

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends
God Is Stranger: Isaiah and the Stranger, 06/09/2019

The Big Idea

Many times, the pursuit of God's ways and will in the world is met with opposition and a lack of success. Why would God send us on a mission that He knew would be unsuccessful? So often we judge things by objectives and measurements, but God's view of success is different than the world's view of success. Isaiah challenges us to remember that when it's all said and done there are only a couple things that matter: the worship of God and the dignity of all people. Or as Jesus put it, "Love God; Love Neighbor."

Where we are in the Bible

Isaiah 1:10-17; 6; 58. The book of Isaiah is a long, drawn-out word of prophecy that condemns God's people of idolatry and injustice, warns them of impending attacks from Assyria and Babylon if they keep it up, but ultimately leads towards hope and restoration. It was written roughly from 750 to 695 BC, and coincides with events we find in 2 Kings 15-20.

Other scriptures to consider

Leviticus 23:22

James 1:27

Matthew 22:36-40

Galatians 3:28

Romans 12:1-5

Finding a bit of ourselves

- In Isaiah, chapter 6, we find the dramatic call of God to the prophet followed by a reality check that the people will not respond. Have you ever experienced this? Have you "beat a dead horse" and people still don't get it? How does that make you feel?
- One of the main problems that Isaiah is called to speak against is injustice. Do a little digging in chapters 1 & 58 and list the specific charges of injustice against the people.
- Where do you see the same injustices today? What are some injustices in the world that you have taken notice of? Have you contributed to any of the problems, even indirectly? (i.e. purchased clothing manufactured by unjust labor practices).

Where do we go from here?

- Recognizing and glorifying God as God is what worship is all about. In what ways do we tend to make worship about ourselves?
- If worship is more than just on Sunday morning, what are some other ways you can worship and glorify God?
- We often think of justice in terms of what we do (soup kitchens, outreach, etc.), but in what ways have you practiced injustice by simply doing nothing?

Prayer focus

Spend a few minutes worshipping God in your own words by praying the following:

- God, I praise you because _____.
- Lord, You are a God of justice because _____.

