

# (Through the Bible) Isaiah 56-60

by Chuck Smith

---

*God's salvation is near, and we should live with a sense of urgency and purpose, keeping judgment and doing justice, and resting in Jesus as our Sabbath.*

**Duration:** 1:22:11

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:3-6, Isaiah 55:8-11, Isaiah 56:1, Isaiah 56:7, Isaiah 56:9, Isaiah 61:1-2

**Topics:** "Social Justice", "Eternal Judgment"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that God wants us to live a life of fairness and honesty. He urges us to do justice and keep judgment, and to refrain from cheating or taking advantage of others. The speaker highlights that if everyone treated each other fairly, the world would be a glorious place. However, the reality is that there are always people willing to exploit others. The speaker also mentions that our time on earth is short, and our actions during this time determine our eternity. The sermon references biblical passages, such as Isaiah 58:6-8, which emphasize the importance of helping the oppressed, feeding the hungry, and clothing the poor. The speaker also criticizes those who prioritize their own gain and welfare over the needs of others.

---

## Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Isaiah 56. In Isaiah 55, the Lord speaks of this glorious, everlasting salvation and the glories of His greatness, His power, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than your thoughts. The blessing and the power of the Word of God, as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven returns not thither.

The water is the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. So is my word, the Lord declares, that goes out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please.

It shall prosper in the thing in which I sent it. Now as we get into chapter 56, the Lord is giving to us more or less some of the conditions of our being a part of that everlasting kingdom and salvation. Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come and my righteousness to be revealed.

Now, even at the time of Isaiah, there were those encouragements to doing the right thing in light of the fact that the Lord's salvation was near. All through succeeding generations, God has wanted, I believe,

each generation to live with that consciousness of the nearness of the coming of the Lord's kingdom. Now, Peter tells us that there would come a day when men would begin to scoff at the nearness of the coming kingdom of God, declaring that all things have just continued as they were from the beginning.

But Peter says of this they are willfully ignorant that God did upset the world at one time in judgment by sending the flood. They are willfully ignorant of God's intervention by catastrophe. And then Peter goes on to explain that God is not slack concerning His promises.

That is the promise of the coming kingdom and the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness. He's not going to fail in that promise. But that He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

So the reason for the delay, God's waiting for man's turning to Him. Now, we were living in Prescott in the first church that we had. We had a very fascinating lady who, as far as I can recall, never did attend our church but professed to have a great love and interest in my wife and I. And she was a very interesting character.

She had spent many years in China as a missionary and was a nurse at the Whipple Veterans Hospital. And I would start to talk to her about the nearness of the coming of the Lord and she would say, Well, yes, I believe the Lord is coming very soon for me. She said, I'm getting up into the years and I won't be around much longer so the coming of the Lord is very soon for me.

And she had that kind of a concept of the nearness of the coming of the Lord. Well, in a sense that is very true. God's coming for each of us is soon.

None of us are going to be around here too long. And if He does not come collectively for His body, the church, even so, our time on earth is so short. What is life? It is as a vapor that appears for a season or a moment and then vanishes.

It's like the grass out there in the field which today grows up and flourishes and tomorrow is dead. And so is the short span of our life, especially when you compare the time that we are here with eternity. So the span of man upon this earth is so short.

And yet in this short span of time, my eternity is being established. My destiny is being determined in this short time that I am here. That's rather awesome to consider.

So, it behooves me to spend whatever time I have walking with the Lord, serving the Lord, and in a total commitment of myself, my energies, my life to Him because time is short. So, for Isaiah to be saying, Hey, the time of the Lord is close. It is for each one of us.

The time of the Lord is always very close. And thus we should live with that consciousness knowing that I have only one life and it will soon be past and only what I do for Jesus Christ is going to last. Everything else is wood, hay and stubble.

Everything else is going to burn. Everything else is not going to have any value at all in the eternal realm. That which I've done for myself, that which I've done for the community, that which I've done for the muscular dystrophy or whatever, not going to last.

The only lasting things are that which I have done for Jesus Christ for His glory and in His name. So time is short. This is a perpetual message to each generation.

Your time is short. Now, how does God want us to live? He wants us to keep judgment and do justice. God wants us to live a fair and honest life.

God doesn't want us cheating. God doesn't want us conniving and taking advantage of someone else. God wants us to do the right thing.

Do justice. Keep judgment. Do the right thing.

That's what God is asking and requiring of us and surely that is not too much to require and that is a reasonable requirement for men. What a glorious world this would be if everyone treated each other fairly, honestly, justly. But that is not the condition of the world, you say, and you are so right.

We find that there are always men who are willing to take an advantage of their position and gouge someone else because they find that they have them at an advantage. It is always a fearsome thing to be at a disadvantage to another person because you can be sure that they're going to take every advantage that they can over you. Look what they're doing now with the oil.

