

Wednesday, May 15, 2024 • Read Isaiah 56:9–57:21

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does v9 invite? To do what? What has left their prey/meal vulnerable (v10)? What are these watchmen doing instead of watching (v11–12)? What happens to the righteous and the merciful (57:1)? Who care? But what is the outcome for him (v2)? Whom does v3 address? What have they apparently been doing to the righteous (v4)? But where/what have they worshiped (v5–7)? To what do v8–9 compare such idolatry? In what did they hope instead of the Lord (v10)? What else did they do to another, instead of the Lord (v11)? What will the Lord do to all these competitors (v12–13)? What will the Lord do to these stumbling blocks (v14)? What does the Lord call Himself in v15a–c? Whom will He make to dwell with Him (v15d)? To do what to them (v15e–f)? Why would the Lord respond this way (v16)? What did He do to His people when (v17)? But what will He do to them (v18)? How (v19)? What are the wicked like by contrast (v20)? And what will they receive (v21)?

How can the sinner find peace? Isaiah 56:9–57:21 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these twenty-five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **a sinner can find peace only if the Lord grants him repentance to forsake all other worship, hope, or fear and give these all to the Lord alone.**

The peril of having false prophets, 56:9–12. When the watch dogs are mute, the beasts will devour (v9). Prophets who cannot bark their warnings leave their hearers as easy prey (v10). But when prophets act out of greed and self-indulgence, they become just such bark-less dogs.

The righteous dies into peace, 57:1–2. The genuinely righteous are disregarded (v1) and mocked (v4a–c). But they need not take to heart that no one takes them to heart (v1b). The Lord Who is their righteousness, and Who made them righteous, brings them into peace by their death (v2).

The family of the harlot, 57:3–13d, v20–21. The rest of this passage centers around two families. The first family is that of the sorceress, adulterer, and harlot (v3)—the children of transgression and offspring of falsehood (v4). Idolatry (v5–7, 10–11) is the worst sort of adultery (v8–9): adultery not merely against a good husband, but against the good and glorious God. This idolatry includes worshiping according to man's pleasure rather than according to God's prescription (v5–7), finding false hope in one's own hand (v10), and fearing other fears rather than fearing God (v11). But this false religion will be exposed by God, Who will judge idolater and idol. They have no peace in themselves (v20) and can get no peace from their false gods (v21). Oh, dear reader, forsake all other worship and worship only as the Lord says to do. Forsake all other hopes, and hope only in Him! And let yourself fear nothing else, but rather give all awe and reverence to the one, true, and living God.

The family of God, 57:14–19. How will the Lord's chosen, "My people," be delivered from such a stumbling block as wickedness and idolatry that are inherent to their original nature (v14d)? By the Lord's own great power. Though He is the "High and lofty One" (v15a), Whose 'house' is "eternity" (v15b), and Whose household Name is "Holy" (v15c)—He takes as His family the least likely from among men: the humble and the contrite (v15d–f).

How does He bring sinners to be His family? Motivated by His own desire to forgive and save (v16), the Lord chastens them (v17), and brings them to contrition (v15d), in order to revive them in Himself (v15e–f). Have you been brought low for your sin and found reviving in the Lord? It is because He desires to forgive and to save and to make His dwelling with you.

God brings His people to comfort (v18), giving the comforters precisely that fruit of the lips (v19a) that is necessary to bring them into the peace (v19b) and salvation (v19d) of the Lord (v19c). True preaching, unto true peace, is given by the true God!

How do you define "good worship"? What is your hope in life? What is your hope in death? What are you tempted to fear? How does proper trembling before God displace such fear?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for listening to dogs who don't bark; to those who speak peace to us when there is none. And forgive us for caring more to enjoy ourselves than to enjoy You and Your covenant love. Forgive us, for we have even judged worship by what we feel is worshipful. Forgive us, for we have trusted in our own hand rather than Yours. Forgive us, for there is much that we have feared instead of You. But, Lord, You give the fruit of the lips to speak comfort to us. Give us that humility of spirit by which You give repentance and faith, so that we may dwell with You in Your house forever, for we ask it all through Christ, Himself the Lord, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH433 "Amazing Grace"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah 56, verse 9. 57 verse 21. These are God's words. All you beasts of the field. Come to devour, all you beasts in the forest. His Watchmen are blind. They're all ignorant. They're all dumb dogs, they cannot bark. Sleeping lying down loving to Slumber. Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough.

