



Healing and Wholeness

(5) Barriers to wholeness (according to Isaiah)

Healing of the nation and the community – Isaiah 58

Opening up! Series prayer

Come in weakness, find strength; come in sickness, find health;
Come in chains, find freedom; come in confusion, find peace;
Come in sorrow, find joy; come in doubt, find faith;
Come in despair, find courage; come alone, find Christ.

As this is the last in the series you may wish to take the opportunity to reflect on what you feel you have learnt during this series

Listening in!

Read Isaiah 58 and then keep a few moments silence

Read the passage again inviting everyone to share a word or a phrase that strikes them and if they wish to **briefly** share why.

Looking Out (with sadness)

An exploration of brokenness

The passage in Isaiah gives a picture of a broken society in dire need of God's healing. Yet it is a passage full of hope and promise as well. It looks to God's people to be 'repairer of broken walls' and 'restorer of streets.'

Today's world is very individualistic and often very driven with the consequences of anxiety, stress, isolation, loneliness and emptiness.

Gandhi's list of seven deadly sins has been praised by Christian leaders for challenging the values of the culture we live in:

1. Politics without principle
 2. Wealth without work
 3. Commerce without morality
 4. Pleasure without conscience
 5. Education without character
 6. Science without humanity
 7. Worship without sacrifice
- Do any of these strike a chord with you?
 - Can you say why and can you link it with a verse from Isaiah 58 or another scripture?

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, the prophets lamented the lack of justice, care for the poor and the stranger and over the lack of shalom (the wellbeing of society).

- Share briefly one thing in our society that you grieve about. (You are probably sharing God's grief.)

Looking Out (with hope and God's heart!)

An exploration of healing

Looking back at the Bible passage, what actions are to bring healing, making God's people 'repairers of broken walls' and restorers of streets'?

Discuss one or two of the following:

- Ways that God is using you, or might be calling you, to bring his healing at home, in your neighbourhood, in the workplace or in your everyday life and routines.
- An area of your life that you feel passionately about, that touches your compassion and motivates you into action. For example an organisation like Tearfund or Christian Aid; a project like A Rocha that cares for the environment; caring for those in debt, poverty, the lonely, the elderly
- Can you think of practical ways in which we can bring healing that reflect Jeremiah 29.7 and Micah 6.8?
- Do you need to act on and follow up anything that you have discussed?

Looking Up

As we close this series let us focus on Jesus and all he has taught and continues to teach us. Create an atmosphere of praise and worship - it may be helpful to play a worship song which draws us to him e.g Just one touch from the King by Godfrey Birtill or Healing Rain by Michael W Smith (both available on Youtube with lyrics) or perhaps a song or hymn that resonates with your group. You might like to light a candle....be creative! Now turn your discussions into prayer as the Lord Jesus leads.