

WEEK 5

ISAIAH

THE LORD SAVES

CHECK-IN

Before you dig into the passage

Ask your group to share how the Lord has been working in their lives in the area of pride. What progress and growth in humility have you seen this past week? How have you experienced God's grace in moments of pridefulness? How have you sought to walk in the ways of the Lord, and how did it go? Encourage your group that growing in humility is a process: God himself is at work in those who trust in Christ and he will complete the good work he started (Phil. 1:3-6).

READ

Isaiah 3:1-4:6

As the text is central to the discussion, read the week's text together. Consider using a few different translations.

OBSERVE

*Make text-based observations (**What?**)*

Guide your group to make observations from the text. Focus on elements like words, grammar, structure, tone, literary devices, genre, etc.

1. Notice the structure of Isaiah 2:2-4:6. What is each of the following sections about:
 - a. Isaiah 2:2-5
 - b. Isaiah 2:6-4:1
 - c. Isaiah 4:2-6
2. How does God judge his people (as seen in Is. 3) and what are the reasons for his judgment? (See especially v. 3:1-3, 8 & v. 3:16-22. What does the Lord "take away" and why?)

3. What are the consequences of removing Judah's leaders and the women's finery?
4. Who, according to Isaiah in verses 9-11, is responsible for the social anarchy described in the preceding verses?
5. Compare and contrast **Is. 3:1-4:1** and **Is. 4:2-6**:
 - a. What is taken away and what is created? (*Note how God does not "give back", but creates something new!*)
 - b. Who is removed from leadership and who rules?
 - c. Who is haughty, adorned with finery and who is humble, beautiful, glorious and honoured?
 - d. What does the absence of marriage bring and what does the (wedding) canopy provide?
 - e. What are the people like before and what will they (the remnant) be like after?
 - f. What does the presence of the Lord evoke before (not part of this section, but see v. 2: 10) and what does it provide after?
 - g. Do you notice any other contrasts?
5. How are the elders and leaders of God's people described? What are they doing (v. 12-15)?
6. Who will be the recipients of what is promised in Is. 4:2-6?

INTERPRET

*What does the passage mean (**So what?**)?*

Based on the observations, what did the text mean to its original audience? What is God saying?

1. What does the structure as observed in question 1 above reveal about God? (*Hint: God's promises bookend God's confrontation of his people.*)
2. "Support" and "supply" (Is. 3:1) are the masculine and feminine forms of the same Hebrew word. What does this tell you about God's judgment through "taking away"?
3. What does the long list of finery symbolise about the daughters of Zion?
4. What do the comparisons between Is. 3:1-4:1 and Is. 4:2-6 reveal about God and his future kingdom?

APPLY

What should we do and why (**Now what?**)?

In light of the meaning of the text in its context, what principles apply to us today?

Regarding leadership:

(See also for example Matt. 24:45-51, 2 Tim. 4:1-2, Jam. 3:1, John 10:10-11, Philippians 2, Mark 10:45.)

1. What warning(s) does Is. 3:1-4:1 provide for those who are in a position of leadership? What encouragement is provided for anyone under leadership?
2. One commentator (Smith) writes that "when godly people fail to step up to positions of leadership, people with questionable character and competence will be elected". In what ways is this statement true of you? In what areas might God be calling you to step up to positions of leadership for the good of others and the glory of his name?
3. What does God want leadership to look like, and what kind of leader are you?
4. Why is Jesus a leader worth following?

Regarding pride (especially in respect of physical appearance):

1. If you had to take an inventory of your "finery", what would be on the list? That is, in what ways do you seek to attract attention (negative or positive) to yourself? *(See 1 Sam. 16:7)*
2. Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." What in life do you fear losing the most? What would God have to take away from you so that you would prize Jesus as your only gain?
3. How, in this past week, have you been motivated by pride? Or, what gift from God has resulted in a prideful attitude?
4. What makes Jesus (the branch of the Lord) the most beautiful and glorious? What can you do practically to behold his beauty more? What effect could this have on your relationship with your possessions, wealth, status, appearance, time, relationships, or anything else you consider "yours"?

PRAYER

Lead your group in a prayer of thanksgiving and praise in response to this week's passage.