Knowing that we need the oil so desperately, they're taking advantage and they're just hiking the prices and becoming inordinately wealthy. So much money they really don't know how to spend it or what to do with it. And yet, there is a world that is suffering and in need and the third world is actually being destroyed and starving because of these people who have taken advantage of the fact that they possess the oil in their nation and that the world is short on oil and so taking advantage of that fact, they are gouging the world, totally disregarding those unfortunate people who cannot afford the inflation that has resulted from the increased oil prices.

But that's only one example and not to just point at one group. That is so common with human nature. If you get in a disadvantaged position, there are men who are willing to take advantage of you.

Jesus said, Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites because they were taking advantage of people. They were taking advantage of the little widows. Woe unto you lawyers.

They were taking advantage of people's ills, of people's problems and becoming rich over other people's problems. Man is not fair. God wants us to be fair.

And so God cries out for justice and for judgment because He said, My salvation is near to come. And blessed is the man that does this. Now, God just sort of pronounces a man who will be fair, a man who will be just, a man who will be honest.

He will be blessed of God. And the son of man that lays hold on it, the person that grabs this concept and says, Yes, I will do unto others as I would have them to do unto me. I will be fair.

I will not take advantage of a position that I may have of superiority or whatever, but I will be fair. God is always for the underdog. God is always standing up for the oppressed and for the poor.

And if we are guilty of oppressing people or impoverishing people, then we will find ourselves opposed to God. Blessed is the man that keepeth Sabbath from polluting it and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Now, the blessing upon the man that keepeth the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is an ordinance that God established with the nation of Israel as a covenant with that race of people. When God gave the law of the Sabbath back in the book of Exodus, God declared in the giving of the law that it was a covenant between Him and Israel forever. Verse 16 of Exodus 31, Wherefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant.

Now, God established circumcision also as a perpetual covenant for these people, but the Sabbath covenant was not placed upon the Gentile world nor upon the Gentile church or Christians. And yet, a man needs a day of rest and we would probably live to be much healthier people if we would take a day of the week off and just stay in bed. Really rest on the Sabbath day and that's what the requirement was, just really to rest.

Give the body a chance to sort of recuperate. But these people, as we will find in a little bit, weren't always keeping the Sabbath as they should. They began to make it a day of pleasure and recreation, which it seems that we are very guilty of doing also.

Except that the Sabbath is really Friday night sundown to Saturday night sundown, if you want to be technical. We worship the Lord on the first day of the week. Now, in the early church, when they sought to determine what relationship the Gentile believers had to the law, they determined that they should not put upon the Gentiles the yoke of bondage, the law, which they were not themselves able to keep.

And so in writing to the Gentiles to tell them their relationship to the law, that is the church, the Gentile church, they said, just keep yourselves from idols and from things that have been strangled. And if you do this, you do well. Now, later on, Paul even modified that a bit when he wrote to the Corinthians.

And he said, when you go to the butcher shop to buy your meat, don't ask the butcher, was this meat offered as a sacrifice to an idol? He said, because if he says yes, then you'll have a hard time eating it. So just don't ask any questions. Just go and buy the meat.

Don't ask any questions for your conscience sake. And then you're not worried about it. Because he said, everything is sanctified through prayer and it really doesn't matter.

Except if in your conscience it begins to trouble you, then it becomes a real problem for you. So for conscience sake, just, you know, when you go out to dinner and someone lays a steak in front of you, don't say, did you offer this steak as a sacrifice to an idol? You know, just eat what is set before you, asking no questions, he said. Just enjoy it.

And so, you know, it isn't that which goes into the mouth that defiles a man. It's that which comes out because the heart is revealed by the things that come out of a man's mouth. there was nothing said to the Gentile church concerning the Sabbath days.

So Paul writing to the church in Rome speaks about those who were weak in the faith who were vegetarians because they could not eat meat. They were fearful it might have been offered to as a sacrifice to an idol somewhere. And so they became vegetarians.

But he that is strong in the faith, he eats meat. Now, let the one who doesn't eat meat, don't let him judge the one who does. And the one who does eat meat should not be condemning the man who doesn't.

It is so easy for us to fall in the trap of thinking that everybody should live as I live. Do as I think. How I would love to run the world.

You know, and tell people that which they can do and that which they can't do according to my own conscience. But Paul said, I am not to judge a person who has greater liberty than I have. Because before his own master he either stands or falls, and God is able to make him to stand.

Much to my amazement. So, in writing to the Colossians, Paul said, Don't let any man judge you in respect to meat or into Sabbath days or holy days or new moons and so forth, which were all a shadow of the things to come. For the substance or the body is of Christ.

These things were all a shadow. Keeping the Sabbath days, keeping the festivals and so forth, they were all a shadow of the things to come. The real substance is of Christ.

So that the Sabbath day was just a shadow of what Jesus is to us for He is our rest. And the Sabbath day was a day of rest where you just rested. So Christ has become our Sabbath.

