

Part II, Lesson 31

Isaiah

The Lord is Salvation

Peace

Isaiah

57:14-21

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex

Curriculum

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Peace

Isaiah 57:14-21

Many people think of peace as the absence of war. For them, there is war or peace. However, the Bible talks about peace as much more than that. According to Strong's Concordance, "The Old Testament word *Shalom* (Peace) means completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord." Shalom means to be complete, perfect and full. For our lesson today, let's think of it as being complete...at peace with all things...healthy and whole. Read Isaiah 57:14-21.

The opening words should remind us of Isaiah 40:3, "A voice of one calling; In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God." In today's reading, the preparation is to be made for God's people. The repetition of the phrase "build up," tells us that this is something very important. This voice speaking is one to which all should be listening.

The command is that all obstacles should be removed for the people to return to God. It is not right for anyone to place barriers between God's people and God Himself. This happens when humans teach things that are not right. Sometimes teachers give the impression that people must earn the right to be heard by God. The way they tell it, doing good things or being good is necessary to get God to love and save you. What teachers should be doing is removing obstacles that keep us from a right relationship with God.

God's invitation is to come. His instruction to those who would get in the way is to not only get out of the way, but also to clear the way, do what is necessary to see that the way to God is level and safe.

Then we are told who is making this statement. The "high and lofty One...the One who has no beginning and no end is speaking. The one "whose name is holy" is speaking. Then He said an amazing thing. He said that He lived "in a high and holy place," but He also lives with the humble...actually, "the lowly in spirit." The people of Judah understood that language. They knew who the "high and lofty One" was. This was like an extension of God's name to them. When He told them that He lived "forever," they had no doubt about who was speaking. But, there was more. This One who lived beyond where humans lived, this One who was so far above where humans lived, this One who lived the truly holy life, also lived with humans.

He said that He lived "with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit." The word "with" has a much fuller meaning in Hebrew, the language Isaiah used. It means "at the side of." So, God is right by the side of the person who is humble and contrite. "Lowly in Spirit," pictures the person who does not think himself or herself as better than anyone else, and understands that they are far from righteous and worthy of God's love and care. "Contrite," pictures a person who is apologetic for their sinfulness and sorrowful for their bad behavior.

When we live in that reality, that is, knowing that we need help from outside ourselves, God is ready to live in us. The promise He made to these people was strengthened in the New Testament. In Galatians 2:20, Paul said that he no longer lived, but "Christ lives in me." We believe that when we accept Jesus as our Savior, God's Holy Spirit comes into us and lives there as proof that we are the children of God.

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God then promises that He will not always be the accuser. Some people live in fear of God and worry about what He is going to do to them next. They only see God as someone who watches their sin. They don't see Him as the loving father who wants only the best for His children. God said the He was not going to be angry forever. Israel had disobeyed Him over and over. They had sinned so much that God allowed them to be conquered and taken captive by their enemies, but that is over. They are back home and God doesn't want them to be browbeaten and frightened of their own shadow.

Israel will be healed. God will do several things for them:

First, He will guide them. They had wandered in the desert after their rescue from Egypt. God had led them through that. They had been captive in Babylon, and God led them out of that. They were looking at rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, rebuilding the Temple, and restoring their national identity. God would guide them through that.

Second, God would comfort them. They came home to a city and nation that was in ruins. They had left people behind in Babylon. They had been told how great Judah and Jerusalem had been in the old days. They needed comfort, and God promised to provide that, as only God can.

Third, God would create praise on their lips. Their song of joy would be "Peace, peace to those far and near." God was going to give them hope, a hope for that "Shalom" spoken of at the beginning of our lesson today. And the Shalom, the peace, would be for everyone. There were still many of the Israelites in Babylon, as well as in many other places to which they had scattered. So there was Peace, peace to those far away. There was also Peace, peace to those who were near. What a great song.

In verse nineteen, God repeated His promise to heal His people, but there is also a warning to those who continue in sin. There is no peace for them.

The wicked, those who reject God, are like the ocean stirred up by a storm. The wind blows, and the sea is stirred up. It tosses itself and rolls, bringing up mud and debris from the bottom of the ocean. It cannot rest.

The picture here is of a person who is trying to make it all alone. They have no anchor. They get blown around, disturbed, and find themselves out of control. Their worst self shows up, like the mud from the bottom of the ocean. There is no peace for them. What a sad picture!

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Page Three

Scripture Memory: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." Isaiah 57:15b

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to trust God above all else.

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Student Worksheet

Listen during the lesson for this information:

1. List some words that describe what *Shalom* means in the Old Testament.
2. It is not right for anyone to place _____ between God's _____ and God, Himself.
3. What teachers should be doing is _____ obstacles that keep us from a right _____ with God.
4. Who made the statement that makes up our Scripture lesson for today?
5. Where else does God live?
6. God said that Israel would be healed. What three specific things did He say He would do for them?
7. To what did God compare the state of the wicked?
8. There is no _____ for them. What a _____ picture!

Page Four

Scripture Memory: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. Isaiah 57:15b

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.