CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah Chapter 56 — A House of Prayer for All Nations

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 56 opens a new movement in the book.

Isaiah 53 revealed:

The suffering Servant.

Isaiah 54 revealed:

The covenant of peace.

Isaiah 55 extended:

The free invitation of salvation.

Isaiah 56 now asks:

What should the redeemed community look like?

The answer includes:

Justice.

Righteousness.

Faithfulness.

Holiness.

Prayer.

Welcome.

Gathering.

And:

Responsible leadership.

The chapter begins with God saying:

“Maintain justice and do what is right.”

Why?

Because:

“My salvation is close at hand.”

Grace does not produce:

Moral carelessness.

The nearness of salvation calls for:

Faithful living.

Then Isaiah turns toward people who may have believed they were:

Outside.

Foreigners.

Eunuchs.

People who might say:

I do not belong.

I have no future.

I am:

A dry tree.

God answers:

Do not say that.

Those who:

Bind themselves to the Lord.

Love His name.

Serve Him.

Hold fast to His covenant.

Will receive:

Belonging.

Honor.

Joy.

A name.

Acceptance.

The promise reaches its climax in:

“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

This becomes one of the most important lines in the chapter.

The God of Israel is gathering:

More than Israel.

He says:

“I will gather still others.”

That theme anticipates the widening mission later seen in:

The ministry of Jesus.

The inclusion of the nations.

The gathering of one people of God.

But then the tone changes dramatically.

The chapter moves from:

Welcomed outsiders.

To:

Corrupt insiders.

Foreigners and eunuchs are faithfully seeking:

God.

Meanwhile many of Israel’s watchmen are:

Blind.

Mute.

Lazy.

Greedy.

Self-serving.

The people thought to be:

Marginal.

May be faithful.

The leaders thought to be:

Privileged.

May be corrupt.

Isaiah exposes a frightening contrast.

The watchman's job is:

To see.

But they are:

Blind.

The dog's job is:

To bark.

But they are:

Mute.

The shepherd's job is:

To care for the flock.

But they seek:

Their own gain.

The leader's responsibility is:

To remain alert.

But they love:

Sleep.

And instead of preparing the people for judgment, they say:

"Tomorrow will be like today, or even far better."

That is:

Complacency.

Self-indulgence.

False security.

The chapter therefore holds together two great truths:

God welcomes sincere seekers who once seemed excluded.

God condemns leaders who possess privilege without faithfulness.

The central truth of Isaiah 56 is:

The Lord calls His people to live justly and faithfully in view of approaching salvation, welcomes foreigners and eunuchs who sincerely bind themselves to Him, declares His house to be a house of prayer for all nations, promises to gather still more people into His covenant community, and condemns blind, lazy, greedy leaders whose self-indulgence leaves the flock exposed to judgment.

I. MAINTAIN JUSTICE AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT

Isaiah 56:1 — Salvation Is Near

> **“This is what the Lord says: ‘Maintain justice and do what is right, for My salvation is close at hand, and My righteousness will soon be revealed.’”**

The command is:

Maintain justice.

Do what is right.

Why?

Because God’s salvation is:

Near.

Cross References

Micah 6:8

God requires His people to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.

Isaiah 51:5

God’s righteousness draws near and His salvation goes out, while the nations wait for His saving power.

Psalm 106:3

Those who practice justice and continually do what is right are called blessed.

Spiritual Principle

Future salvation should shape:

Present conduct.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The closer God’s salvation comes, the less sense it makes to live as though righteousness does not matter.

II. SALVATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS BELONG TOGETHER

God does not say:

Salvation is near, therefore:

Ignore obedience.

He says:

Live rightly.

Spiritual Principle

Grace and righteousness are:

Friends.

Not:

Enemies.

III. MAINTAIN JUSTICE

Justice must be:

Practiced.

Protected.

Continued.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Justice is not a slogan God’s people admire; it is a way of life they must maintain.

IV. DO WHAT IS RIGHT

Right belief should produce:

Right action.

Spiritual Principle

Orthodoxy without obedience is:

Incomplete.

V. BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO HOLDS FAST

Isaiah 56:2 — Sabbath and Moral Faithfulness

> **“Blessed is the one who does this—the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hand from doing any evil.”**

Two dimensions:

Worship.

Ethics.

The Sabbath represented:

Covenant loyalty.

The hand kept from evil represented:

Moral obedience.

Cross References

Exodus 20:8

Israel was commanded to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

James 1:25

The person who hears God’s instruction and actually does it is blessed in faithful obedience.

Psalm 1:1

Blessing belongs to the one who refuses the counsel and path of wickedness.

Spiritual Principle

True devotion affects:

Worship.

And:

Conduct.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You cannot honor God with a holy day while using the rest of your life for unholy deeds.

VI. HOLDS IT FAST

Faithfulness requires:

Perseverance.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience is not merely:

Starting.

It is:

Holding fast.

VII. KEEPS HIS HAND FROM EVIL

The hand represents:

Action.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Godly worship that never reaches the hands has not reached the whole life.

VIII. THE FOREIGNER MUST NOT SAY, “I AM EXCLUDED”

Isaiah 56:3 — Outsiders Invited In

> **“Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the Lord say, ‘The Lord will surely exclude me from His people.’ And let no eunuch complain, ‘I am only a dry tree.’”**

Two marginalized groups appear:

Foreigner.

Eunuch.

Both may fear:

Exclusion.

Cross References

Ephesians 2:12

Paul describes Gentiles as once separated from Israel’s covenant privileges and without the same historic access to the promises.

Acts 10:34

Peter declares that God does not show favoritism based on ethnicity or nationality.

Galatians 3:28

In Christ, ethnic, social, and gender distinctions do not determine access to covenant standing before God.

Spiritual Principle

God’s grace can reach people who believe:

They do not belong.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never let yesterday’s exclusion speak louder than God’s invitation.

IX. “BOUND HIMSELF TO THE LORD”

The foreigner is not merely:

Curious.

He has:

Joined himself.

Committed himself.

Belonged himself to:

The Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Inclusion is not:

Indifference.

It is covenant:

Commitment.

X. THE EUNUCH’S FEAR

> **“I am only a dry tree.”**

This means:

No descendants.

No family line.

No legacy.