They are Shepherds, who cannot understand. They all look to their own way everyone for his own gain. From his own territory. Come one says, I will bring wine and we will fill ourselves with intoxicating. Drink tomorrow will be as today and much more abundant The righteous man, perishes and no man takes it to heart.

Merciful men are taken away while no one considers. That the righteous. Taken away. From Evil. He shall enter into peace. They saw rest in their beds, each one. Walking in his uprightness. But come here, you sons of the Sorceress. You, offspring of the adulterer and the Harlot. Whom do you ridicule and against whom do you make a wide mouth and stick out the tongue?

Are you not children of transgression? Offspring of falsehood, inflaming yourselves of gods, under every green tree, slaying. The children in the valleys under the clefts of the Rocks. Among the smooth stones of the stream is your portion. They they are your lot. Even to them, you have poured, a drink offering, you have offered a grain offering.

Should I receive comfort in these? On a lofty and high mountain. You've set your bed, even there, you went up to offer, sacrifice also behind the doors and their posts. You have set up your remembrance For you have uncovered yourself to those other than me. And you've gone up to them, you have enlarged your bed and made a covenant with them.

You have loved their bed where you saw their nudity You went to the king with ointment and increased your perfumes. You sent your Messengers far off. And even descended to sheol. You are weary in the length of your way. Yet you did not say there is no hope. You have found the life of your hand, therefore you are not grieved.

And of whom have you been afraid or feared? That you have lied and not remembered me, nor taken it, to your heart. Is it not? Because I have held my piece from of old. That you do not fear me. I will declare your righteousness and your Works. For they will not profit you.

When you cry out let your collection of Idols deliver you. But the wind will carry them all away of breath. Will take them. But he who puts his trust in me. Shall possess the land. And shall inherit my Holy Mountain. And one shall say, Heap it up, Heap it Up, prepare the way, take the stumbling block out of the way of my people.

For thus, says the high and lofty. One who inhabits eternity Whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place. Him who has a contrite? And humble spirit. To revive the spirit of the humble. And to revive the heart of the contrary ones. For I will not contend forever.

Nor will I always be angry. For the spirit would fail before me in the souls, which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness, I was angry and struck him. I hid and was

angry and he went on backsliding in the way of his art. I have seen his ways and will heal him.

I will also lead him. And restore Comforts to him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace. To him, who is far off. And to him who is near says Yahweh. And I will. Heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea. When it cannot rest whose Waters cast up mire and dirt.

There is no peace, says my God. For the wicked. Amen, this ends this reading of God's inspired into an errant word.

In the end of chapter 56. We have. A very sharp transition. From the picture of Uh God with those who are part of his household on the Sabbath day in verses one through eight. To those who. Uh, do not care to be. Uh, drawn near to God. To those.

Here's Watchman, whose prophets. Uh, rather than Uh, preaching. The warnings of the Lord and the gospel of the Lord. They preach. Peace, and abundance. So tomorrow will be us today. Much more. Abundant. Indulge themselves. And the problem is they're supposed to be Watchmen, they're supposed to be Shepherds. They're supposed to be guard dogs.

But they're like guard dogs, who just lay around and don't bark. And that's what a false preacher is like. Someone who's supposed to sound the alarm someone who's supposed to be a barking Watchdog. But the false preacher is like a dog that doesn't bark. Just tells everyone that everything's.

Going to be fine. Now, God in his Mercy. Was permitting the righteous. Uh, to die. The righteous are dying. The merciful men. Being taken away beginning of verse 7 over.

Righteous die. The merciful men are taken away. Beginning in chapter 57 verse 1, And they don't realize they don't care in the first place. But they don't realize that the Lord is actually. Permitting, the righteous to die out. So, When he brings his judgment. They don't have to. Experience it.