We are resting in the work of Jesus Christ as regards to our salvation. I'm not trying to get out there and hustle and work to be saved. I am resting.

Christ is my Sabbath. He is my rest. And the whole Sabbath day celebration was looking forward to Jesus Christ, the substance, who is the rest for the believer of God.

And we all are resting our salvation in Him. And that's what the whole thing was about. So, as we read of the Sabbath day, we realize that Isaiah is addressing himself to Israel.

It has nothing to do really with the Gentile, the Gentile church. For in the Gentile church, as Paul said, one man esteems one day above another and another man esteems every day alike. And we esteem every day alike.

Every day is the Lord's day. I get up in the morning and say, Well, Lord, this is your day. What would you have me to do today? And every day is alike to me.

I don't look at the calendar to see what day of the week it is. It's the Lord's day. My life is His.

And no matter what the calendar may say as far as the day of the week, it's all the Lord's day as far as I'm concerned. But blessed is the man that will keep justice, do judgment, lays hold on these, keeps the Sabbath from polluting it and keeps his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people.

We shouldn't think that we have been separated from the people of God. But God has really, in Christ, Paul said, has broken down that middle wall of partition that used to exist between the Jew and us. And He has made us all partake of the one body in Christ.

So I'm not to say, Well, I've been separated from God's people and think of myself as separate from them. But really, we have been grafted into the root that we might partake of the fatness and the fullness of God's blessing and promise to the nation of Israel. Neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I'm a dry tree.

For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths and choose the things that please me and take hold of my covenant. Even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a

name better than the sons and daughters. And I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

Now Jesus speaks of there are some men that are born eunuchs. There are some who become eunuchs for the kingdom of God's sake. That is, men who refrain from marriage in order that they might better serve the Lord.

Paul the Apostle would probably fit in this category. Now, we think of a eunuch in a very strict sense of the word. I do not think that the Bible really looks at it or is looking at it in a strict sense of the word.

I think it is a man who just determines to live a celibate life for the sake of the kingdom of God. As Paul the Apostle writing to the Corinthian church encouraged the men, if they were able to handle it, to live as he did for the sake of the kingdom. For he that is married seeks how to please his wife.

But he that is unmarried can just seek how he can please the Lord. And thus, because it is in many times easier to endure hardship just yourself and many times in the proclaiming of the gospel there requires a real hardship and sacrifice. It is easier for you to make those sacrifices by yourself than to impose them also upon a wife.

And so, for the sake of expediency and all, you'd be better off to stay as I am. Yet, if you can't handle it, Paul says, go ahead and get married. There is no sin to it, but I would just spare you a lot of problems.

And so, there are those who, for the kingdom of God's sake, have chosen a celibate type of a life. And that is fine. The Lord said, I will give them children, sons and daughters, in a spiritual sense.

And so, Paul speaks of his beloved son Timothy and all and those relationships that he had with these younger men that he more or less tutored in their spiritual walks. Now also, the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve Him and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, everyone that keeps the Sabbath from polluting it and takes hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer and their burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. Now, the Jews in establishing the temple did not really follow this.

They had the court of the Gentiles. And if you were a Gentile, you had to stay in that court. And leading into the next court were the signs warning the Gentiles at the cost of their life to stay out.

Warning any Gentile from trespassing within that next area of the temple. Now, Paul the apostle really got into big trouble with the Jews because they thought that he had brought an uncircumcised man into the area of the temple. The Jewish quarter within the temple.

And that's what created the whole hubbub there in Jerusalem that almost resulted in Paul's being killed. However, Paul was not guilty. They thought he was guilty.

But Paul was not guilty of that charge. But yet the Lord had declared my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. So he's talking about the stranger.

That is, the person who is not a Jew. Who is there, who follows the Lord. God wanted him to feel an access unto God through the temple.

Now, you remember that when Jesus came into the temple, he saw those money changers that were there and those that were selling doves. And he made a whip. And he began to overturn the tables of the money changers.

And began to drive them out of the temple. Saying unto them that they have profaned the temple. That my Father has said my house shall be called a house of prayer.

But you have made it a den of thieves. And the anger that he had for the profaning of the... in other words, they wouldn't let the Gentiles in but they had all kinds of crooked kind of practices going on. The money changers were men who would have their little booths there in the temple.

And you could only pay your offerings to God in the shekels. They would not receive Roman coinage because they considered that unclean. You couldn't give your common Roman coinage to the Lord.

So, if you wanted to give an offering to God, you had to exchange your Roman coins for the temple shekels. Well, you say, what's so wrong with that? Well, what was wrong with that is these guys were charging a horrible rate of exchange. In other words, they were making a markup, a percentage.

And thus, in essence, they were skimming off money that really should have gone to the Lord. They were thieving from God. In the exchanging of the shekel and in drawing a percentage for themselves, they were really skimming off from God.