Spiritual Principle

Human loss does not determine:

Divine worth.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can give a person a name that outlives the family line they thought they needed in order to matter.

XI. EUNUCHS WHO PLEASE GOD

Isaiah 56:4 — Covenant Faithfulness Matters More Than Social Status

> **“For this is what the Lord says: ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, who choose what pleases Me and hold fast to My covenant—’”**

What matters?

Not:

Social prestige.

Physical condition.

Public status.

But:

Faithfulness.

Cross References

Acts 8:27

An Ethiopian eunuch becomes one of the striking New Testament examples of an outsider seeking God and receiving the good news of Jesus.

Deuteronomy 23:1

Old covenant restrictions help us appreciate the remarkable inclusiveness of Isaiah’s promise here.

Matthew 19:12

Jesus speaks of eunuchs in several senses, including those who willingly remain unmarried for the sake of God’s kingdom.

Spiritual Principle

Covenant faithfulness matters more than:

Human category.

XII. CHOOSE WHAT PLEASES GOD

This is deliberate:

Obedience.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Holiness is not merely avoiding what displeases God; it is choosing what pleases Him.

XIII. HOLD FAST TO THE COVENANT

Commitment must become:

Durability.

Spiritual Principle

Covenant loyalty is:

Relational faithfulness.

XIV. A NAME BETTER THAN SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Isaiah 56:5 — Everlasting Honor

> **“To them I will give within My house and within My walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will never be cut off.”**

The eunuch fears:

No descendants.

God offers:

An everlasting name.

Cross References

Revelation 2:17

Christ promises the overcomer a new name known personally within God’s covenant blessing.

Matthew 19:12

Jesus recognizes lives shaped by kingdom devotion beyond ordinary expectations of marriage and family.

Isaiah 62:2

God promises His restored people a new name given by the Lord Himself.

Spiritual Principle

God can give:

Legacy.

Where society sees:

Loss.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A name given by God is better than a reputation manufactured by people.

XV. “WITHIN MY HOUSE”

Belonging is:

Internal.

Not distant.

Spiritual Principle

God does not merely tolerate the outsider at:

The edge.

He gives a place:

Within.

XVI. EVERLASTING NAME

Earthly names:

Fade.

God-given identity:

Endures.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What God writes into eternity cannot be erased by what people denied you in history.

XVII. FOREIGNERS WHO LOVE THE LORD'S NAME

Isaiah 56:6 — Servants from the Nations

> **"And the foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be His servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to My covenant—"**

Notice the language:

Bind themselves.

Minister.

Love.

Serve.

Keep.

Hold fast.

Cross References

Ephesians 2:19

Gentile believers are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens and members of God's household.

Galatians 3:28

All who belong to Christ share equal covenant standing regardless of former social distinctions.

Romans 10:12

There is no distinction in access to the Lord, for the same Lord richly blesses all who call upon Him.

Spiritual Principle

Belonging to God includes:

Love.

Service.

Faithfulness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God’s welcome is never merely an invitation to attend; it is an invitation to belong, love, serve, and worship.

XVIII. LOVE THE NAME OF THE LORD

Not merely:

Fear punishment.

Love:

His name.

Spiritual Principle

Covenant life is:

Relational.

XIX. TO BE HIS SERVANTS

The outsider becomes:

Servant.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The one once treated as outside can become someone who ministers inside the house of God.

XX. BROUGHT TO THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

Isaiah 56:7 — A House of Prayer for All Nations

> **“These I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”**

What does God give?

Access.

Joy.

Acceptance.

Prayer.

Belonging.

Cross References

Matthew 21:13

Jesus quotes this verse when cleansing the temple, condemning corruption of a place meant for prayer.

Mark 11:17

Mark records Jesus emphasizing the full phrase:

> **“A house of prayer for all nations.”**

Luke 19:46

Jesus rebukes those who turned the temple from a place of prayer into a corrupt marketplace.

Spiritual Principle

God’s house is meant to be:

A place of prayer.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A house bearing God’s name has failed part of its purpose when people can find commerce, performance, and activity there but not prayer.

XXI. “FOR ALL NATIONS”

This is one of the chapter’s great emphases.

Not:

One ethnicity only.

Not:

One social class.

Not:

One background.

Spiritual Principle

God’s redemptive purpose reaches:

Nations.

XXII. JOY IN THE HOUSE OF PRAYER

Prayer is not pictured as:

Miserable religious duty.

It is associated with:

Joy.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The house of prayer should not feel like the house of exclusion to people genuinely seeking the Lord.

XXIII. THEIR OFFERINGS ACCEPTED

Once marginalized.

Now:

Accepted.

Spiritual Principle

God grants:

Worshiping access.

XXIV. JESUS AND ISAIAH 56:7

When Jesus cleansed the temple, He quoted:

This verse.

Why?

Because worship had become:

Corrupted.

The place meant for:

Prayer.

Had become:

Exploitation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus was not merely angry about buying and selling; He was defending the purpose of His Father’s house.

XXV. THE GOD WHO GATHERS

Isaiah 56:8 — “I Will Gather Still Others”

> **“The Sovereign Lord declares—He who gathers the exiles of Israel: ‘I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.’”**

God is:

Gatherer.

Israel:

Gathered.

Others:

Still to be gathered.

Cross References

John 10:16

Jesus speaks of other sheep not presently in the same fold whom He must also bring, resulting in one flock under one Shepherd.

Ephesians 2:14

Christ breaks down hostility and creates peace between formerly divided peoples.

John 11:52

Christ’s death is described as gathering together God’s scattered children.

Spiritual Principle

God’s gathering work is:

Expanding.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never assume God is finished gathering simply because the people you expected have already arrived.

XXVI. “STILL OTHERS”

Those words enlarge:

Expectation.

Spiritual Principle

God’s kingdom is:

Still gathering.

XXVII. ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

The chapter does not erase:

Israel.

It expands:

The gathering.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God’s inclusion of the nations does not require pretending Israel never mattered; it reveals how wide His saving purpose has always been.

XXVIII. THE TONE CHANGES

Verses 1–8:

Justice.

Faithfulness.

Welcome.

Prayer.

Gathering.

Verses 9–12:

Predators.

Blindness.

Greed.

Sleep.

