

Clear the Way!

Eric Ross / General

Evangelism / Preach Good News; Church: Leadership / Isaiah 60:1–7; Isaiah 59:16–21; Isaiah 58:8–14; Isaiah 57:15–21; Isaiah 57:14–21; Joshua 24:23–24

It is, and always has been our behavior, our sin that has separated us from God. The Lord says, “Call!”, say “Here is your God!”, “Lift up your voice like a trumpet”, “I will heal him; and I will lead him”. The Lord asks one thing, “turn away from transgression”. There is a God kind of life. There is a way for us to find peace and it begins as we “remove from among you the yoke, the finger-pointing and evil speech ... offer your soul to the hungry”. He says to “Clear the way!”

Notes

From Tell One Devotions 10/9/2018

<https://tellone.org/devotions/clear-the-way/?highlight=Clear%20the%20Way>

Clear the Way!

› Eric Ross 6-8 minutes

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He says to “Clear the way!”

Part 1: Turn from Transgression

Isaiah says, “Clear the Way!”

Isaiah 57:14–21

This message from

Isaiah 57:14 LEB

¹⁴ And one shall say, “Build up, build up! Clear *the* way! Remove *the* obstacles from the way of my people!”

“echos” (Barry, J. D., et al, 2016) this message in Isaiah which says

Isaiah 40:3 LEB

³ A voice *is* calling in the wilderness, “Clear the way of Yahweh! Make a highway smooth in the desert for our God!

and then goes on to say in

Isaiah 40:6 LEB

⁶ A voice *is* saying, “Call!” And he said, “What shall I call?” All humankind *are* grass, and all his loyalty *is* like the flowers of the field.

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with an answer in

Isaiah 40:9–10 LEB

⁹ Get yourself up to a high mountain, Zion, bringer of good news! Lift up your voice with strength, Jerusalem, bringer of good news! Lift *it* up; you must not fear! Say to the cities of Judah, “Here *is* your God!” ¹⁰ Look! The Lord Yahweh comes with strength, and his arm rules for him. Look! His reward *is* with him, and his recompense in his presence.

“Say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!”

“Look! The Lord Yahweh comes with strength, and his arm rules for him”.

“Look! His reward is with him, and his recompense in his presence”.

God himself is removing the obstacles, God himself is bringing the power to overcome them.

John the Baptist says “Make straight the way”

This is fulfilled in John the Baptist as recorded in each of the gospels. It says in

John 1:23 LEB

²³ He said, “I *am* ‘the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord,” ’ just as Isaiah the prophet said.”

It is not the Lord’s heart though, to bring condemnation, his desire is in

Isaiah 57:18–19 LEB

¹⁸ I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; and I will lead him and give him and his mourners comfort as a recompense, ¹⁹ creating fruit of lips. Peace, peace to the far and near,” says Yahweh, “and I will heal him.

But there are those, the wicked, and of them in

Isaiah 57:21 LEB

²¹ There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”

Our part is to turn to the Lord and seek after him.

Joshua said Choose Yourselves Today Whom You Want to Serve

As Joshua, now in his last years, admonishes the people of Israel, he says to them twice, remove the foreign Gods. He says, “revere Yahweh” and “remove the gods” in

Joshua 24:14 LEB

¹⁴ “So now, revere Yahweh and serve him in sincerity and faithfulness; remove the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt and serve Yahweh.

but this is no demand. They are not required to serve Yahweh, they are free to choose and as Joshua declares his allegiance to Yahweh, he presents them with that choice in

Joshua 24:15 LEB

¹⁵ But if it is bad in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you want to serve, whether it is the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you *are* living; but as for me and my household, we will serve Yahweh.”

and the people all respond that they will not forsake Yahweh in Joshua 23:16. Then Joshua challenges them saying “you cannot serve Yahweh” in Joshua 23:17. Joshua must have seen the people turning away already and he issues a strong caution in

Joshua 24:20 LEB

²⁰ If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster to you; he will destroy you after he has done good to you.”

but the people respond that they will not forsake him in

Joshua 24:21 And the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve Yahweh.”

so Joshua says to them again “remove the foreign gods” in

Joshua 24:23 LEB

²³ He said, “Remove the foreign gods that *are* in your midst, and incline your hearts to Yahweh the God of Israel.”

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Some believe that serving God is a passive act that only requires that they stop doing evil, but it is much more than that, it is an active proposition that requires doing good. Living for God means loving God, inclining your heart to him, listening to his voice and following his ways, not just for a moment in time, but for all of your life.

