Why is it significant that these two people groups are specified? (v3-8) (hint: Deut 23:1-6)

**Q5.** What conditions must be fulfilled for eunuchs and foreigners to be included in the fold of God's people? How is this different from the requirements for Jews?

**Q6.** Who might the "foreigners" and "eunuchs" correspond to today? How can we, as a CG, be salt and light to the marginalized in Singapore?

**Q7.** How can we extend the offer of the gospel to outsiders in our own lives?

**Q8.** How does the gospel compel us to overcome our prejudices towards people who are different from us?

**Q9.** In John 10:16, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who gathers the outcasts to join his flock. How can we make our CG more welcoming to people who are different from us, so that we express our unity based on the gospel alone?

## **References**

### **Books for further study on the book of Isaiah**

The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary - J. Alec Motyer

## **Works Cited**

1. Sproul, R. C. *The Reformation Study Bible: New King James Version*. Reformation Trust, a Division of Ligonier Ministries, 2016.
2. Sam Waldron. The Lord's Day: Its Presuppositions, Proofs, Precedents and Practice. <https://www.chapellibrary.org/files/2114/8657/9714/lday.pdf>