Drunkenness.

Key Truth

The chapter moves from faithful outsiders being welcomed to unfaithful leaders being condemned.

XXIX. BEASTS OF THE FIELD ARE SUMMONED

Isaiah 56:9 — Judgment Approaches

> **“Come, all you beasts of the field, come and devour, all you beasts of the forest!”**

This is:

Judgment imagery.

Why are predators invited?

Because those responsible for protecting the flock have:

Failed.

Cross References

Jeremiah 12:9

Predatory birds and beasts are summoned against what has become exposed to judgment.

Zephaniah 3:8

God announces a day when nations are gathered for judgment.

Jeremiah 15:3

God appoints multiple forms of devastation against persistent rebellion.

Spiritual Principle

When watchmen fail, danger increases.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A sleeping guard does not make the enemy less dangerous; it makes the people more exposed.

XXX. WATCHMEN ARE BLIND

Isaiah 56:10 — Leaders Who Cannot See

> **“Israel’s watchmen are blind; they all lack knowledge. They are mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep.”**

Every image is:

Failure of function.

Watchman:

Blind.

Teacher:

Lacks knowledge.

Guard dog:

Mute.

Leader:

Sleeping.

Cross References

Ezekiel 3:17

A prophet is appointed as a watchman who must hear God’s warning and faithfully warn the people.

Ezekiel 34:2

God condemns shepherds who feed themselves instead of caring for the flock.

Jeremiah 6:17

God had placed watchmen to sound warning, yet the people refused to listen.

Spiritual Principle

Leadership is dangerous when:

Position remains.

Function disappears.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A title cannot compensate for blindness.

XXXI. A WATCHMAN WHO CANNOT SEE

The first qualification is:

Vision.

Spiritual Principle

Leaders must perceive:

Danger.

Truth.

Direction.

XXXII. LACK KNOWLEDGE

Ignorance in leadership is:

Dangerous.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

People should never be expected to follow confidently where leaders refuse to understand faithfully.

XXXIII. MUTE DOGS

A watchdog that cannot bark is:

Useless in danger.

Spiritual Principle

A spiritual leader who sees danger but refuses to warn is failing:

The flock.

XXXIV. THEY LOVE TO SLEEP

The issue is not:

Physical rest.

It is:

Negligence.

Complacency.

Unwatchfulness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There is a difference between resting after faithful service and sleeping through your responsibility.

XXXV. GREEDY DOGS

Isaiah 56:11 — Leaders Seeking Their Own Gain

> **“They are greedy dogs, never satisfied. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain.”**

What drives them?

Greed.

Self.

Gain.

Cross References

Micah 3:11

Leaders, priests, and prophets are condemned for serving in spiritual roles for money while presuming upon God’s presence.

1 Timothy 3:8

Church leaders are warned against greed and dishonest gain.

Titus 1:7

An overseer must not be greedy for gain because leadership belongs to stewardship rather than self-enrichment.

Spiritual Principle

Self-interest corrupts:

Spiritual leadership.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The shepherd becomes dangerous when he begins calculating what the sheep can do for him.

XXXVI. NEVER SATISFIED

Greed has:

No finish line.

Spiritual Principle

Appetite without godliness becomes:

Endless.

XXXVII. SHEPHERDS WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING

A shepherd should know:

The flock.

The field.

The dangers.

The path.

These do not.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Leadership without understanding turns authority into hazard.

XXXVIII. “THEY ALL TURN TO THEIR OWN WAY”

This echoes Isaiah 53:6:

> **“Each of us has turned to his own way.”**

The difference is striking.

Isaiah 53:

The Servant bears the sin of straying sheep.

Isaiah 56:

The shepherds themselves turn to:

Their own way.

Spiritual Principle

Leaders need:

The Servant.

As much as:

The flock.

XXXIX. EACH SEEKS HIS OWN GAIN

The opposite of:

Servanthood.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question of ministry is not, “What can I get?” but, “Whom am I responsible to serve?”

XL. “COME, LET US GET WINE”

Isaiah 56:12 — Complacent Leaders

> **“‘Come,’ they say, ‘let us get wine, let us drink our fill of strong drink; and tomorrow will be like today, or even far better.’”**

Their worldview:

Pleasure now.

No concern for:

Judgment.

Tomorrow will be:

Fine.

Better.

Cross References

Amos 6:6

The complacent elite drink abundantly and indulge themselves while remaining unconcerned about the ruin of God’s people.

Luke 12:19

Jesus describes the fool who tells himself to relax, eat, drink, and enjoy life while ignoring the nearness of divine accountability.

1 Corinthians 15:32

Paul cites the attitude:

Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,

as the logic of life stripped of resurrection hope and divine accountability.

Spiritual Principle

Complacency assumes:

Tomorrow belongs to us.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

One of the most dangerous sentences in spiritual life is: “Tomorrow will be just like today.”

XLI. INTOXICATION AND LEADERSHIP

They are not:

Watching.

They are:

Drinking.

Spiritual Principle

Self-indulgence dulls:

Spiritual awareness.

XLII. FALSE OPTIMISM

“Tomorrow will be like today, or even far better.”

There is no:

Repentance.

No:

Warning.

No:

Discernment.

Only:

Presumption.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Optimism without truth is not faith.

It is denial.

XLIII. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT RIGHTEOUS LIVING

Justice.

Right conduct.

Avoiding evil.

Faithfulness.

Spiritual Principle

Salvation produces:

A moral response.

XLIV. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT THE SABBATH

In its old covenant setting, Sabbath observance functions as:

A sign of covenant faithfulness.

Spiritual Principle

God’s people are called to order life around:

His authority.

XLV. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT FOREIGNERS

The foreigner who joins himself to the Lord should not say:

I am excluded.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Grace creates belonging where ethnicity once appeared to create distance.

XLVI. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT EUNUCHS

God gives:

A place.

A name.

An everlasting memorial.

Spiritual Principle

Human limitation cannot erase:

Divine dignity.

XLVII. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT IDENTITY

God gives a name:

Better than descendants.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Your deepest identity is not finally determined by biology, social standing, or cultural recognition, but by the God who names His people.

XLVIII. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT GOD’S HOUSE

It is:

A house of prayer.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer belongs at the heart of:

Worship.

