

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



A Plea for Mercy

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Isa 64:7-11; Is. 63:15-19; Is. 64:1-11; Is. 6:5-7

There are moments in life when we finally run out of excuses. The spiritual masks fall off, the noise quiets down, and we are left standing before God with the painful realization that we cannot fix ourselves. That is where Isaiah brings us in this prayer. Jerusalem is in ruins. The holy city has become a wasteland. The people who were called to reflect the beauty and holiness of God now look nothing like Him. Isaiah does not deny the reality of sin, rebellion, or judgment. Instead, he confesses it openly. *"All of us have become like one who is unclean... all of us wither like a leaf"* (Is. 64:5). Yet right in the middle of despair comes one of the most hope-filled phrases in the chapter: *"But now, ADONAI..."* (Is. 64:7).

That phrase changes everything. Isaiah recognizes that although their condition is terrible, God's character has not changed. The people may be broken, but the Potter is still faithful. Israel may have failed, but the Father has not stopped being a Father. Isaiah's prayer becomes a desperate plea for mercy rooted not in human goodness, but in the unchanging nature of God. This is the heart of biblical intercession: not pretending sin is small, but believing that God's compassion is greater. The same God who once cleansed Isaiah's lips is still able to restore His people.

1. WE ARE BROKEN CLAY, BUT HE IS STILL THE POTTER

Isaiah cries out, *"But now, ADONAI, You are our Father. We are the clay and You are our potter"* (Is. 64:7). This is not an attempt to blame God for Israel's failures. Rather, it is an appeal to His covenant love and sovereign care. The clay cannot reshape itself. Broken pottery cannot restore its own beauty. If restoration is going to happen, it must come from the hands of the One who formed them in the first place. Their hope is not in their righteousness, because their righteousness has failed them. Their hope is in the Father who still calls them His own.

There is deep comfort in this truth for us today. Many people spend years trying to repair themselves through effort, discipline, religion, or performance. But eventually we discover that human strength cannot heal a heart enslaved to sin, fear, pride, or bitterness. Like Isaiah, we must come to the place where we say, "Lord, I cannot reshape myself. I need You." The beautiful thing about the Potter is that He does not abandon the clay simply because it has become marred. He is patient enough to remake it. He is compassionate enough to begin again. The Father's heart still invites prodigals home, and the Potter's hands are still able to restore what seems ruined beyond repair.

2. MERCY BEGINS WHEN "ALL OF US" CONFESS TOGETHER

One of the most striking parts of Isaiah's prayer is how often he says *kulanu*—"all of us." *"All of us have become unclean."* *"All of us wither like a leaf."* *"All of us are the work of Your hand."* *"All of us are Your people."* Isaiah does not stand at a distance pointing fingers at "those sinners." Even as a prophet and intercessor, he includes himself in the confession. He remembers what happened when he encountered the holiness of God in Isaiah 6. In that moment, he did not say,

“They are unclean.” He said, *“Oy to me! For I am ruined!”* (Is. 6:5). True intercession is always marked by humility.

This challenges the spirit of self-righteousness that so easily creeps into our lives. It is far easier to identify the sins of culture, society, or other people than it is to honestly face our own need for mercy. Yet revival never begins with pride. It begins when God’s people stop pretending. It begins when we stop comparing ourselves to others and instead stand before the holiness of God. Modern culture teaches us to defend ourselves, justify ourselves, and curate an image of ourselves. But the Gospel invites us into something different: honest confession and total dependence on grace. The good news is that the God who touched Isaiah’s lips with cleansing fire is still able to cleanse hearts today. What He did for one, He can do for *kulanu*—for all of us.

3. THE RUINS REVEAL OUR NEED FOR GOD’S COMPASSION

Isaiah then looks at the devastation around him: *“Your holy cities became a wilderness... Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful House... has been burned with fire”* (Is. 64:9–10). The outward destruction reflected an inward spiritual condition. The city that was meant to display the beauty of God now looked abandoned and ruined. Isaiah recognizes that sin always leaves devastation behind. The people stubbornly clung to their own ways, and the result was emptiness, loss, and desolation. Everything they truly treasured had become a wasteland.

Yet even here, Isaiah’s prayer does not end in hopelessness. His final plea is, *“Will You restrain Yourself at these things, ADONAI? Will You stay silent?”* (Is. 64:11). He knows the only hope left is the mercy of God. This is where many believers find themselves today. There are ruins in marriages, families, ministries, churches, and hearts. There are places where shame, compromise, fear, or stubbornness have left devastation behind. But Isaiah teaches us not to run from God in those moments. Instead, we are invited to cry out for mercy. God’s compassion is still His most characteristic quality. He may discipline His people, but He does not abandon them. The same Lord who allowed Jerusalem to be rebuilt is still able to restore ruined lives and awaken hearts that have grown cold.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah’s prayer ends without neat resolution, because sometimes intercession lives in the tension between devastation and hope. The people are still broken. The city is still in ruins. Yet Isaiah refuses to stop calling on the Lord. He keeps praying because he knows God’s mercy is greater than Israel’s failure. He understands that the story is not over as long as the Father still hears the cries of His children. The watchman on the wall continues to pray because he believes God is faithful to His promises, even when circumstances seem hopeless.

Perhaps today you feel the weight of ruins in your own life. Maybe there are places where sin, exhaustion, disappointment, or stubbornness have left you feeling dry and desolate. The invitation of Isaiah 64 is not to hide from God, but to return to Him. The Father still welcomes prodigals. The Potter still restores broken clay. The Lord still responds to cries for mercy. So bring Him the honest confession. Bring Him the weariness. Bring Him the rubble. And call on Him again. He is still compassionate, still faithful, and still able to do what we cannot do for ourselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the phrase "*But now, ADONAI, You are our Father*" so important in the middle of Isaiah's confession and despair?
2. What does the imagery of the Potter and the clay teach us about dependence on God?
3. Isaiah repeatedly says "*all of us.*" How does this challenge pride and self-righteousness within God's people?
4. In what areas of your own life have you been trying to "reshape yourself" instead of surrendering to the Potter's hands?
5. What "ruins" in your life or community need to be brought before God again in prayer and trust?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, we come before You honestly today. Like Isaiah, we confess that we cannot heal or restore ourselves. Too often we cling to our own ways and find ourselves weary, dry, and broken. Yet You remain our Father, our Potter, and our Redeemer. Thank You that Your mercy is greater than our failure and that Your compassion has not run dry.

Lord, take the ruined places in our hearts and remake them according to Your purposes. Teach us humility, repentance, and perseverance in prayer. Let us not hide from You in shame, but run to You with confidence in Your love. Restore what has become desolate, and make our lives a reflection of Your holiness and beauty once again.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.