

Life Group Notes

Series: God is closer than you think

Is God at home in you?

Isaiah 57:11-21

To begin

Is there a place – or places – where you have especially known the presence of God? Is it a place where God seems to be at home?

Today, we will be exploring Isaiah 57v15 and the surrounding verses:

‘For this is what the high and exalted One says – he who lives for ever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”’

Questions for discussion

1. The people of Israel believed that God was especially present in the Temple at Jerusalem. How do you think they would have felt at being unable to worship there whilst in exile in Babylon? What might they have felt about God and about Babylon? (See Psalm 137)
2. Is there a time you can share when it seems that God was absent from your life? What was it that allowed him to be present again?
3. For what reasons did Israel experience the absence of God from their community? See Isaiah 56:9-57:21. (NB Not all experiences of the absence of God are caused by sin in our lives, but some of them may be)
4. In verse 14, God says ‘And it will be said: “Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people.”’ King Cyrus was an obstacle, but God moved him to allow Israelites to return and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). King Artaxerxes was an obstacle, but he was favourable to Nehemiah’s requests to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-9). What obstacles are there today to the worship of God? Be encouraged that the Lord can remove them!
5. What is Solomon’s answer to the question: ‘Will God really dwell on earth with humans?’ See 2 Chronicles 6:18-21. What is the answer of the New Testament? See e.g. John 1:14.
6. Where can God make his second home? (v16) How can this happen? (These were the suggestions in Tim’s sermon: Turn from your sin and yourself. Turn to God, through his Son; turn to God’s Word; turn to God’s family.)
7. If God has made his second home in you, what difference does it make? Is God at home in our church? (See 1 Cor 3:16)
8. What does the promise of Revelation 21:3 mean to you?

To close

Pray:

- For those who feel that God is not at home in them – that they would know his presence
- That God would be at home in our church, and that all would experience his Spirit's presence

Tim Edworthy

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