And the same was true with the doves. You could buy a dove outside for a couple of pennies. But these guys were charging an exorbitant fund, an exorbitant price, but they were in collusion with the priest.

If you just brought a dove in, the priest would examine it carefully and he'd find some little flaw. And of course, you cannot offer any flawed offering unto God. So he said, no, I can't offer this for you.

But here this fellow had doves for sale and he had the stamp on them. They were kosher. But they were charging a bigger price.

So again, the idea of robbery, of thievery that was going on, and it upset Jesus. And so he quotes actually from this verse in Isaiah, where God's intention that His house would be called a house of prayer for all people. That it would be open to anyone.

Anybody who wanted to pray unto God would be free to come in and pray unto God within the house. So He declares, The Lord God which gathers the outcast of Israel saith, yet will I gather others to Him beside those that are gathered unto Him. The gospel that will go out unto the Gentiles.

All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all the beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind. That's a tragic situation is you have a watchman that's blind.

They are all ignorant. They are all dumb dogs. They cannot bark.

Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which never can have enough. And they are shepherds that cannot understand.

They all look to their own way. Everyone for his own gain. From his own quarter.

And so God's speaking. And of course it's interesting that God would speak of those they were all looking for their own gain. All looking for their own welfare and their own gain.

And it is interesting that the Lord would mention that in the very passage that Jesus quoted when He said, You've made My Father's house a den of thieves. For My Father's house was to be called a house of prayer for all people. And here they are.

They are greedy dogs that never have enough. They are all looking for their own gain. Come ye, say they.

I will fetch wine. We will fill ourselves with strong drink. And tomorrow shall be as today and much more abundant.

Now the righteous man perishes and no man lays it to heart. And merciful men are taken away and none is considering that the righteous is taken from the evil to come. There are many who see this verse as a description of what happens at the rapture of the church.

As the merciful are taken away and no man considering the fact that they have been taken away from the evil that is to come. From the period of the great tribulation that is coming. He shall enter into peace.

They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness. But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress. And so God speaks about the merciful being taken away.

But now His dealings with those who were worshiping false gods, false idols. Draw near. He's going to lay it upon them now.

Ye sons of the sorceress. The seed of the adulterer and the whore. Now this is of course talking in spiritual terms.

The adulteress and the whore. That would be pagan religious systems. Pagan worship.

The worship of Baal, Molech. You see, these people were to be married unto God. They were looked upon as the wife of God.

God said, I've joined myself unto you. And He uses the figure of a husband and a wife. And their love was to be to God exclusively.

Their devotion unto God exclusively. But they were worshiping other gods. They were worshiping the gods of the pagans.

The gods of Baal and Molech and Ashtoreth and all. And they were worshiping all of these other gods. And so God said, look, you're supposed to be married to Me.

If you're out there cavorting and worshiping these other gods, then that's adultery. And so God speaks of it in a spiritual sense. The worship of the idols.

The worship of the other gods. Were looked upon by God as their following after adultery or whoredom. Against whom do you sport yourselves? And that is, again, a term that is used of intimate relationships.

And thus they were having, in a sense, intimate relationships with these other gods. Against whom make ye a wide mouth to draw out the tongue? Are you not the children of transgression, the seed of falsehood? Inflaming yourself with the idols under every green tree. Slaying the children in the valleys under the cleft

of the rocks.

It seems unthinkable to us, in this age in which we live, I guess it doesn't, that parents would take their little babies and throw them into the fire, which was a part of the worship of Bel and of Molech. If you go over to Jerusalem to the Museum of Natural History, in one area they have a case filled with little idols that have been uncovered in the land. I saw one of the idols of Bel, a little iron figure with arms out and hands in an upturned position like this.

And in their worship of this idol, they would heat it until it would turn a glowing red hot color from the heat and then they would place their live babies in these little outstretched arms and they would be consumed in the fire as they worshiped the God. These are the things that God is speaking out against. Practices that His people followed as they thought so little of life that they were willing to sacrifice their own babies unto their gods.

In the archaeological diggings, they have found in the jars that were built into the walls of the homes, skeletons of babies that were buried alive as you would build a house for an offering unto the God. These were the practices that God said were an abomination unto Him. The things that God was forbidding, these were common practices of the people around them.

You say, well Chuck, I am abhorred by that thought, you know, sacrifice a baby. Who could ever think of killing a baby? Well, I am afraid that unfortunately here in the United States, million of them are being sacrificed every year. When does life begin? So God speaks out against them, how they inflamed themselves with their idols under every green tree, slaying your children in the valleys, under the cleft of the rocks.

And among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion. They are thy lot, even them that thou hast poured a drink offering. Thou should have offered a meal offering.

Should I receive comfort in these? Upon a lofty and a high mountain you have set up your bed. That is a bed for an adultery, because they would make the places of worship up on the tops of the mountains like the pagans. Even thither you went to offer your sacrifices.

