

## Isaiah 59

VV.1-2: God is all-powerful. One of his many names and titles is El Shaddai (The all-mighty God). This is first mentioned in Genesis 17:1.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD (YEHOWAH) appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai) ; walk before me, and be thou perfect. (Genesis 17:1)

There are two repeated truths throughout the Bible. God is unlimited and loving and perfect; while men are weak and selfish and self-defeating. We will never stop sinning until the day we die. One definition of sin are the things we do to turn away from God. The Bible is written to bring together God and men; who are traveling in opposite directions. The issue is never that we have gone too far into sin. God is omnipotent; which means there are no limitations to his power to save. God's hand is not shorter or weaker than distance that separates us by our wrongdoing. God is omniscient; which means that God is also fully aware of all thoughts and fears within our innermost being. He is not in the dark about our desires or our predicaments. How many times have we thought: 'Now I've really done it?' That little voice is not God. The only issue is this: Are we willing to receive what God is offering?

Thou know my sitting down and mine uprising, thou understand my thoughts far away. Thou compass my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou know it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: Even there shall thy hand lead me,

and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hides not from thee: but the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. (Psalm 139:2-12)

And Samuel said, Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou have rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

SMALL SIN IS SAME A BIG SIN THERE IS NO DIFFERENTIATION

The comment about God's face being hidden from us is just a way of saying that in truth, we have turned around; and we are looking in the opposite direction from God. God does not run away or hide himself from us when we sin. The path of life and death is always before us. We only become a lost cause when we refuse to look to God's face for direction healing. God also gives all men increasing pain as we go further away from him as he desires that none perish.

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26-27)

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee. And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day: thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine brethren shall be captivated, and shalt see them, thou shalt not forsake them; for they are thy brethren, and thou shalt love them as thyself: for they are thy brethren, and thou shalt love them as thyself.

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life and the length of thy days: that thou may dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deuteronomy 30)

VV.3-18 For reconciliation to begin Between men and God we must become committed to intellectual honesty. Men's logic takes them from bad to worse. Before the flood men were incredibly depraved and living in violence. After the flood there was a difference between those who followed God and those who dismissed all direction. Job recorded men in ancient days living like animals without names. These countryside homeless people were so degraded and worthless that their value was less than a sheepdog to Job.

But now those younger than I mock me, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock. "Indeed, what *good* was the strength of their hands to me? Vigor had perished from them. "From want and famine they are gaunt Who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation, Who pluck mallow by the bushes, And whose food is the root of the broom shrub. "They are driven from the community: They shout against them as *against* a thief. So that they dwell in dreadful valleys, In holes of the earth and of the rocks. "Among the bushes they cry out: Under the nettles they are gathered together. "Fools, even those without a name. They were scourged from the land. (job 30:1-8)

HUMAN BEINGS  
BEING TREATED  
LIKE ANIMALS

Men do not like to make u-turns. John the Baptist called the entire region down to the riverside to confess their sins. We have to be honest about who God is; and what we are. We cannot know who we are until we know how clearly that our ways are just for our own pleasure and survival. We do not trust God because down deep we

know that we are untrustworthy. All men project their own image upon God.

That is why we must constantly set the truth before us. The Bible is called a sword because it is penetrating and painful to come to terms with our own nature. God's word is only comforting to us when we stop resisting the truth. God is making a revelation in this chapter about mankind. Our actions towards each other demonstrate how we handle the small amount of power that we have. Do we understand God's mercy on us to a degree that we are willing to share the tiny bit of mercy that we are able to share with others?

"When you have finished Paying all the tithes of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the Orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. You shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred *portion* from *my* house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all your commandments which you have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your Commandments. (Deuteronomy 26:12-13)

How ridiculous is it that way down inside we want to be like God; and yet the miniscule power we have is used to step all over each other instead of healing each other? The Garden of Eden was a setting where man had the maximum power allocation in the absence of curses. Our capacity to ignore grace and become fixated on our own way was revealed. Man needs an imperfect and fallen world to become saved. We need to learn that we cannot save ourselves or improve our lot in life. The road of hard knocks is the difficulty of receiving truth. All of the subsequent setbacks for mankind are only medicine for healing. It takes a tested and humbled man to come to

terms with the truth that we are men under authority. We absolutely have a responsibility to care for our neighbor.

And the LORD said unto Cain. Where is Abel thy brother? And he said. I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said. What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. (Genesis 4:9-10)

How can we believe that we are in communion with God, while we inflict damage on precious souls who God loves?

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3)

God does not run away when we sin. We do. It is our sin that separates us from God. Our sin blinds us and numbs us.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou might be justified when you speak, and be clear when thou judge. Behold, I was shaped in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:1-7)

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost says, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart: and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. (Hebrews 3:7-11)

For the people turns not unto him that smites them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. (Isaiah 9:13)

Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them: (Hebrews 10:15-16)

It seems that some of us are tested differently than others. Some are raised in homes of abuse. Some have little exposure to the gospel. Many are raised in homes and neighborhoods of pervasive fornication and drug abuse and unemployment. How can that child be expected to grow up with the same potential to be saved as a Brady Bunch kid? There is a blessing in knowing that there is pain in being away from God. It is actually more dangerous to falsely-believe that we are *moral enough*.

And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us. Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression: (Deuteronomy 26:6-7)

There is a natural tendency in all men to break away from their family and make their own way in this world.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions: (Hebrews 10:31-32)

The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. (Ezekiel 18:20)

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)

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There are sins of commission and sins of omission. The sins we commit are according to our lusts. The sins of what we omit are from our lack of love for others.

Therefore to him that knows to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

Sin leads to more and worse sin. Sin leads to increasing pain.

Which now of these three, think thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (Luke 10:36-37)

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Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised:) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: (Hebrews 10:23-24)

Evil leads to more evil. Good leads to more good. We are heading back into prophetic times where there are more public spectacles of good and evil seen as larger-than life icons. We are getting whittled down to a church of true believers. The coming sacrifices to remain true will separate us from this world. Hard times and persecution are great faith builders.

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What do you say for yourself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. (John 1:22-23)

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubles Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the

WE'VE NOW COMING BACK INTO THOSE TIMES

WHEN PHAROSES ARE SPEAKING OUT

prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. (1 Kings 18:17-21)

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. (Jonah 3:4-5)

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6-7)

VV.19-21 God is health and life and truth and peace. He is only thing that can keep mankind from destroying himself. For that to happen God needs to clean house and start over from time to time. The trash just gets piled too high. One day Jesus will return to this earth to restore the planet and its inhabitants. That healthy picture includes having God's Spirit and heart within us. We have to have one mind with God to make it.

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him: and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:14-16)