XLIX. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT THE NATIONS

God says:

All nations.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God’s house is not designed to become a private religious club.

L. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT GATHERING

God gathers:

Israel.

Others.

Still others.

Spiritual Principle

The mission continues.

LI. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT LEADERSHIP

Leaders must:

See.

Know.

Warn.

Serve.

Watch.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A leader who cannot see, will not warn, and seeks personal gain has abandoned the very purpose of leadership.

LII. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT GREED

Greed transforms shepherds into:

Dogs.

Spiritual Principle

Ministry becomes corrupted when:

Gain becomes the goal.

LIII. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT COMPLACENCY

Tomorrow assumed.

Judgment ignored.

Pleasure pursued.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Complacency is dangerous because it treats unpromised tomorrows as guaranteed property.

LIV. WHAT ISAIAH 56 TEACHES ABOUT TRUE INCLUSION

Inclusion means:

Coming to the Lord.

Loving His name.

Serving Him.

Holding His covenant.

Spiritual Principle

Biblical welcome does not mean:

God has no standards.

It means people from every background are welcomed into:

Covenant faithfulness.

LV. GRACE AND HOLINESS

Foreigners welcomed.

But also:

Bind themselves to Lord.

Love His name.

Serve.

Obey.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Grace removes illegitimate barriers without removing God’s call to holiness.

LVI. THE OUTSIDER MAY BE FAITHFUL

Foreigners.

Eunuchs.

They seek:

God.

Spiritual Principle

Do not assume spiritual maturity based on:

Social position.

LVII. THE INSIDER MAY BE CORRUPT

Watchmen.

Shepherds.

Leaders.

They fail.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Religious position is not proof of spiritual faithfulness.

LVIII. ISAIAH 55 AND ISAIAH 56

Isaiah 55

> **“Come, all you who are thirsty.”**

Isaiah 56

Foreigners and eunuchs are:

Welcomed.

Key Truth

The free invitation of Isaiah 55 becomes visible in the expanding covenant community of Isaiah 56.

LIX. ISAIAH 54–56

Isaiah 54

Enlarge the:

Tent.

Isaiah 55

Invite the:

Thirsty.

Isaiah 56

Gather:

Foreigners and outsiders.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God enlarges the tent because He intends to fill it with people once considered far away.

LX. ISAIAH 49 AND ISAIAH 56

Isaiah 49

The Servant is light to:

Nations.

Isaiah 56

The nations are welcomed into:

Prayer and worship.

Spiritual Principle

Mission moves toward:

Worship.

LXI. ISAIAH 52 AND ISAIAH 56

Isaiah 52

All ends of earth see:

God’s salvation.

Isaiah 56

God’s house welcomes:

All nations.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Worldwide salvation naturally produces worldwide worship.

LXII. ISAIAH 53 AND ISAIAH 56

Isaiah 53

The Servant bears:

Sin.

Isaiah 56

The excluded receive:

A place.

Key Truth

The suffering Servant’s saving work provides the theological foundation for a covenant people broader than old social boundaries.

LXIII. JOHN 10 AND ISAIAH 56

Isaiah:

> **“I will gather still others.”**

Jesus:

> **“I have other sheep.”**

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Shepherd always had more sheep in view than the current fold could see.

LXIV. EPHESIANS 2 AND ISAIAH 56

Foreigners once:

Far.

Now:

Fellow citizens.

Spiritual Principle

Christ creates:

Belonging.

LXV. ACTS 8 AND ISAIAH 56

Isaiah promises hope to:

Eunuchs.

Acts records:

An Ethiopian eunuch.

Reading:

Isaiah.

Hearing:

Jesus.

Receiving:

Baptism.

Going on his way:

Rejoicing.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The man who might once have read “dry tree” can become a living example of God’s promise to outsiders.

LXVI. JESUS CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

Jesus cites:

Isaiah 56:7.

The issue:

God’s house.

Prayer.

Nations.

Corruption.

Spiritual Principle

God takes the purpose of worship seriously.

LXVII. A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Not primarily:

A house of entertainment.

Commerce.

Status.

Performance.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When prayer becomes peripheral, a church should ask whether something central has been displaced.

LXVIII. ALL NATIONS

The nations are not:

An interruption.

They are part of:

The purpose.

Spiritual Principle

God’s mission is:

Global.

LXIX. HOLY MOUNTAIN

The outsider receives access to:

Sacred space.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Grace takes people from “I do not belong” to “God brought me near.”

LXX. ACCEPTED WORSHIP

God accepts:

Those He gathers.

Spiritual Principle

Belonging culminates in:

Worship.

LXXI. GOD GATHERS EXILES

Restoration.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who scatters in judgment can gather in mercy.

LXXII. STILL OTHERS

Mission unfinished.

Spiritual Principle

Never close the guest list before:

God does.

LXXIII. BEASTS INVITED

Judgment appears because:

Leaders failed.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Negligent leadership can create openings for destructive forces.

LXXIV. BLIND WATCHMEN

Contradiction in terms.

Spiritual Principle

Position cannot substitute for:

Perception.

LXXV. LACK KNOWLEDGE

Ignorance becomes:

Dangerous.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A leader who refuses to learn eventually forces others to suffer the cost of his ignorance.

LXXVI. MUTE DOGS

No warning.

Spiritual Principle

Silence can become:

Negligence.

LXXVII. DREAMING LEADERS

Detached from:

Reality.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The flock does not need leaders dreaming through danger; it needs leaders awake to truth.

LXXVIII. LOVE TO SLEEP

Pleasure over:

Responsibility.

Spiritual Principle

Comfort becomes sinful when it causes:

Neglect.

LXXIX. GREEDY DOGS

Never:

Enough.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Greed has no vocabulary for “enough.”

LXXX. SHEPHERDS SEEKING THEIR OWN WAY

Self-centered leadership.

Spiritual Principle

The shepherd must not become:

The center of the flock.

LXXXI. OWN GAIN

Profit over:

People.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Ministry dies when people become resources for the leader instead of souls entrusted to the leader.

LXXXII. WINE AND STRONG DRINK

Self-indulgence.

Spiritual Principle

Pleasure becomes dangerous when it replaces:

Watchfulness.

LXXXIII. “TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER”

Presumption.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Faith trusts God with tomorrow.

