

Small Group Meeting week 5 on Isaiah 35:1-10

Review (20mins)

Reflect together on your experiences over the last week. What has God been teaching you? Where have you been growing in your walk with Him? Had you set yourself a challenge in your discipleship? How is that going? Share those experiences with your small group.

Read (10mins)

Recap on the sermon from last Sunday. Try to give a summary to those who were not able to be present.

Isaiah 35:1-10

Read the Bible passage for this week, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.

As you read, look out for *shockers* and *blockers*.

Shockers – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

Blockers – something from the text that raises questions for you.

Setting the scene:

- Isaiah is speaking into a society that has forgotten God, a ruling elite that has made wealth for themselves and neglected love of God and neighbourliness
- The previous chapter focuses on the judgement of God upon Edom, Judah's neighbour who took particular delight when

Judah suffered at the hands of others. Edom seems to have been quite troublesome and oppressive on the borders with Judah.

- The future so far has looked bleak for Judah (and indeed the nations). Then comes this glorious chapter, full of promise.
- **Once again, we encounter two horizons.** One for Judah in the days of the prophecy of Isaiah. Another for those who down the years continue to trust and look forward in hope for God's kingdom restored.

Reflect (20 mins)

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your *shockers* and *blockers*. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. What is there in this prophetic poem that gives you great hope?

Q2. How might this prophecy encourage us now? How can we hold on to this to counter the oppressive narrative that we find in the world today?

Q3. Thinking of the "Still Lyfe" theme, how could you use this prophecy in your prayer time this week?

Respond (20mins)

As you draw near to the end of your session, consider how you might respond to your reading and reflection by "walking the talk". What are you going to be doing this week that will help you stretch the faith you have? It may be a challenge or activity that you are

currently engaged with over many weeks. Be prepared to share how you are growing in that.

Some new challenge ideas

1 “Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear””. 35:4

Who could you speak such words to this week? Who could you really encourage?

2 “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened...” 35:5-7

Think of a situation this week where you could bring the kingdom of God in to open blind eyes and set captives free... trust God in that situation and be his minister of the kingdom...

3 “Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads...” 35:10

Nehemiah says that “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” As a prayer challenge this week in your prayer time, sing to the Lord – sing out words of praise, in faith. It is often liberating to dance in that moment too. If you can, play a song and dance to the Lord. Remember King David did this.

Group Prayer

As a group, pray for one another this week as you explore a deeper life with God through prayer. Pray that your times of prayer and your attempt to walk in the light of God’s ways will increase and become more habitual throughout each day.