Behind the doors also, in the posts, have you set up your remembrances. For you have discovered yourself to another. That is, you've uncovered yourself, you've made yourself naked in a sense, before other gods.

You've gone up. You have enlarged your bed. You've made a covenant with them and you love their bed where you saw it.

And you went to the king with ointment and you did increase your perfumes and send your messengers far off and you did debase yourself even to hell. And so God is speaking out against the fact that these people had turned away from Him and had turned unto the practices of the heathen around them in the worship, in the developing of other little idols and gods and their worship of them. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way, yet you said not, there is no hope.

Thou hast found the life of thine hand, therefore you were not grieved. And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared that you have lied and have not remembered me nor laid it to your heart? Have not I held my peace, even of old, and you have not feared me? I will declare thy righteousness and thy works, for they shall not profit thee. And when you cry, let your companies deliver thee, but the wind shall carry them all

away, vanity shall take them.

And so God speaks out against the people and when you cry, your gods will not be able to deliver you. They will be carried away themselves by the wind. They are empty.

But now in sharp contrast, he that puts his trust in me shall possess the land and inherit my holy mountain. And he shall say, cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people. For thus saith the high and the lofty one that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy.

I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. So God declares now his dwelling place. It is high, it is holy.

But those that will dwell with him are those that are humble and those of a contrite heart. For I will not contend forever neither will I always be angry for the spirit should fail before me and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I angry and I smote him.

I hid and I was angry and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways and will heal him. I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

I create the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him. So even though they had forsaken God and gone in these abominable practices of the heathen, yet God promises his restoration.

But to the wicked they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up the mire and the dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. A person who lives in wickedness, his life is like a stormy sea just casting up dirt and filth.

No rest. Constant turmoil, constant troubling of the man who has set his heart against the Lord. Cry aloud.

Spare not. The Lord is commanding now the prophet Isaiah. Lift up thy voice like a trumpet.

Show my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily. Now, there was a real inconsistency here because the attendance at the temple worship had not diminished at all.

People were still going through outward forms of religion. There was a popular religious movement on the surface, but the heart of the people was still alienated from God. And so there was a combination.

They would go to temple and worship God and yet they were still worshipping their own little idols and still following after their own flesh. And such was the dichotomy that existed then and such is the dichotomy today. There are people who still on the surface acknowledge God and it's a surface experience, but it hasn't really affected down in their hearts and down in their lives their way of living.

And God was interested in the heart. Now you remember when Jeremiah who prophesied shortly after Isaiah and during the time of Jeremiah's prophecy and we'll be getting into that couple weeks now. During the time of Jeremiah's prophecy when Josiah became the king, he was a good king and there was a popular religious movement under Josiah.

You might say a revival. Everybody was going back to temple. And so the Lord said to Jeremiah, this young boy, now you go down to the temple and cry unto the people as they're going into the temple saying, trust not in lying vanity saying the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.

In other words, God again was crying out against the fact that it was only a surface movement. It wasn't down deep in the hearts of the people. They moved towards Him.

So here God is telling the prophet, cry out. Let your voice be like a trumpet. Show My people their transgressions for they seek Me daily.

They delight to know My ways. As a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God, they ask of Me the ordinances of justice and they take delight in approaching God. They had a great form of religion.

Going to hear, inquiring, what does God say? And then they were complaining. They were even fasting, but they were saying to God, how is it that we have fasted and You do not see it? We've afflicted our soul and You haven't taken any acknowledgement of it. But the Lord answers them, behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure and you exact all your labors.

Behold, you fast for strife and for debate and to smite with a fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast as you do this day to make your voice to be heard on high. You're not really fasting to seek God, but to prove a point.

Is it such a fast that I have chosen a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and acceptable day to the Lord? Do you think that I want an outward kind of a thing from you? Now Jesus said when you fast, don't be like the hypocrites who like to make a big open kind of a display of their fasting. They get a very mournful face and they don't anoint themselves at all and they look very gaunt and sad. You say, oh, what's the matter brother? Oh, I'm fasting today brother, you know.

Oh my, isn't he spiritual? And the Lord says, hey, don't do it that way. I don't want an outward fasting kind of a thing. If you're going to fast, let it be something really of your heart in seeking after Me.

Don't let it be to prove a point. Don't let it be to gain an advantage. How many times people are trying to fast just to gain some kind of an advantage with God? Force God to answer my prayer because I'm fasting.

If I'm going to afflict my soul and I'm going to fast, let me do it out of a pure motive of just wanting God and more of God in my life. And do it unto God, not in a big display or show. But God said this is the fast that I have chosen.

To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free that you break every yoke. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry that you may bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When you see the naked that you would cover him and when you hide not yourself from your own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning. When you really are fasting, doing what God wants, fasting and doing, God wants you to set free those that are oppressed, to feed those that are hungry, to clothe those that are poor.

