



# First Baptist Church Selmer

THE QUESTIONS OF CHRISTMAS • HOW JESUS DID IT! • ISAIAH 59 • 12/28/2025

## MAIN POINT

It is only through God reaching down to us that we have received salvation through Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What is the most hopeful season of life you have experienced? What was happening?**

**Have you lost that hope today? Why or why not?**

**How do you usually react to difficult circumstances? Why?**

The way we react in the dark season of our lives reveals the source of our hope. Faith is not what we say we believe; it is what we live out. For some people, hope is found in a spouse, a job, or even children. However, the hope that we see in Isaiah 59 is a powerful, lasting hope built on Jesus.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 59:1-9.

*1 "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; 2 but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood and*

*your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. 4 No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity. 5 They hatch adders' eggs; they weave the spider's web; he who eats their eggs dies, and from one that is crushed a viper is hatched. 6 Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. 7 Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. 8 The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths, they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace.*

*9 Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom." (ESV)*

Isaiah 59 looks at the state of Judah and how the people struggled to trust and hope in the Lord. Isaiah spoke to them about their sins, transgressions, and iniquities, which kept them from seeing God as the one who could redeem them.

**What symbolic human language did Isaiah use to describe God? What do you think this language conveys?**

**How can the character of God that Isaiah expresses in these verses impact your life?**

**What did Isaiah say about humans? Are we still like the humans that Isaiah described? Why or why not?**

Isaiah describes God using the terms hands, ear, and face. The language does not mean that God has physical hands. It is referring to God's ability, His nature, and His will. There is nothing out of the reach of God's hands or ears. God can save anyone, but the problem is that people often do not realize they need to be saved. They do not realize how significant their separation from God truly is.

In the words of Sinclair Ferguson, "Thinking that I deserve heaven is a sure sign I have no understanding of the gospel." The incarnation and ultimate death of Jesus show us clearly that sin is not merely an honest mistake but holds eternal consequences. We are not sinners because we sin, but we sin because we are sinners. Isaiah points out that sin separates us from God. There is no room for the single thought of a self-righteous spirit in the heart of a believer that states, "I am good enough". Many people function as if they don't need saving, but God's Word is clear: *"men will not cover themselves with what they make."*

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 59:10-15.

*10 "We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men. 11 We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us.*

*12 For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: 13 transgressing, and denying the Lord, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.*

*14 Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. 15 Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice." (ESV)*

**How does physical language in these verses describe the spiritual state of man? Which phrase resonated the most with you and why?**

**Why did Isaiah use three words: transgressions, iniquities, and sins to describe their actions?**

**What does this say about the source of separation from God?**

**What would our hope look like without the work of God?**

The state of man was described in less than glowing terms. Man is clueless as to where hope and salvation can be found. Humans are mired in iniquities, moral uncleanness, transgressions, high-handed rebellion, and sins, missing the mark. The problem is that man cannot reach the standard set, and that is the source of separation. We all fall short as Romans 3:23 states, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Isaiah states, *"The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice."* If only God could do something about it...

God can do something about it, and He did. God reached down to us *"that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). The sinfulness of mankind was no match for the love of God and His ability to reconcile those who would call upon the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 59:16-21.

16 "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. 17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. 18 According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. 19 So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the Lord drives.

20 'And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,' declares the Lord. 21 'And as for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the Lord: 'My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,' says the Lord, 'from this time forth and forevermore.' (ESV)

**Which article of clothing the worn by the Lord stands out to you the most?  
Why?**

**Take a look at Ephesians 6:13-17. What is the relationship between the armor God wears and the armor He asks us to wear? How can this impact our hope?**

**How did Isaiah describe God's judgment? Why does God judge iniquity and sin?**

**What do you think are the different challenges we face in recognizing Jesus as our hope compared to the challenges of Isaiah's time?**

God has the right and the will to judge sins and transgressions. However, the hope that all believers in every age have is found in Christ, who is the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus came as avenger and redeemer to buy back humans despite their sins, taking on sin and death for us that we may receive salvation and righteousness.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What are the sins that most often reign in your life that keep you from hoping and trusting in God? How can this passage help you this week?**

**What are some practical things that you can do during this season of life to focus on Christ as your hope?**

**Is there someone on your heart right now that needs to know the hope Christ gives? How can you create the opportunity to share it with them this week?**

## PRAYER

Close your time with prayer. Ask God to reveal the sins that cause separation. Thank God that even in our dark moments, He is still present. Pray that God would be the hope for your group members, rather than family, a job, recognition, or anything else.

## COMMENTARY

### | ISAIAH 59

59:1. This oracle begins with an affirmation that God can hear and act, characteristics that contrast with the powerless idols that tempted Israel (44:6-23).

59:3-4. A selection of the sins that separated God from His people is listed. The list begins with acts of violence and moves on to deceit and injustice. They were guilty in thought and action (they conceive trouble and give birth to iniquity).

59:5-6. These sinners produced viper's eggs. Eggs promise life, but these eggs produced death. Thus, the works of God's people may look promising, but they kill. In a similar vein, God's people produce spider's webs. They may look beautiful in their intricacy, but they have no practical value.

59:7. Again (v. 4), the oracle emphasizes that the people are sinful in thought and deed. Indeed, they do not merely walk in *"the advice of the wicked"* (Ps 1:1); they show their eagerness when they run after evil.

59:8. Isaiah used the words *"paths"* and *"roads"* to refer to the course of a person's life. Proverbs 1-9 talks about two paths: a straight path that leads to God and life, and a crooked path that leads to death. Isaiah described God's people as choosing the latter, and thus they were headed toward death (they will not know peace).

59:10. Chapter 58 has already described the way to light in obedience to God, but they appear incapable of getting there on their own.

59:11. Bears growl out of anger, and doves make a sound like the groans of a suffering person. These metaphors suggest that God's people were angry and sad about their present state.

59:12-15a. The people had no one but themselves to blame for their lamentable situation, and they knew it. They had sinned against God by perverting justice in their society (in the public square).

59:15b-16. The section begins with a statement of God's recognition of human injustice and the offense that He takes at it. It also goes on to describe His amazement that no human was interceding on behalf of the people. Perhaps the intercession of Moses (Ex 33) or the other prophets is what is in mind here. In any case, God proclaims that in the absence of such a human intercessor, He Himself will step into the gap between His people and Himself. Indeed, God's hand is not *"too short"* (Isa 59:1). His arm reaches out to save His people.

59:17. To save His people, God assumed the guise of a warrior. However, His armor and His weapons are not physical but spiritual. The description of God's armor and weapons remind believers of Paul's description of the spiritual weapons available to Christians as they wage battle against *"the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens"* (Eph 6:12).

59:18-19. God's enemies do not get off without punishment. The mention of the coast lands indicates that the far-flung nations, indeed the whole world (west and east), are in mind here. The whole world will fear the name of Yahweh after His work of retribution.

59:20-21. The climax of this oracle announces the future arrival of God the Redeemer at Zion, God's holy mountain in Jerusalem. He had abandoned Zion in anticipation of its destruction at the Babylonian captivity (Ezek 11-19), but His war against sin will result in His return. It is specifically to the repentant that He will come. He will reestablish His covenant with them. God's Spirit will be given to His people to cleanse their mouths (reminiscent of Isaiah's cleansing at his prophetic commission; chap. 6) so they will proclaim the glory of God to future generations.