

Isaiah 1-5 Introduction How can one be spared judgement and live happily ever after?	Isaiah 6-39 New Creation God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	Isaiah 40-55 New relationship God will restore his people from exile to a permanent relationship	Isaiah 56-66 Who God will choose the humble and reject the proud
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Isaiah 58:1-59:21 (NIVUK)

Sunday 12 April 2026

58 ‘Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

1a. YHWH rejects those who serve themselves and oppress others... (58:1-5)

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

²For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

- despite appearing to fast and worship

They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.

³“Why have we fasted,” they say,
“and you have not seen it?”

Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?”

‘Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.

⁴Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

⁵Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶‘Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

1b. ...but blesses those who serve others (58:6-14)

⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter –
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

⁸Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness^a will go before you,
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.



**Andover
Bible
Church**

^a Or *your righteous One*

Isaiah 56-66	<u>56:1-8</u> Any humble 'outsider'	<u>56:9-57:21</u> The lowly and contrite, even if extremely wicked	<u>58:1-14</u> The selfless, not the selfish	<u>59:1-21</u> Jews who acknowledge their many sins	<u>60:1-22</u> In wealth, comfort and luxury	<u>61:1-11</u> With no more sadness	<u>62:1-12</u> In a secure relationship with God
Who gets in?							
Where do they end up?							

⁹ Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: here am I.
‘If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
¹⁰ and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
¹¹ The LORD will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
¹² Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.
¹³ ‘If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the LORD’s holy day honourable,
and if you honour it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the LORD,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.’
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Variations on *humility*

Isaiah 56-66 describes humility in a number of ways! Last week we saw:

- binding oneself to, loving and serving YHWH
- being lowly and contrite, mourning sin

What do you make of adding the idea of *servicing others within God’s people* in Isaiah 58?

2a. YHWH’s lack of blessing is due to his people’s extreme sin (59:1-8)

59 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.
² But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.
³ For your hands are stained with blood,
your fingers with guilt.
Your lips have spoken falsely,
and your tongue mutters wicked things.
⁴ No one calls for justice;
no one pleads a case with integrity.

<u>63:1-6</u> On YHWH's side, after he executes his enemies	<u>63:7-64:12</u> Those who pray like Isaiah's model humble prayer	<u>65:1-16</u> The humble, not the proud	<u>65:17-25</u> In a wonderful New Creation (compilation!)	<u>66:1-6</u> Those with humility, not external religion	<u>66:7-14</u> In YHWH's peace and flourishing	<u>66:15-24</u> On the right side of YHWH's judgement day
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They rely on empty arguments, they utter lies;
they conceive trouble and give birth to evil.

⁵ They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider's web.

Whoever eats their eggs will die,
and when one is broken, an adder is hatched.

⁶ Their cobwebs are useless for clothing;
they cannot cover themselves with what they make.

Their deeds are evil deeds,
and acts of violence are in their hands.

⁷ Their feet rush into sin;
they are swift to shed innocent blood.

They pursue evil schemes;
acts of violence mark their ways.

⁸ The way of peace they do not know;
there is no justice in their paths.

They have turned them into crooked roads;
no one who walks along them will know peace.

⁹ So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us.
We look for light, but all is darkness;
for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.

¹⁰ Like the blind we grope along the wall,
feeling our way like people without eyes.

At midday we stumble as if it were twilight;
among the strong, we are like the dead.

¹¹ We all growl like bears;
we moan mournfully like doves.

We look for justice, but find none;
for deliverance, but it is far away.

¹² For our offences are many in your sight,
and our sins testify against us.

Our offences are ever with us,
and we acknowledge our iniquities:

¹³ rebellion and treachery against the LORD,
turning our backs on our God,

inciting revolt and oppression,
uttering lies our hearts have conceived.

¹⁴ So justice is driven back,
and righteousness stands at a distance;
truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.

2b. Isaiah confesses and laments God's people's sin (59:9-15a)

- sinful as a whole

- but also personal responsibility

2c. YHWH will bring eternal justice (59:15b-21)

¹⁵ Truth is nowhere to be found,
and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.
The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.
¹⁶ He saw that there was no one,
he was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so his own arm achieved salvation for him,
and his own righteousness sustained him.
¹⁷ He put on righteousness as his breastplate,
and the helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on the garments of vengeance
and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.
¹⁸ According to what they have done,
so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes;
he will repay the islands their due.
¹⁹ From the west, people will fear the name of the LORD,
and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory.
For he will come like a pent-up flood
that the breath of the LORD drives along.^b
²⁰ ‘The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,’ declares the LORD.
²¹ ‘As for me, this is my covenant with them,’ says the LORD. ‘My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants – from this time on and for ever,’ says the LORD.

Vindictory justice
We are used to YHWH’s *benevolent blessing*. But how comfortable are we with YHWH’s *vindictory justice*?

For reflection on Isaiah 58-59

- 58:1-5 1. In what way(s) do you feel ‘God, why have we humbled ourselves and you haven’t noticed’?
- 58:6-14 2. How do you feel about the idea of ‘serving others within God’s people’ appearing in the OT?
3. Suppose a friend mishears Isaiah 58 as *salvation by making sacrifices for church family*. How would you correct this view?
4. What particular details did you find compelling? Why?
- 59:1-8 5. What particular descriptions of Judah’s sin caught your eye? Why?
- 59:9-15a 6. What aspects of Isaiah’s prayer do you find easier to pray? Which parts do you need help to improve?
- 59:15b-21 7. How do you feel about the language/idea of God’s *vindictory justice*?
8. What promises do you most look forward to? Why?
- Prayer 9. Where do you need to repent or pray?
10. How might your church family help you?

^b Or *When enemies come in like a flood, / the Spirit of the LORD will put them to flight*

Next Sunday (19 April)
- Isaiah 60-61
- No car parking restrictions