That the righteous is being taken away from the face of evil. He says, in the end of verse one, And so he grants them to die into peace. Now this is always the case for the righteous. The evil and the hardship that we experience in this life is all of the evil and the hardship that we will ever face.

And so when those who are righteous, before God by faith in Jesus Christ, When we die, we're done. We're done sinning. We're done being sinned against. We're done experiencing any pain or any suffering. Whatsoever. That's why the New Testament in particular. Refers to the death of the righteous as falling asleep in the Lord Jesus.

And that's the picture in verse two, isn't it? He shall enter into peace. They shall rest. In their beds. And so the Lord is giving peace. Uh, to those who are his by faith. But those who don't care for him. Those who think they have peace those who mock the righteous Uh, caring so much about the Lord, and caring so much about doing, what is right.

The Lord challenges them. Now, Uh, in from verse 3 to the middle of verse 13. Even as when he concludes the chapter and is described uh, what he does for the righteous. He returns at the end of the chapter in verses 2021 to the wicked. He says, the wicked are like a troubled sea and it cannot rest.

There is no peace. For the wicked. And so, he addresses here, not the Um, The household of Yahweh that gathers together on the Sabbath. Where there are no separated sons of foreigners, where no one, no eunuch is permitted to say. I am a dry tree. He addresses a very different family beginning in verse three, doesn't he?

Come here, you sons of the Sorceress. You offspring of the adulterer. And the Harlot. And we can see several things about this Wicked family. One rhetorical questions in verse four, whom do you ridicule against whom do you make a wide mouth? They mock The Godly. Business has ever been the case.

It continues to be the case today. They have false worship. Not only do they worship false gods? But they worship false ways. According to whatever seems Pleasant to them. Under every green tree. And, Their false worship. Married to great wickedness. Verse 5, slaying the children. In The Valleys. Indeed, this was one of the features of Much of the false worship.

Their culture at the time. That they would sacrifice children unto their false gods. This is one of the features. Of the false Worship in our time. That children millions of babies. Our sacrificed in order to Trust in and enjoy and devote their lives to The things that they worship other than the Lord.

Money wealth influence. This false idea that they have of progress or Whatever it is. The Lord describes. Trusting in or fearing. We're worshipping anyone or anything other than in. In very shocking terms. Of fornication and adultery. In verses 7 to 8. But then he starts to describe in verses 9 and 10.

Uh, all of these false Idols, all of these false things people trust in or worship. They don't do the trick, they don't satisfy. And so, the workshoper becomes more and more desperate. We went to the king with ointment, you increased your perfumes, you sent your Messengers far off. You even descended into sheol.

You are wearied in the length of your way. Says, you tried all these things? To find your hope to find your identity to find your joy to find your security. And after trying all these things and they all fail, you you still refuse to say there is no hope in verse 10 You think you still think your hand?

Is going to preserve your life, he says. In verse 10. They are not. The blessed ones that we heard about at the beginning of Matthew 5 blessed are those who mourn? They are the cursed ones. Cursed are the ones who tell themselves they have. Cursed are the ones. Who refused to mourn.

So, Have this. False hope, false trust false worship. And they tell themselves lies are Not afraid of God. They're afraid of all these other things, but they don't fear God. They don't tremble. To worship him in the wrong way, or to worship other gods or To place their hope and other things we should we should tremble at that.

We should be terrified. Uh, there's nothing that we should fear more.

Rejecting God and provoking his wrath. He says. Why haven't you remembered me or taken to heart? Is it not? Because I have held my peace from of old. That you do not fear me. He says, at the end of verse 11, very similar to Romans 2 where it says

That they don't realize that the patience and kindness of God are meant to lead them to repentance. But a person can. Become very bold in his wickedness because of the patience of God. Because he doesn't realize the greatness of the Wrath that he provokes.

And so everything that they have done is useless. It's like chaff. It's like Dandelion seeds that blow away so easily in the wind. So like the wind will carry them all away. He says a breath. We'll take them. But then he describes his own family. He who trusts? In me?

Shall possess the land shall inherit my Holy Mountain. There's this amazing, uh, picture. Verse 14 of the Lord building a highway to Heaven. One shall say, Heap it up, Heap it up. Prepare the way, take the stumbling block out of the way of my people. So, where are they going that?