Take of your substance and really give it to someone else. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy health shall spring forth speedily and thy righteousness shall go before thee and the glory of the Lord shall come behind you, will be your rear word. Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer.

Thou shalt cry and he shall say, Here am I. If you take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger and the speaking of vanity. So there is a fast that God will honor. God will be with you.

He'll go before you and behind you. He'll answer you when you call. They were fasting but it was just a formality and then they were saying, Well, why doesn't God respond? And so God answers why he was not responding.

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness shall be as the noonday. And the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in the drought and make fat thy bones and thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not. So the prosperity, the blessing, the glory if you draw out your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul.

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places. Thou shalt raise up the old foundations of many generations and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the paths to dwell in. And if thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath from doing thy pleasure on my holy day and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy of the Lord honorable, and thou shalt honor Him, not doing your own ways nor finding your own pleasure nor speaking your own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord and I will cause thee to write upon the high places of the earth and to feed with the heritage of Jacob thy father for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

So, the right way to fast, the wrong way to fast, the right purposes and the wrong purposes. And also it does also follow in the keeping of the Sabbath day, the right and the wrong way. Now in 59, Behold, the Lord's hand is not short in that it cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear.

Lord, why aren't you hearing us when we fast? Why aren't you acknowledging it? Why aren't you recognizing it? Now the Lord is saying, Hey, look, there's nothing, I don't have any hearing problem. The Lord's hand is not short that He cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that He cannot hear. If you're not getting answers to prayer, it isn't really God's fault.

The fault lies within us. And the Lord declares, My hand is not short that I cannot save, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear.

David said, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me when I pray. God says, look, my hand isn't short, my ear isn't heavy that I cannot save, that I cannot hear. But your sins have broken the connection between you and God.

Sin can hinder your prayers. For sin breaks your relationship with God. And at that point, prayer is totally meaningless.

In fact, it's perhaps a little worse. Prayer is deceitful. Because though you know that you are wrong, and you are doing wrong, so many times a person passes it off by saying, well, I know that I'm not living as I should, but I still pray.

You know, I know that this is wrong, I know that this is sin and all, but I still pray. But wait a minute. Your prayers are totally meaningless.

You're being deceived by them. Because God says that He will not hear. Your sin is separated between you and God.

So the fact that you still pray is totally meaningless, because you've allowed this sin in your life. And thus, you are deceived by your prayer life itself. Thinking, well, I'm not too bad, I still pray.

God declares for your hands are defiled with blood, your fingers with iniquity, your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has uttered perverseness. So, one of the manners of praying was often to lift up their hands to the Lord, but God says, you're lifting up your hands to Me, but they're full of blood, full of iniquity. In that sense, prayer is an insult to God.

If I hold up hands before God that are full of blood, full of iniquity, that's insulting God. And surely God will not honor nor hear. Now, God said, none is calling for justice.

No one's pleading for truth. They are trusting in vanity. They are speaking lies.

They conceive mischief. They bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrices' eggs.

And they weave the spider's web. And he that eats the eggs will die. And they which are crushed, those eggs which are crushed, there breaks out into a viper.

And their web shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works. Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood.

Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings. They have made them crooked paths, whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

Therefore, is judgment far from us, neither does justice overtake us. We wait for light, but behold, there's obscurity. We wait for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

We grope for the wall like the blind. We grope as if we had no eyes. We stumble at noonday as in the night, and we are in desolate places as dead men.

We roar all like bears and mourn like doves. We look for judgment, there is none. For salvation, it's far from us.

For our transgressions are multiplied before thee. Our sins testify against us, for our transgressions are with us. And as for our iniquities, we know them.

In transgressing and lying against the Lord and departing away from our God-speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood, and judgment is turned away backward, and justice stands afar off, for truth is fallen in the street and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth fails, and he that departs from evil makes himself a prey, and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him, because there was no judgment. Displeased him that there was no judgment.

The tragic condition of man, and it is expressed, of course, in an extremely poetic way. And this portion of Isaiah is actually Hebrew poetry. And we see the thoughts are expressed in very picturesque ways.

Crooked paths, groping like a blind man, like a person with no eyes, stumbling at noontime as though it were midnight, desolate as the grave, men who dwell in the grave or its places as dead men. And God looking on the whole thing, seeing the whole perversity of man, seeing the greed of man, ruling his heart as no one is really seeking to be fair or honest or just. No one calling for justice.

Everybody getting by with whatever they can. And he saw, verse 16, that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no intercessor, no one to cry out against it. People just allowing it to go on.

Therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation upon his head. Remind you of Ephesians chapter 6, where we are told to put on the whole armor of God.

The breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation. And he put on the garment of vengeance for clothing and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies, and to the coast he will pay the recompense.

In Hebrews it says that it is a fearful thing to fall in the hands of a living God. For we know Him who has declared, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. And God here speaks of this day of judgment.