Presumption assumes tomorrow owes us comfort.

LXXXIV. RIGHTEOUS OUTSIDERS VERSUS CORRUPT INSIDERS

This may be one of the chapter’s strongest contrasts.

Outsiders:

Love God.

Insiders:

Love gain.

Outsiders:

Hold covenant.

Leaders:

Turn to own way.

Outsiders:

Seek prayer.

Leaders:

Seek wine.

Key Truth

God evaluates people by faithfulness, not by proximity to religious privilege.

LXXXV. RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGE CAN BECOME DANGEROUS

The leaders have:

Position.

Yet lack:

Faithfulness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The closer a person stands to holy things, the greater the danger of assuming proximity equals obedience.

LXXXVI. A NAME BETTER THAN HUMAN LEGACY

The eunuch fears:

No children.

God promises:

An everlasting name.

Spiritual Principle

God can give:

Eternal significance.

LXXXVII. SERVANTHOOD IS HONOR

The foreigners become:

Servants.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Serving God is not second-class citizenship in His kingdom; it is covenant honor.

LXXXVIII. LOVE AND SERVICE

Love:

The name.

Serve:

The Lord.

Spiritual Principle

True worship combines:

Affection.

Action.

LXXXIX. PRAYER AND MISSION

House of prayer.

All nations.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A missionary church should be a praying church, because the God who gathers nations is the God we seek in prayer.

XC. PRAYER AND PURITY

The chapter begins:

Justice.

Righteousness.

Avoid evil.

Then:

Prayer.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer does not excuse:

Unrighteous living.

XCI. PRAYER AND JOY

God gives:

Joy.

In:

House of prayer.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Prayer should not only be the place where burdens are carried; it should also become the place where God gives joy.

XCII. SALVATION IS NEAR

Verse 1.

Spiritual Principle

Urgency should create:

Faithfulness.

XCIII. RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL BE REVEALED

God’s future:

Approaches.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Live today in light of what God says He will reveal tomorrow.

XCIV. BLESSED IS THE ONE

Faithfulness has:

Blessing.

Spiritual Principle

God notices:

Obedience.

XCV. KEEP THE HAND FROM EVIL

Practical holiness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Spirituality must eventually reach what your hands do.

XCVI. DO NOT SAY, “EXCLUDE ME”

The foreigner’s fear is:

Rejected.

Spiritual Principle

God speaks against:

Hopeless self-exclusion.

XCVII. DO NOT SAY, “DRY TREE”

The eunuch’s identity statement is:

Corrected.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not make your limitation your name when God has promised you a better one.

XCVIII. A MEMORIAL IN GOD’S HOUSE

Remembered by:

God.

Spiritual Principle

God can preserve:

Legacy.

XCIX. AN EVERLASTING NAME

No expiration.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Human memory fades.

God’s naming does not.

C. MINISTER TO THE LORD

Service directed:

Upward.

Spiritual Principle

Ministry begins with:

God.

CI. LOVE HIS NAME

Affection directed:

Toward God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The servant who loves only the work and not the Lord will eventually lose the heart of ministry.

CII. JOY ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

The outsider becomes:

Worshiper.

Spiritual Principle

Grace brings people:

Near.

CIII. ACCEPTED ON THE ALTAR

Worship recognized.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who once seemed distant says: “Your worship is welcome here.”

CIV. HOUSE FOR ALL NATIONS

The temple points beyond:

Ethnic restriction.

Spiritual Principle

The worshiping people of God are:

International.

CV. GATHERER OF ISRAEL

God remains:

Faithful.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who widens the family does not become unfaithful to His earlier promises.

CVI. GATHER STILL OTHERS

Expansion.

Spiritual Principle

God’s grace keeps:

Moving outward.

CVII. BEASTS COME BECAUSE WATCHMEN FAIL

Leadership has:

Consequences.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When those assigned to guard refuse to watch, those assigned to follow become vulnerable.

CVIII. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES VISION

Watchman:

Must see.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual blindness at the top becomes:

Danger below.

CIX. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES COURAGE

Dog:

Must bark.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Love for people sometimes requires sounding an alarm they would rather not hear.

CX. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES KNOWLEDGE

Shepherd:

Must understand.

Spiritual Principle

Good intentions cannot substitute for:

Wisdom.

CXI. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES SELFLESSNESS

Shepherd:

Feeds flock.

Not:

Self.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A leader who consumes the flock is no shepherd at all.

CXII. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES WATCHFULNESS

Sleeping through danger:

Failure.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual leaders must remain:

Awake.

CXIII. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES SOBRIETY

Wine dominates:

Their thinking.

Spiritual Principle

The leader must not become enslaved to:

Appetite.

CXIV. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES REALISM

Tomorrow is not:

Guaranteed.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A faithful leader does not soothe people with false optimism when Scripture calls for warning.

CXV. ISAIAH 56 AS A MISSIONARY CHAPTER

Foreigner.

All nations.

Still others.

Gather.

Key Truth

God’s house is designed for gathering people beyond the boundaries many humans would have drawn.

CXVI. ISAIAH 56 AS A HOLINESS CHAPTER

Justice.

Right.

Sabbath.

No evil.

Covenant.

Service.

Spiritual Principle

Inclusion does not erase:

Holiness.

CXVII. ISAIAH 56 AS A PRAYER CHAPTER

> **“My house will be called a house of prayer.”**

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Prayer is not a ministry among ministries; it is one of the defining activities of the people who live near God.

CXVIII. ISAIAH 56 AS A LEADERSHIP CHAPTER

Watchmen.

Dogs.

Shepherds.

Spiritual Principle

God holds leaders:

Accountable.

CXIX. ISAIAH 56 AS A WARNING CHAPTER

Welcome:

For seekers.

Warning:

For complacent leaders.

Key Truth

The chapter comforts the humble outsider and frightens the self-satisfied insider.

CXX. TWELVE GREAT CONTRASTS IN ISAIAH 56

1. Salvation Near → Righteous Living Now

2. Foreigner → Member of God's People

3. Dry Tree → Everlasting Name

4. Excluded → Welcomed

5. Outsider → Servant

6. Distance → Holy Mountain

7. Marginalization → Joy in God's House

8. One Nation → All Nations

9. Scattered → Gathered

10. Watchman → Blindness

11. Shepherd → Greed

12. Watchfulness → Complacency

Key Truth

Isaiah 56 reverses assumptions: outsiders may become faithful worshipers, while insiders with titles may prove spiritually blind and corrupt.

