



**Sermon Notes 4/28/24**

## **“Reward of the Righteous”**

**How can we enjoy the reward of the righteous?**

1. Maintain justice and do what’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaiah 56:1-3

Deuteronomy 5:13-15

James 2:1-4

2. Invite \_\_\_\_\_ people to come to Jesus.

Isaiah 56:6-8

Acts 8:36-39

3. Encourage men to be \_\_\_\_\_ leaders.

Isaiah 56:10-12

1 Peter 5:1-3

4. Trust in the righteousness of \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaiah 56:1

Romans 1:16-17

1 Peter 2:24-25



# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 50: April 28 – May 5

## Isaiah 56

Chapters 56 to 66 compose the final section of the book of Isaiah. In fact, these chapters form a chiasm. John Oswalt writes,

The chiasitic structure looks like this:

- A. Obedient Foreigners (56:1-8)
- B. Necessity of Ethical Righteousness (56:9-59:15a)
- C. Divine Warrior (59:15b-21)
- D. Jerusalem, Light of the World (60:1-62:12)
- C.' Divine Warrior (63:1-6)
- B.' Necessity of Ethical Righteousness (63:7-66:17)
- A.' Obedient Foreigners (66:18-24) (Oswalt, 607)

While chapter 56 begins a new section in the book, it still has a connection to the previous chapter. Chapter 56 is an example of what it means to accept the great invitation in chapter 55. The more specific commands in chapter 56 expand on the general invitation “Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts” (55:7). When we accept God’s invitation to come to Him through Jesus, we are making a commitment to reflect His righteousness in every area of life.

### Read Isaiah 56

1. What did God command His people to do in verse 1?
2. According to verse 1, why was it important for the people to obey these commands immediately?

Terry Briley notes,

The passage begins with a straightforward declaration. God’s desire for justice (מִשְׁפָּט, *mišpāt*) and righteousness (יְדִיאוֹת, *šedāqāh*) is nothing new (cf. 1:17). He calls his people to reflect his nature. This exhortation, in fact, derives from the fact that the appearance of God’s salvation / righteousness is close at hand. This causal (for) connection continues Isaiah’s perspective that God’s deliverance, though from a human perspective seems delayed, from God’s perspective is imminent. (Briley, 241)

3. What did God promise to do for the one who obeys these commands? (56:1-2)

4. Why did God emphasize keeping the Sabbath in the context of maintaining justice? (56:2, 4, 6)

The laws about keeping the Sabbath were part of the Old Covenant that God made with the people of Israel when He delivered them from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 5:12-15). It was a command to rest and remember that God delivered them from working seven days a week as slaves. However, in Isaiah's time, the leaders of Judah were resting seven days a week and refusing to give their servants a day off (56:10-12).

Barry Webb observes,

For the Sabbath had to do with rest; not just for masters, but for servants as well, and even for working animals and resident foreigners. To keep the Sabbath meant, among other things, that you served the God who created the world and cared for everyone and everything in it... The Sabbath is viewed not as an end in itself, but as a sign that the whole of life was to be lived in submission to God, and that meant sharing his concern for justice. (Webb, 221)

5. Why would foreigners and eunuchs in the Old Testament feel like they could never be a part of God's people? (56:3; see also Deut. 23:1-8)

6. How did God want His people to treat the foreigners and eunuchs who converted to following Yahweh as the one true God? (56:3)

God wants us to know that because of His righteous Servant (Is. 53), His salvation and righteousness are available to all people. God does not exclude people because of their social status or genealogy. Anyone who comes to God through Jesus Christ will be accepted.

7. What did God promise to the faithful eunuchs who were choosing to please Him? (56:4-5)

8. How did God describe the foreigners who were committed to worshiping Yahweh? (56:6)

9. What did God promise to the foreigners who were committed to worshiping Yahweh? (56:7)

10. Why did Jesus quote from this passage in Mark 11:15-17? (56:7)

Ray Ortlund comments,

We draw lines of exclusion that God wants to erase... “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” (Is. 56:7) God’s house of prayer is big and colorful and happily united in Christ, and he wants every one of us to be a part of it. We know from when Jesus kicked the hucksters out of the temple, and quoted this verse, that God is willing to fight for this principle (Mark 11:15-17). (Ortlund, 379)

11. Besides the exiles in captivity, who did God promise to gather into His kingdom? (56:8)

12. How did God describe the leaders of Judah who should have been protecting the people? (56:9-12)

James Smith writes,

Judah was about to be attacked by beasts, i.e., enemy nations. The leaders, however, did not sense the danger. They were like (1) blind watchmen who could not see; (2) dumb watchdogs who could not sound an alarm; and (3) unintelligent shepherds who had no idea what was best for the flock. They were totally given over to greed and self-indulgence. (Smith, 153)

13. How can we reach out to people with disabilities and help them to know that God loves them?

14. How can we help people feel welcomed and loved when they come to church?

15. What does it mean to “love the name of the Lord”?

16. What qualities are important for Christian leaders to have?

18. How will you serve and worship the Lord this week?

**Sources cited:**

Briley, Terry R. *Isaiah: Volume 2*. College Press, 2004.

Ortlund, Ray. *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners*. Crossway, 2005.

Oswalt, John. *The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah*. Zondervan, 2003.

Smith, James. *The Major Prophets*. College Press, 1992.

Webb, Barry. *The Message of Isaiah: On Eagles' Wings*. IVP, 1996.