

## Isaiah 59 • He Will Restore Truth

### Introduction

Why do some relationships last a lifetime growing stronger and deeper, and others fail dramatically? The answer is that it's probably the result of whatever formed the foundation for that relationship. Trust and mutual respect engender deeper trust and respect; deception and pretense foster more of the same. Although God loves us and desires a loving relationship with us, the fact is that a right relationship with Him is formed on the basis of truth: truth about sin, truth about who we are in relation to Him, truth that defines our behavior going forward. There is no biblical love without truth because biblical truth defines love. Therefore when someone falls away from God, it's not love that needs to be restored but truth.

<sup>1</sup>Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short  
That it cannot save;  
Nor is His ear so dull  
That it cannot hear.

<sup>2</sup>But your iniquities have made a  
separation between you and your God,  
And your sins have hidden His face from  
you so that He does not hear.

<sup>3</sup>For your hands are defiled with blood  
And your fingers with iniquity;  
Your lips have spoken falsehood,  
Your tongue mutters wickedness.

### [Read v.1-3]

**Q: Verse 1 is really an answer to an unspoken question. What is the question?**

A: "Why doesn't the Lord save us? Is He even listening to us?"

**Q: How does v.2 provide the real answer as to why God seems so distant and unresponsive?**

1. "...your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God..."
2. "...your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."

**Q: What are the 4 anatomical parts of the body mentioned in v.3? How do they describe an existing condition of sin?**

A: "Hands" and "fingers" describe sinful deeds, "lips" and "tongue" describe a sinful heart. It's a description of someone enrolled in a sinful lifestyle both within and without.

**Q: So why are they puzzled by God's unresponsiveness?**

A: Sin is so ingrained as part of their behavior that they don't see it as the cause of the break in their relationship with God. They don't see the connection between sin and separation, or at least don't want to acknowledge it.

**Q: What biblical condition do these behaviors produce?**

A: At the very least "hypocrisy", but more likely "heresy" – allowing truth to reside side-by-side with error.

<sup>4</sup>No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly.  
They trust in confusion and speak lies;  
They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.  
<sup>5</sup>They hatch adders' eggs and weave the spider's web;  
He who eats of their eggs dies,  
And from that which is crushed a snake breaks forth.  
<sup>6</sup>Their webs will not become clothing,  
Nor will they cover themselves with their works;  
Their works are works of iniquity,  
And an act of violence is in their hands.  
<sup>7</sup>Their feet run to evil,  
And they hasten to shed innocent blood;  
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,  
Devastation and destruction are in their highways.  
<sup>8</sup>They do not know the way of peace,  
And there is no justice in their tracks;  
They have made their paths crooked,  
Whoever treads on them does not know peace.

### **[Read v.4-8]**

**Q: Given the “normal” list of sins dictated by God throughout Scripture, what might be obviously missing from this list, and to what does that speak?**

A: There is no mention here of idolatry or worship of other gods. As God has done at other times, He focuses on their treatment of others to prove that they therefore can't possibly have any real regard for Him.

**Q: How does this list of the examples of their sins begin?**

A: The references to “sues” and “pleads” represent both sides of the Law, either as a plaintiff or a defendant. In either case, regardless of which side they find their self on, they engage it dishonestly. So their sin begins by twisting God's Law in ways He never intended.

**Q: According to v.4, what are the primary tools employed to twist God's Law?**

A: “Confusion” and “lies”. If they can't cause doubt as to the true meaning of God's Word, they'll lie to render it ineffective.

**Q: How does this behavior extend to the illustration in v.5-6 of the “adders' eggs” and “spider's web”?**

- Whereas the right implementation of God's Word is often referred to throughout the Bible as “bread” – something that nourishes – their twisting of it makes it something poisonous in its end-result of deception.
- Whereas the right implementation of God's Word results in right deeds often described as “clean clothes”, their twisted implementation is no covering at all. Rather than works of righteousness, “*Their works are works of iniquity*”.

**Q: What is the result of their misapplication of God's Law according to v.7?**

- They actively pursue evil deeds. (“*Their feet run to evil*”) This matches the opening remarks concerning the sins of their hands and fingers.
- Their thought-life pursues evil. (“*Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity*”) This echoes the opening remarks concerning their lips and tongue.

**Q: According to v.8, what do these behaviors of misapplying God's Word combine to produce?**

A: “Tracks” with no basis in justice and crooked “paths”. In other words, a lifestyle leading away from God which never satisfies, never knows “*the way of peace*”.

**Point:** People that have never come to Christ may struggle with sin, but not necessarily understand it to be sin. Backsliding Christians who at one time accepted Christ came into a precise knowledge of sin and therefore must twist its meaning and definition according to God's Word in order to justify behavior that returns them to the old life. Whereas non-Believers are blinded by Satan to be kept from seeing the truth, back-slidden Believers engage in self-deception to achieve the same thing.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore justice is far from us,  
And righteousness does not overtake us;  
We hope for light, but behold, darkness,  
For brightness, but we walk in gloom.

<sup>10</sup>We grope along the wall like blind men,  
We grope like those who have no eyes;  
We stumble at midday as in the twilight,  
Among those who are vigorous we are  
like dead men.

<sup>11</sup>All of us growl like bears,  
And moan sadly like doves;  
We hope for justice, but there is none,  
For salvation, but it is far from us.

