

**Sunday, August 7, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

Bible Study – Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

“Learning to do Good”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes)

In groups of two or three, respond to the following, “When is worship stale and unmoving for you? When does worship connect to your daily life as a Christian?”

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20. Context. “Isaiah of Jerusalem,” as he is sometimes called, was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea, and Micah. His prophetic activity spanned the reigns of several of the kings of Judah, from the 740s BCE (Uzziah) to around 700 (Hezekiah). It was a tumultuous time: the sleeping Assyrian empire began to move against the principalities in the Near East, crushing Syria and eventually the northern kingdom of Ephraim (721). Within a few years, the Assyrians threatened the southern kingdom of Judah, decimating the countryside and besieging Jerusalem itself in 701. For whatever reason, the Assyrians broke off the siege and Jerusalem was spared until the Babylonians destroyed it in 586. Isaiah appears to have been a priest by training, and his words are recorded in the first 39 chapters of the book that goes by his name. The balance of the book derives from the period after the Babylonian Exile. Like Amos, Isaiah pronounces judgment on the people for the evil and injustice of their society, but also holds out the promise of redemption if they repented. These central themes are announced in the opening verses of the book, which constitute this week’s reading. (Sodom and Gomorrah are used here derisively to describe the nation of Judah.)

Read Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Isaiah 1:1, 10-20 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Why might the prophet Isaiah be using the titles Sodom and Gomorrah to refer to the leaders and people of Judah (v. 10)?

- Why does God no longer take delight in the sacrifices of the people?
- Why does God say God will no longer listen to their prayers (v. 15)?
- What does God through the prophet require the people to do (vv. 16-17)?
- What will the result be if the people are “willing and obedient” (v. 19)? What if they “refuse and rebel”?
- What does this passage indicate about worship that is acceptable to God?
- **(R)** What does this passage tell us about God? What does this passage tell us about worship and the daily life of believers?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

God of justice, your compassion and concern extend to all. As followers of Christ, the body of Christ, as people of the covenant, you summon us to a life that reflects your character. Empower us to seek justice, defend the orphan, plea for the widow, hear those who are crying out in need, and be the people who are able to respond with your compassionate love. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.