Part 2: Lift Up Your Voice Like a Trumpet

› **Isaiah 58:1–14**

Declare Their Rebellion and Sins

Isaiah 58:1 LEB

¹ “Call with *the* throat; you must not keep back! lift up your voice like *a* trumpet, and declare to my people their rebellion, and to the house of Jacob their sins.

The Lord tells Isaiah to “declare to my people their rebellion ... they seek me day by day ... they (his people) desire the closeness of God”

There is no Justice

› **Isaiah 59:1–11**

Isaiah 59:1–4 LEB

¹ Look! The hand of Yahweh is not too short to save, and his ear is not *too* dull to hear. ² Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden *his* face from you, from hearing. ³ For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity. Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue speaks wickedness. ⁴ There is nobody who pleads with justice, and there is nobody who judges with honesty. They rely on nothing and speak vanity. They conceive trouble and beget iniquity;

It isn't that the Lord cannot save in Isaiah 59:1, it is that in Isaiah 59:2 “your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God”. This is the bleak and simple truth in Isaiah 59:3 “your hands are defiled with blood” and in Isaiah 59:4 “There is nobody who pleads with justice”. Or as it says in

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Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

Which leaves us separated from God in

Isaiah 59:9 LEB

⁹ Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We wait for light, but look! *there is* darkness; for brightness, *but* we walk in darkness.

Part 3: A Redeemer Will Come to Zion

Isaiah 59:12–21

The world is lost because “truth is missing” but even worse than that, anyone that would stand for the truth (“turn aside from evil”) is attacked (“plundered”) in

Isaiah 59:14–15 LEB

¹⁴ And justice is pushed back, and righteousness stands afar; for truth stumbles in the public square, and straightforwardness is unable to enter, ¹⁵ and truth is missing, and he who turns aside from evil *is* plundered. And Yahweh saw, and it was displeasing in his eyes that there was no justice

But in Isaiah 59:16 “so his arm came to assist him” and in Isaiah 59:20 “And a redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn away from transgression,” declares Yahweh.

The Lord makes a promise to those that will “turn away from transgression” even though they know they will be “plundered”. Some versions say they make themselves “a prey”, “They (people of the world) have distanced themselves so far from the truth that they openly combat those who turn away from perversity and choose the good”.²

But here is God’s promise, the beginning of life with God’s blessing that grows and progresses through Isaiah 60-61 in

Isaiah 59:21 LEB

²¹ “And as for me, this *is* my covenant with them, says Yahweh: my spirit that *is* upon you, and my words that I have placed in your mouth shall not depart from

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your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of your children's children," says Yahweh, "from now on and forever."

The Glory of Yahweh (the Lord) Has Risen on You

Isaiah 60:1–11

Keep Yourselves in the Love of God

Jude 17-23

Jude 18–19 LEB

¹⁸ for they said to you, "In the end time there will be scoffers following according to their own ungodly desires." ¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly, not having the Spirit.

There will be those that only cause divisions. They seek their own way as it says in

Jude 16 LEB

¹⁶ These *people* are grumblers, discontented, proceeding according to their desires, and their mouths speaking pompous *words*, showing partiality to gain an advantage.

For us as Christians, there is a simple way forward, it is the power of the Holy Spirit in

Jude 20–21 LEB

²⁰ But you, dear friends, *by* building yourselves up in your most holy faith, *by* praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

by this power we keep ourselves in the right place with God and prepare ourselves for the great commission which here in James is described in two actions

Jude 22 LEB

²² And have mercy on those who doubt,

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The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament ἔλεος, οὐς, τό

The vb. ἐλεεῖν (ἐλεᾶν) in the sense of have pity, be sorry for, help (out of pity), be merciful is found in the Synoptics in narrative, where it signifies the coming of the divine mercy into the world of human misery (Mark 5:19), esp. in the imv.

ἐλέησον (Mark 10:47, 48 par. Matt 20:30f./ Luke 18:38f.; Matt 9:27

Mark 10:46-48 - blind Bartimaeus called out to Jesus “have mercy on me”, it was a cry for help.

and of others who are bound up in sin, and maybe not even aware, in

Jude 23 LEB

²³ and save others *by* snatching *them* from the fire, and have mercy on others with fear, hating even the tunic stained by the flesh.

References

1. Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible (Is 57:14). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
2. Elliott, M. W. (Ed.). (2007). Isaiah 40–66 (p. 223). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.