CXXI. TWELVE GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH 56

1. Salvation Calls for Righteous Living

Principle:

Grace prepares people to live rightly.

2. Justice Matters to God

Principle:

Covenant faith includes moral responsibility.

3. Foreigners Are Welcomed

Principle:

Ethnicity does not place a sincere seeker beyond God's grace.

4. Eunuchs Receive Honor

Principle:

Human limitation does not cancel divine belonging.

5. God Gives an Everlasting Name

Principle:

Identity in God is stronger than earthly loss.

6. God's House Is for Prayer

Principle:

Prayer belongs at the heart of worship.

7. God's House Is for All Nations

Principle:

God's saving purpose is global.

8. God Continues Gathering

Principle:

There are always still others in His redemptive purpose.

9. Leaders Must See

Principle:

Blind leadership exposes people to danger.

10. Leaders Must Warn

Principle:

Silence in the face of danger is failure.

11. Leaders Must Not Seek Their Own Gain

Principle:

Greed corrupts spiritual responsibility.

12. Complacency Is Dangerous

Principle:

Tomorrow should never be presumed upon as though judgment cannot come.

CXXII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does God command in verse 1?

Maintain justice and do what is right.

Question 2

Why?

Because His salvation is near and His righteousness will soon be revealed.

Question 3

Who is called blessed?

The person who holds fast to faithful obedience.

Question 4

What old covenant practice is specifically mentioned?

Keeping the Sabbath.

Question 5

What moral command accompanies it?

Keep the hand from doing evil.

Question 6

Who fears being excluded in verse 3?

The foreigner.

Question 7

What does the eunuch call himself?

A dry tree.

Question 8

What does God promise faithful eunuchs?

A place, memorial, and everlasting name within His house.

Question 9

What does God say is better than sons and daughters?

The everlasting name He gives.

Question 10

What are the foreigners described as doing?

Binding themselves to the Lord, loving His name, serving Him, and holding fast to His covenant.

Question 11

Where will God bring them?

To His holy mountain.

Question 12

What will He give them there?

Joy in His house of prayer.

Question 13

What will God’s house be called?

> **“A house of prayer for all nations.”**

Question 14

Who quotes this verse in the New Testament?

Jesus.

Question 15

What does God promise in verse 8?

To gather still others beyond those already gathered.

Question 16

What do the beasts in verse 9 symbolize?

Coming judgment and danger against an unprotected people.

Question 17

How are Israel’s watchmen described?

Blind and lacking knowledge.

Question 18

How are they like dogs?

They cannot bark and fail to warn.

Question 19

What do they love?

Sleep.

Question 20

How are they described morally?

Greedy and never satisfied.

Question 21

What do the shepherds seek?

Their own way and their own gain.

Question 22

What attitude appears in verse 12?

Self-indulgent complacency.

Question 23

What false assumption do they make about tomorrow?

That it will simply continue or be even better.

Question 24

What is one of the main contrasts of Isaiah 56?

Faithful outsiders are welcomed while corrupt insiders are condemned.

Question 25

What does this teach about religious position?

Religious position alone does not prove faithfulness.

Question 26

What does this chapter teach about God’s mission?

He is gathering worshipers from all nations.

CXXIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 56 asks several searching questions.

Am I Maintaining:

Justice?

Righteousness?

Or only talking about them?

Does my belief in salvation make me more:

Faithful?

Or more:

Careless?

Is worship affecting:

My hands?

My behavior?

My choices?

Have I ever assumed someone was too:

Far away?

Different?

Marginalized?

To belong among God’s people?

Have I allowed cultural barriers to become:

Spiritual barriers?

Have I ever called myself:

A dry tree?

Useless?

Without future?

Without legacy?

Can I believe God can give:

A better name?

Do I love:

The Lord’s name?

Or merely religious:

Activity?

Is my church truly:

A house of prayer?

Is prayer:

Central?

Or:

Peripheral?

Would people from different backgrounds experience:

Welcome?

Truth?

Holiness?

Prayer?

Do I believe God is still gathering:

Others?

If I am in leadership:

Can I see?

Do I understand?

Will I warn?

Am I awake?

Am I serving:

The flock?

Or:

Myself?

Have I allowed greed to influence:

Ministry?

Am I assuming:

Tomorrow will be like today?

Have comfort and routine made me:

Spiritually sleepy?

CXXIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Call Yourself a Dry Tree When God Has Promised You an Everlasting Name”

The eunuch saw:

Loss.

God saw:

Belonging.

Principle:

Your limitation does not have authority to define your eternal usefulness to God.

CXXV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“A House of Prayer Must Never Become a House of Exclusion”

God says:

> **“For all nations.”**

Principle:

The people of God should reflect the welcome of the God who gathers worshipers from every people.

CXXVI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The God Who Has Already Gathered Some Is Still Gathering Others”

Verse 8:

> **“I will gather still others.”**

Principle:

Never let the present size of God’s people shrink your expectation of His missionary purpose.

CXXVII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“A Watchman Who Will Not Warn Has Forgotten Why He Is on the Wall”

Leadership exists for:

Responsibility.

Principle:

Spiritual authority is not permission to sleep above the people; it is responsibility to remain awake for them.

CXXVIII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Shepherd Becomes Dangerous When His Appetite Becomes Bigger Than His Love for the Sheep”

Greedy dogs.

Never satisfied.

Own gain.

Principle:

Self-interest eventually turns ministry from care into consumption.

CXXIX. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Faith Trusts God with Tomorrow; Complacency Assumes Tomorrow Owes Us More of Today”

The leaders said:

Tomorrow:

Better.

God saw:

Judgment.

Principle:

Biblical faith never requires pretending the future will automatically favor us.

CXXX. GOD’S SALVATION IS CLOSE

Not distant.

Spiritual Principle

Near salvation calls for:

Ready lives.

CXXXI. RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL SOON BE REVEALED

God will act.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What God will reveal later should shape how we live now.

CXXXII. BLESSING AND OBEDIENCE

Blessed is:

The one who does.