So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun. Now, when the enemy shall come in like a flood, and he has spoken of that which has taken place here. The enemy has just come in like a flood.

There doesn't seem to be any intercessor. Anyone who is really seeking for righteousness. Anyone who is really seeking for the right thing.

No intercessor, and God wonders at it. And the enemy has just come in like a flood. If a person seeks to live righteous, he is sort of isolated.

And when the enemy shall come in like a flood, then the Spirit, because there is no intercessor, there is no man to do it, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. God intervenes and begins to work. And the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, shall come to Zion, to Jerusalem.

And unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, or out of thy mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever. For God, in spite of all things, is yet going to show forth His mercy and His grace upon these people.

Paul the Apostle said that blindness has happened to Israel, in part, until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. But then all of Israel shall be saved, as saith the Scripture, for the Lord shall come to Zion. And so Paul is making a reference really to this particular prophecy of Isaiah of that glorious day when Jesus comes and establishes His kingdom and from the covenant of God with the people that shall be a perpetual covenant forever.

And so, the deliverance of Zion, the glorious day of the Lord. Paul said the cutting off brought salvation to the Gentiles. What do you think the crafting of them back is going to be? If the cutting off of Israel brought such glory to the world, how much more when God restores them and restores His work with these people, will the glory of the Lord fill the earth? Oh, arise and shine, for thy light is come.

For the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and the kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see all they gather themselves together. They come to thee.

Thy son shall come from far and thy daughter shall be nursed at thy side. And then shalt thou see and flow together and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged because of the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee and the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of the camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of the Medes and of Ephah.

And all of they from Sheba, Saudi Arabia, shall come. They shall bring gold and incense. And they're getting the gold right now.

And they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. All of the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee. The rams of Nebaoth shall minister unto thee.

They shall come up with acceptance on My altar and I will glorify the house of My glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud and the doves to their windows? Surely the coast shall wait for Me and the ships of Tarshish first to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them unto the name of the Lord thy God, to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee. And the sons of the strangers shall build up thy walls and their kings shall minister unto thee.

For in My wrath I smote thee, but in My favor have I had mercy on thee. Therefore, thy gates shall be opened continually. They shall not be shut day nor night that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles that their kings may be brought.

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish. Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee.

The fir tree, the pine, the box together to beautify the place of My sanctuary and I will make the place of My feet glorious." Now, with this prophecy of the glorious coming of the Messiah and the glory that shall come to Israel when the Messiah comes, you can understand the difficulty that they had with Jesus Christ. Even His own disciples, wondering when He was going to overthrow the Roman government. And His own disciples troubled when He talked to them about His crucifixion.

When Jesus said to Peter, after Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood did not reveal this unto you, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto you that thou art Peter, Petros, little stone. And upon this Petra, this rock, I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And then Jesus began to speak to them how that the Son of Man must be rejected by men and turned over to the hands of sinners and be crucified and slain. And on the third day rise again. And Peter began to rebuke Him saying, Lord, be that far from Thee.

And Jesus said, Get thee behind Me. Satan, you are an offense unto Me because you can't tell the difference between what comes from God and what comes from man. When Jesus started talking about His rejection, about His death, Peter couldn't stand it.

Lord, don't talk like that. Be that far from Me. The Jews had great difficulty because here in chapter 53 of Isaiah, we read that He would be despised and rejected, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief.

We hid, as it were, our faces from Him. But surely, He has borne our griefs and He has carried our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And by His stripes we were healed.

For all of us, like sheep had gone astray, we had turned every one of us to our own ways. But God had laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. And He was smitten and all.

And these prophecies of the Messiah and this suffering. Now, we read of the glorious glory that is going to come to Israel when the Redeemer comes. So it was only natural that the Jews had difficulty trying to correlate such opposing positions as were prophesied with the Messiah.

So the way they settled these opposing positions was to spiritualize the suffering. And they only accepted and looked at those Scriptures that spoke of the glory of the reign of the Messiah. And they emphasized that aspect and spiritualized the others.

The suffering, the death, the rejection, and all. They would just spiritualize those Scriptures. Now, as a result, they failed to recognize their Messiah when He came.

Though He was definitely fulfilling their own Scriptures. Next week, as we get into chapter 61, we will see in the prophecy itself a definite division between the two comings of the Messiah. And it's just within one verse there is a break.

And He immediately begins talking about the aspects of the second coming of Christ in contrast to the aspects of the first coming. Now, Jesus, when He came to the synagogue in Capernaum, and they handed Him the Scriptures to read, opened the prophecy of Isaiah to what is to us the 61st chapter. And He began to read to them.

And He read the first part of the chapter, but He stopped suddenly. Closed the scroll and set it down. And looking around, He said, Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your eyes.

That's a pretty heavy declaration. But the interesting thing is where He stopped. Because He stopped right where the aspects of His first coming stopped.

