

Stumbling

TOWARDS THE PROMISE



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WELCOME

(How to use this guide.)

For the next four weeks, PAC is going to walk a path of together guided by three stories. On the surface, these stories don't seem to have much to do with each other. However, they are all stories of people journeying towards the promises of God - and stumbling along they way. They are stories of incredible blessing, terrible tragedy, and unwavering hope and with some help from Holy Spirit you will see yourself in them!

Story #1 is Isaiah 58.

This will be our main guide for these four weeks. Isaiah 58 starts by pointing out the futility of religion to create anything beautiful or meaningful. Religion has no fruit. From this place of frustration, the chapter eventually takes us to a place where we are effectively partnering with God to create a new garden of Eden. We become blessed and like every truly blessed person, are able to bless others.

Story #2 is the story of Jacob (Genesis 25-49).

You'll notice references to Jacob are found at the beginning and end of Isaiah 58 (some translations have "Israel" instead of Jacob but they are referring to the same thing). So, to more fully understand the depth and vision of Isaiah 58 we need to be familiar with the story of Jacob. A good way to come at Jacob's story is to think of him as your uncle. You are a part of this messed up family who, despite their dysfunction, is still called by God to bless the entire world.

Story #3 are the Prayers for Journeying to Worship (Psalm 120-134).

These Psalms originally celebrated the journey to Jerusalem to worship in God's temple. Today, these chapters still help us express our desire to be near the presence of God. Some Psalms are pleas, some are praises, some have us making huge promises to God. All of them are exceptional prayers which help us bring our entire beings into God's presence. You don't so much read these as you pray them. Making them your own. Where it says "I" put your name in. Where it says "us" put in your family, House Church, or PAC. Where it says Jerusalem/Zion/Israel sub in PAC Portage/PAC Neepawa/Long Plain/Dauphin - whatever seems appropriate. There is no right way to pray these; you simply allow them to guide your imagination prayerfully and help you be attentive to God.

Week #1

Day 1

Isaiah 58 / Genesis 25 / Psalm 120

Meditation:

Conflict starts at birth - or in the case of Jacob and Esau in the womb - and can be present our whole lives.

People spread lies and it hurts. Or maybe they aren't spreading lies, they are spreading the truth about us, but the truth hurts as much as lies sometimes. For many of us, conflict causes us to rise up and fight. We manipulate and connive to get what we want or think we deserve. For others, we've had enough and just roll over and disengage.

Neither path leads to peace and God's dream for His people is different. We are called to be people of peace and move past backbiting, gossip, and conflict.

Question:

"How can I be a person of peace today?"

Prayer:

Lord, I can too easily pour a little gas on the fiery conflicts around me. Today, I submit my speech and my body language to you to use as instruments of peace. Help me to rest in your presence and not get defensive when people say bad things about me.