Uh, that this path has to be heaped up and smoothed out. So that the so that the righteous can take the path, He says, for thus, as the high and lofty, one who inhabits eternity whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place and we're remembering now from chapter six, right?

And the year that King as I died, I saw the king sitting on his throne high and lifted up. Says, I dwell in the high and holy place with Camu has a contrite and humble spirit. With him to whom the Lord, gives the repentance to be the one who Mourns to be the one.

Who fears the Lord and fears, the Lord's Wrath, and doesn't hope in Kings, or hope in. Even the devil in sheol doesn't hope in his own hand, refuses, false worship. Hopes only in the Lord. Blessed are those who mourn? The Hubble and contrite ones. The ones who are sorry in their hearts.

Uh, and yes. In the way that God works, sometimes. It takes a long time. For us to be brought to repentance and Faith. Sometimes it doesn't But he describes Verse 16 and 17. This one who keeps backsliding in his heart. Keeps falling keeps stumbling. Is. Uh, trusting in the Lord or perhaps.

This could also apply even to someone, who is a Believer and has had many failings and backslidings. But in either case, if they're being saved, the reason is in verse 18. Because the Lord is determined. Despite his backsliding. Despite your black slide. The Lord is determined to. Heal and lead.

And restore Comfort. And he sends true prophets. And he says verse 19. I create the fruit of the lips. That's the that's the kind of preaching you want. Not the one who is preaching from himself and he says, peace. And there is no peace and he says, tomorrow will be like today only more abundantly You want the one?

Preaching, what the Lord creates on his lips. So that will then that one says peace. Peace. In verse 19, there is peace. Because its peace offered by God in Jesus Christ with full atonement for our sin and real and full righteousness on our behalf. It's real peace. And God is the one who put it on their lips, so it can be trusted.

It's uh, it is sure and it is real. Uh, four Echoes here of Acts chapter, 2, peace. Peace to him. Who is far off unto him who is near And so to you and to your children and or as many as are far off, Whomever the Lord, Our God will call to himself or Ephesians chapter 2.

Jesus coming to Ephesus. How can that be? Well because God creates the fruit of the lips. And in that case, Jesus is the great prophet sitting on the throne of heaven and they are his Apostles and Prophets and evangelists and Pastor teachers. That are on Earth. Through whom he addresses.

Uh, the people in the preaching. And he says, he came and he proclaimed. Peace to those who are far off just as he also had proclaimed. Peace to those who are of the Commonwealth of Israel and who were near When both are offered peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if the Sun sets you free, if you have peace with God and Christ you are free. Indeed, it's True. And genuine and perfect. Peace. But the wicked, those who Are not humbled by God. Are not brought by the preaching of his word. To repentance and faith. There's no peace for them.

How can they ever have peace? If the person. Is not sent by God, is not preaching, the gospel of Jesus Christ, whatever words, he gives of comfort, or optimism, or peace, or abundance. Their lies from hell. It's just more of the idolatry that provokes God's Wrath. But praise God that he who The high and lofty one.

When inhabits eternity? Whose name is Holy. Who dwells in the high and holy place. That he is indeed. He has indeed made this way Jesus himself. By which we may be brought into his family. And not be the sons of the Sorceress. Or The Offspring of the Harlot. So, let me go out and give us to respond.

To his word by the ministry of his Spirit. And believe in his son. Let's pray.

Lord, we pray that you would Not allow me or any other of your ministers. To be mute dogs, who do not bark. But rather that you would create the fruit of the lips, That proclaims to us your word and especially in your word. Peace with you through the Lord.

Jesus. And the heaping up of a way in him. That brings us all the way home. With all of your family in Heaven and Earth. To be gathered to you in heaven. Grant that by your spirit, you would give us life and faith in Christ. And bring us into Union with him.

And the grant that by that your Same Spirit, we would know. Peace with you. We would have your love poured out in our hearts. We would know ourselves to be children in your household and your family. And call you are of a father. Through our Union with your only begotten son.

Our Lord Jesus. In his name, we ask it. Amen.