<sup>12</sup>For our transgressions are multiplied  
before You,

And our sins testify against us;  
For our transgressions are with us,  
And we know our iniquities:

<sup>13</sup>Transgressing and denying the Lord,  
And turning away from our God,  
Speaking oppression and revolt,  
Conceiving in and uttering from the heart  
lying words.

<sup>14</sup>Justice is turned back,  
And righteousness stands far away;  
For truth has stumbled in the street,  
And uprightness cannot enter.

<sup>15a</sup>Yes, truth is lacking;  
And he who turns aside from evil makes  
himself a prey.

### [Read v.9-11]

**Q: How does this spiritual condition fit with the explanation of the previous verses regarding self-deception?**

A: As v.8 summarized it, “*They do not know the way of peace*”. Their self-deception results in a continuing downward spiral. The ironic thing about being deceived is that you’re **deceived** and all the while such bad behavior is pursued, the person still cries out to God for help as if it’s **NOT** a result of their choices. It’s the very definition of spiritual blindness, of groping about.

### [Read v.12-15a]

**Q: What is the root cause given in v.12?**

- “*Transgressions*” – The act of rebellion against God’s standards.
- “*Sins*” – Failure to obey God’s standards.
- “*Iniquities*” – Deviating from or even twisting God’s standards.

**Q: What behaviors are employed which result in “transgressions”, “sins”, and “iniquities”?**

- Transgressing (rebellious against) the Lord
- Denying the Lord
- Turning away from God
- Speaking oppression and revolt
- Lying from the heart

**Q: How does v.14 express the underlying cause?**

A: “...*truth has stumbled in the street and uprightness cannot enter.*”

**Q: What is the end result of these behaviors according to v.15?**

A: “...*truth is lacking...*”

**Point:** *The twisting of God’s Word not only results in a wayward course away from God, but finds its ultimate destination in a place completely void of truth. Whereas pursuing God results in finding God, pursuing falsehood results in finding a place of nothing BUT falsehood, a vacuum where truth is concerned.*

**Q: Why does a person in this condition make himself a prey?**

A: They are in a situation where they must either participate in evil or become its victim.

<sup>15b</sup> Now the LORD saw,  
 And it was displeasing in His sight that  
 there was no justice.  
<sup>16</sup> And He saw that there was no man,  
 And was astonished that there was no one  
 to intercede;  
 Then His own arm brought salvation to  
 Him,  
 And His righteousness upheld Him.  
<sup>17</sup> He put on righteousness like a  
 breastplate,  
 And a helmet of salvation on His head;  
 And He put on garments of vengeance for  
 clothing  
 And wrapped Himself with zeal as a  
 mantle.  
<sup>18</sup> According to their deeds, so He will  
 repay,  
 Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to  
 His enemies;  
 To the coastlands He will make  
 recompense.  
<sup>19</sup> So they will fear the name of the LORD  
 from the west  
 And His glory from the rising of the sun,  
 For He will come like a rushing stream  
 Which the wind of the LORD drives.  
<sup>20</sup> “A Redeemer will come to Zion,  
 And to those who turn from transgression  
 in Jacob,” declares the LORD.

<sup>21</sup> “As for Me, this is My covenant with  
 them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit which  
 is upon you, and My words which I have  
 put in your mouth shall not depart from  
 your mouth, nor from the mouth of your  
 offspring, nor from the mouth of your  
 offspring’s offspring,” says the LORD,  
 “from now and forever.”

## [Read v.15b-20]

**Q: So according to v.15-16, what does it take to enable spiritual recovery?**

A: An intercessor or mediator, someone greater than mere man who can, on their behalf, effect salvation. In Isaiah’s time this spoke of the Messiah to come, from our perspective this is Christ Jesus.

**Q: Why does the armor in v.17 sound familiar?**

A: It begins like the “armor of God” described by Paul in Ephesians 6:10-17.

**Q: What is the major difference between this armor adorned by the Messiah and that which Paul encourages us to don?**

A: Only Jesus can put on “vengeance” and “zeal”. Only He can actually fight the battle and accomplish either salvation for the one side or judgment of the other.

**Q: How does v.18 fit with the previous discussion of God’s list of man’s sins which began this chapter?**

A: God’s list of sins were exclusive to the “second tablet”, those commandments to “love your neighbor”. Recompense “according to their deeds” is a direct association to one’s actions as to whether or not they obeyed God’s commandments regarding their neighbor.

**Q: For whom does the Redeemer work?**

A: “...those who turn from transgression...” Just as choice led down the path to rejection of the truth, so choice is able to lead one back again.

## [Read v.21]

**Q: What is the ultimate work of the Redeemer?**

A: To enable faithfulness to God’s Word. He restores Truth.

**Q: Why is there no mention of “love” in this and similar passages? Isn’t love supposed to be the most important thing above all else?**

A: Without truth, there is no love. Love is defined by God’s truth. Without truth, our self-deception brought about by twisting God’s Word also twists the definition of love into something unbiblical as well.

## Epilogue

*When Christians speak of employing “tough love” to hold another Christian accountable for their behavior to bring them back to biblical standards of living, what they’re really stating is the need for truth to be restored to that life. As the back-sliding brother or sister continues on their path, it can’t be “loved” away but requires a course correction in the way they handle and apply God’s Word to their life. In such cases, the application of truth is the best way can “love” them back to where they need to be. To **NOT** insist on returning to the truth is actually a complete lack of love on our part. If we love them, we will force the issue of truth in the best interest of all parties involved.*