He did not go into the aspects that dealt with His second coming to proclaim the day of the vengeance and the wrath of God. That is yet to come. So He stopped before He got there.

Now here, again, in chapter 60, we see the glorious reign of the Messiah and the prominence that Israel will have as the Gentiles will gather unto it. The nations and the strength of the nations will be brought unto it. And a general bringing together of the people from all over the world.

And the glory that shall rest upon the nation. And this is what the disciples were constantly looking for. After Jesus had risen from the dead.

And He said, Now wait in Jerusalem until you receive the promise of the Father. For John indeed baptized you with the Holy Ghost, but you're going to be baptized... I mean, John indeed baptized you with water, but you're going to be baptized with the Holy Ghost in just a few days. And the disciples said, Lord, is it at this time you're going to bring glory to the kingdom? He said, ah, come on.

It's not for you to know the times and the seasons that are appointed unto the Father. We're not talking about that right now. We're talking about another issue.

For you're going to receive power when the Holy Ghost comes upon you and you're to be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth. But even then, they were still looking for this glory. The disciples were arguing, now when the Lord sets up the kingdom, I'm going to be greater than you are.

And they were disputing who was going to be the greatest. And the Lord said, what are you guys arguing about? Oh, nothing. And that's when He said, whoever wants to be the greatest, let him become the servant of all.

And He taught the way to greatness was the way of a servanthood, humbling yourself in the sight of the Lord that He might exalt you. And so, it was a problem with the disciples because you have passages like Isaiah 60 that tell of the glory and the people were true patriots and they desired the glory to Israel. And they were looking for the Messiah to bring that glory and when Jesus failed to do so, but instead submitted to the suffering of the cross, they couldn't handle it.

Many of them forsook Him and fled. They were expecting the kingdom to be established immediately. They didn't know that God was going to use this interim of time to gather from among the Gentiles a body of believers which would be known as the body of Christ, the bride of Christ.

So, He speaks of this glorious gathering, the gates being opened, and then bringing the forces of the Gentiles. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish. Those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The glory of Lebanon will come and I will make the place of My feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bowing before thee and all of they that despise thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of Thy feet and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel, the glory of Jerusalem in that day. Whereas Thou hast been forsaken and hated so that no man went through Thee, I will make Thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles and shalt suck the breast of kings and Thou shalt know that I the Lord am Thy Savior and Thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. For brass, I will bring gold. For iron, I'll bring silver.

For wood, brass. And for stones, iron. I will also make Thy officers peace and Thy exactors righteousness.

Wouldn't it be great to have righteous tax collectors? Violence shall no more be heard in Thy land, wasting nor destruction within Thy borders. But Thou shalt call Thy walls salvation and Thy gates praise. Oh, what a glorious time and day and place when the city, the walls are called salvation, the gates are called praise.

And so enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise where people will just come to worship the Lord in great celebrations. Oh, how glorious. The sun shall no more be Thy light by day,

neither for brightness shall be the moon to give her light unto Thee, but the Lord shall be unto Thee an everlasting light and Thy God Thy glory.

Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall Thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be Thine everlasting light and the days of Thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous. They shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting and the work of My hands that I may be glorified.

A little one shall become a thousand, a small one a strong nation, for I, the Lord, will hasten it in His time. So the Lord declares His purposes that He will accomplish in His time. The glorious restoration of God and the work of God among this people in this city and among this nation.

Oh, what a day when the Messiah comes and that's what the heart of the Jew is yearning for today. That's what the heart of the Christian is yearning for today. When God's righteousness shall cover the earth as waters cover the sea.

The glorious day of the Lord. And as we look at the world in which we live today, we see more and more the need for God to intervene. We see the injustices that fill our earth.

It seems that if a person does stand up for what is right, he stands alone, is isolated, and made fun of. And so the time has come really for the Spirit of the Lord to lift up the standard against the enemy. For the Redeemer to return and to establish righteousness and His righteous kingdom on this earth.

God is seeking for justice and for judgment. God is seeking a people that will honor Him, not with their lips, but with their hearts, with their actions. God is seeking a people that will serve Him with a pure heart.

And God is open unto them and to their cries. But unto the wicked there is no rest. There is no peace.

God help us that we might live in a way that is pleasing unto Him. That we might know that peace of God. That our hearts might be established in His peace and in His love as we await the Messiah to come and for God's promises to be fulfilled in that kingdom age.

God bless you. And God cause you to abound in His grace and in His love as we show ourselves merciful, understanding, patient and kind with those that are about us. May God help us that we will be His servants and His representatives as we lift those that are fallen.

As we reach out to those that are oppressed. And as we share with them that which God has given and done for us. May God make us His instruments of righteousness in this needy world.

God wondered that there was no intercessor. No one to stand up. God help us to be intercessors in these days.

God bless you. And God use you this week for His glory. In Jesus' name.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6448.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-isaiah-56-60/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**