Spiritual Principle

Faith becomes:

Practice.

CXXXIII. THE SABBATH AS COVENANT SIGN

For Isaiah’s audience, Sabbath observance visibly expressed:

Covenant loyalty.

Spiritual Principle

God’s people must take His covenant claims:

Seriously.

CXXXIV. KEEP HANDS FROM EVIL

Not theoretical.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Righteousness must reach fingers, feet, finances, and daily choices.

CXXXV. FOREIGNER BOUND TO THE LORD

Identity transformed.

Spiritual Principle

The outsider becomes:

Devoted.

CXXXVI. “THE LORD WILL EXCLUDE ME”

A fear:

Answered.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not assume God’s answer before He has spoken.

CXXXVII. EUNUCH AS DRY TREE

Human conclusion:

No fruit.

Spiritual Principle

God sees forms of fruitfulness beyond:

Biological continuation.

CXXXVIII. CHOOSE WHAT PLEASES GOD

Heart orientation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Maturity asks not merely, “What is allowed?” but, “What pleases the Lord?”

CXXXIX. HOLD FAST TO COVENANT

Faithful grip.

Spiritual Principle

Perseverance matters.

CXL. A PLACE IN THE HOUSE

Not:

Outside wall.

Inside.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does more than remove exclusion; He creates belonging.

CXLI. BETTER THAN SONS AND DAUGHTERS

God can compensate in:

Unexpected ways.

Spiritual Principle

Earthly loss does not set the maximum limit on:

Heavenly blessing.

CXLII. NAME NEVER CUT OFF

Permanent identity.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

People may forget your name; God never loses the names He has written into His covenant purpose.

CXLIII. FOREIGNERS MINISTER

Once outside.

Now serving:

Inside.

Spiritual Principle

Grace transforms:

Status.

CXLIV. LOVE THE NAME

Affection.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Service without love becomes duty; love gives service its heart.

CXLV. HOLY MOUNTAIN

Access.

Spiritual Principle

God brings people:

Near.

CXLVI. JOY IN PRAYER

Worship with:

Gladness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who invites prayer also gives joy in His presence.

CXLVII. ACCEPTED SACRIFICES

Welcome confirmed.

Spiritual Principle

God receives:

Sincere worshipers.

CXLVIII. HOUSE OF PRAYER

Identity of:

God’s house.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If the house is known for everything except prayer, something important has been misplaced.

CXLIX. ALL NATIONS

No ethnic monopoly.

Spiritual Principle

The God of Israel seeks worship from:

The world.

CL. SOVEREIGN LORD GATHERS

His sovereignty is:

Missionary.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The sovereign God does not merely rule nations; He gathers people from them.

CLI. EXILES OF ISRAEL

God keeps:

His promises.

Spiritual Principle

Gathering begins with:

Faithfulness.

CLII. STILL OTHERS

Beyond:

Expectation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There is always room in God’s mission for people we have not yet met.

CLIII. BEASTS OF FIELD

Danger approaching.

Spiritual Principle

Judgment is:

Real.

CLIV. BLIND LEADERS

No perception.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When leaders cannot discern truth, people inherit confusion.

CLV. IGNORANT WATCHMEN

No knowledge.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual responsibility requires:

Understanding.

CLVI. MUTE DOGS

No warning.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Silence is not always peace; sometimes it is negligence.

CLVII. DREAMERS

Disconnected.

Spiritual Principle

Leadership requires:

Awake attention.

CLVIII. LOVE SLEEP

Comfort over:

Calling.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The bed becomes an idol when rest consistently replaces responsibility.

CLIX. GREEDY DOGS

Appetite controls:

Leadership.

Spiritual Principle

Unchecked desire corrupts:

Service.

CLX. NEVER SATISFIED

More.

More.

More.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When “enough” disappears from a leader’s vocabulary, danger has already entered the ministry.

CLXI. SHEPHERDS LACK UNDERSTANDING

They hold:

Role.

But not:

Wisdom.

Spiritual Principle

Authority without wisdom becomes:

Destructive.

CLXII. OWN WAY

Self-direction.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Isaiah 53 says sheep went their own way; Isaiah 56 says the shepherds did too.

CLXIII. OWN GAIN

Personal benefit.

Spiritual Principle

Selfishness is incompatible with:

Shepherding.

CLXIV. “COME, LET US DRINK”

Their invitation contrasts God’s invitation in Isaiah 55.

Isaiah 55

> **“Come… buy wine and milk without money.”**

Isaiah 56

> **“Come… let us get wine.”**

One invitation leads to:

Life.

The other to:

Complacency.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Not every invitation to “come” leads to God.

CLXV. ISAIAH 55’S WINE AND ISAIAH 56’S WINE

Isaiah 55:

Symbol of divine abundance.

Isaiah 56:

Self-indulgence and spiritual dullness.

Spiritual Principle

Context determines:

Meaning.

CLXVI. TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER

They assume:

Continuation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never build your theology of tomorrow on the comfort of today.

CLXVII. FALSE PEACE

They enjoy:

Pleasure.

While danger approaches.

Spiritual Principle

Comfort can hide:

Judgment.

CLXVIII. TRUE LEADERSHIP VERSUS CORRUPT LEADERSHIP

True Watchman

Sees.

Corrupt Watchman

Blind.

True Dog

Warns.

Corrupt Dog

Mute.

True Shepherd

Feeds flock.

Corrupt Shepherd

Feeds self.

True Leader

Stays awake.

Corrupt Leader

Loves sleep.

Key Truth

God’s standard for leadership is responsibility, vigilance, wisdom, courage, and selfless care.

CLXIX. TEN GREAT MOVEMENTS IN ISAIAH 56

1. Salvation Draws Near

God’s people are called to justice and righteousness.

2. Faithfulness Is Blessed

Worship and moral obedience belong together.

3. Foreigners Are Welcomed

Those once distant may bind themselves to the Lord.

4. Eunuchs Receive an Everlasting Name

Human limitation does not cancel covenant dignity.

5. Outsiders Become Servants

They love God’s name and minister to Him.

6. God’s House Becomes a House of Prayer for All Nations

Prayer and worldwide worship stand at the heart of God’s purpose.

