

Opening Prayer

With hearts full of hope,
minds open to receive,
and ears tuned to hear,
we draw near, Lord God, to learn
and to share your all-powerful, guiding truth.

Amen.

Read Isaiah 5. 1-25

The prophet uses the picture of a vineyard to describe God's relationship with his people. But the people do not produce the expected fruit, and the vineyard is to be destroyed.

Questions for discussion: -

1. In what ways was the fruit of the people not up to God's standards?
2. How do you understand v 25? (Is God going to strike, or is there time for a change?)
3. If Isaiah spoke to us today, what image might he use?

Read Isaiah 30. 1-5

Later, the prophet warns the king to trust God when a foreign king attacks Jerusalem, but the rulers instead, try to form an alliance with Egypt.

Questions for discussion: -

1. What is the sin of the rulers?
2. In what ways do we forget God and do things for ourselves?

Read Isaiah 58. 6-12

We are now with the later writer who is still trying to get the people to behave as God wants them to.

Questions for discussion: -

1. What did God expect the people to do?
2. What injustices do you think make God angry today?

Questions for personal reflection: -

Being angry at what is wrong in society is sometimes called righteous anger, and Jesus sometimes showed this towards the authorities.

1. What brings out righteous anger in you?
2. How do you think a Christian should respond to this?
3. In what ways do you think the church can take action over social injustice?

A personal prayer

Merciful God,
give us the determination to speak out for your values,
even when those closest to us disapprove.
Give us the courage to face up to inhuman social structures,
so that we might create your Kingdom in our everyday lives.
Make us bold to challenge oppressive systems,
and to confess your name and your good news.
Give us the inspiration to show the joy
that comes through living in your love.
God of choice, thank you that you go on calling us.
May our willingness to be called into the unknown
be our gift to your world.

Amen.



Mid-week Session 1



Isaiah – Tough Love

The first theme in our study of the book of Isaiah is “Tough Love”. This concerns the relationship between Judah and God. God wants his people to live according to the Torah but with a spirit of justice and righteousness. To care for other as He cares for them.