7. God Continues Gathering

Still others will be added to those already gathered.

8. Judgment Approaches an Unprotected People

The failure of leaders exposes the flock.

9. Blind and Greedy Leaders Are Condemned

They fail to see, warn, understand, or serve.

10. Complacency Ends the Chapter

Self-indulgent leaders assume tomorrow will always improve.

Key Truth

Isaiah 56 moves from the nearness of salvation and worldwide welcome into a severe warning that those nearest religious privilege must still remain awake, faithful, selfless, and obedient.

CLXX. FINAL APPLICATION

Isaiah Chapter 56 begins:

> **“Maintain justice and do what is right.”**

Why?

Because salvation is:

Near.

That means hope should not make us:

Careless.

It should make us:

Faithful.

Then God speaks to people who feel:

Outside.

The foreigner says:

> **“The Lord will surely exclude me.”**

The eunuch says:

> **“I am only a dry tree.”**

Maybe you have said something like that.

I do not:

Belong.

I do not have:

What others have.

My background disqualifies:

Me.

My past excludes:

Me.

My limitations mean:

I have no future.

God says:

Do not say that.

He promises:

A place.

A name.

An everlasting identity.

That means your greatest identity is not:

What people call you.

What you lost.

What you never had.

It is:

What God names you.

Then God speaks of:

Foreigners.

People from outside Israel.

And says:

They may:

Bind themselves to Me.

Love My name.

Serve Me.

Hold My covenant.

And I will bring them:

Near.

Then comes:

> **“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”**

What a vision.

A place where:

People pray.

Nations come.

Outsiders belong.

Worship is accepted.

Joy is found.

God is sought.

That should challenge every:

Church.

Do people find:

Prayer?

Do they find:

Truth?

Do they find:

Holiness?

Do sincere seekers from different backgrounds find:

Welcome?

Or do they find:

Barriers God did not build?

Then God says:

“I will gather still others.”

Never assume the gathering is:

Finished.

There are:

Still others.

People not here yet.

People not reached yet.

People not saved yet.

People we do not know yet.

God is still:

Gathering.

Then the chapter suddenly turns.

The outsiders are:

Faithful.

The leaders are:

Blind.

The watchmen cannot:

See.

The dogs will not:

Bark.

The shepherds seek:

Gain.

They love:

Sleep.

This is a warning to everyone in:

Leadership.

Pastor.

Teacher.

Elder.

Deacon.

Parent.

Ministry leader.

Watchman.

Do you:

See?

Will you:

Warn?

Do you:

Understand?

Are you:

Awake?

Do you seek:

The flock’s good?

Or:

Your own gain?

Leadership is not:

A title.

It is:

A responsibility.

The watchman who does not watch is:

Dangerous.

The dog that never barks is:

Useless.

The shepherd who feeds himself is:

Corrupt.

Then they say:

> **“Tomorrow will be like today, or even far better.”**

That is:

Presumption.

They assume:

Nothing will change.

Judgment will not come.

Comfort will continue.

But Scripture warns:

Tomorrow is not:

Ours.

So Isaiah 56 gives us two pictures.

The faithful outsider says:

I want the Lord.

The corrupt insider says:

I want more.

One loves:

God’s name.

The other seeks:

His own gain.

One enters:

The house of prayer.

The other enters:

Self-indulgence.

One holds:

The covenant.

The other sleeps through:

Responsibility.

So where are we?

Are we pursuing:

Justice?

Are we living:

Righteously?

Are we welcoming those:

God welcomes?

Are we praying for:

The nations?

Are we expecting:

Still others?

Are we serving:

Selflessly?

Are we awake?

Or have we assumed:

Tomorrow will always look like today?

The call of Isaiah 56 is:

Live faithfully.

Welcome humbly.

Pray globally.

Serve selflessly.

Lead watchfully.

And never forget:

God is still gathering.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that Your salvation is:

Near.

Teach us to live:

Justly.

Righteously.

Faithfully.

Keep our hands from:

Evil.

Let our worship affect:

Our lives.

Father, thank You for welcoming:

Foreigners.

Outsiders.

Those who feel:

Excluded.

Those who believe they are:

Dry trees.

Remind every discouraged heart that You can give:

A place.

A name.

A future.

An everlasting identity.

Father, make us people who:

Love Your name.

Serve You.

Hold fast to Your truth.

Worship You faithfully.

Thank You that Your house is:

A house of prayer.

Teach our churches to:

Pray.

Teach our families to:

Pray.

Teach us personally to:

Pray.

Give us joy in:

Your presence.

Father, give us a heart for:

All nations.

Help us remember:

There are still others.

Still more to:

Gather.

Still more to:

Reach.

Still more to:

Invite.

Father, guard those in leadership from:

Blindness.

Ignorance.

Silence.

Laziness.

Greed.

Selfishness.

Complacency.

Give us watchmen who:

See.

Shepherds who:

Care.

Teachers who:

Understand.

Leaders who:

Serve.

Voices that:

Warn.

Hearts that:

Love.

Father, keep us from seeking:

Our own gain.

Keep us from assuming:

Tomorrow belongs to us.

Make us:

Awake.

Sober.

Faithful.

Ready.

May Your people become:

A praying people.

A holy people.

A just people.

A welcoming people.

A missionary people.

A watchful people.

And may those who once believed they did not belong discover:

Joy.

Belonging.

Identity.

And salvation.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen.

Key Verse

> **“These I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” — Isaiah 56:7**

Central Truth

The Lord calls His people to practice justice and righteousness because His salvation is near, welcomes foreigners and eunuchs who sincerely love Him and hold fast to His covenant, gives the once-excluded an everlasting name and joyful place in His house, declares that His house is a house of prayer for all nations, promises to gather still others into His people, and warns that blind, lazy, greedy, self-indulgent leaders place the flock in danger when they abandon watchfulness and seek their own gain.

Isaiah 56 in One Sentence

Isaiah declares that God’s approaching salvation calls for justice and faithful living, promises belonging, an everlasting name, and joyful worship to foreigners and eunuchs who bind themselves to the Lord, reveals God’s house as a house of prayer for all nations and His continuing purpose to gather still others, and then sharply condemns Israel’s blind, silent, lazy, greedy watchmen whose self-serving complacency leaves the people exposed to judgment.