

# The Lord's Outstretched Arm

by Erlo Stegen

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*The problem of not hearing God's voice may not be with God, but with us and our sin, and the first step to receiving God's help is to confess and correct our sin.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 59:1-4, Matthew 5:28, John 4:16-18, James 5:17

**Topics:** "Repentance and Restoration", "Sin and Separation"

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## Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes that God's ability to save is not limited, but our sins create a barrier between us and Him. The people in Isaiah's time were unaware that their disobedience was the reason for God's silence, believing instead that God had failed them. Stegen illustrates that sin is an affront to God's holiness and must be addressed for us to receive His help and guidance. He shares examples, including the Samaritan woman at the well, to demonstrate that acknowledging and confessing our sins is essential for restoring our relationship with God. Ultimately, the sermon calls for self-examination and repentance to remove the separation caused by sin.

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## Transcript

"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." (Isaiah 59:1-2).

In Isaiah's day, the people were fasting and praying but God did not answer them. They thought that there might be a problem with God.

Then God answered them with these words, to show that the problem was not with God but with them and that was the reason that God did not hear.

God is able to help us. Many people want God's help but don't want to live in obedience. Sin separates between you and God. It may be that God has spoken to you and you did not listen and obey. Today you don't hear His voice anymore. You must go back on your way and correct those things where you have lived in disobedience.

Here in our text we find that sin offends our holy God. It is a crime, affront and displeasure to God if sin enters your life, especially as a child of God.

Sin separates us from Him. Because God is holy He cannot ignore or excuse sin as though it doesn't matter.

In the sermon on the mount He taught us that a thought is like a deed. In English it's said so well, "you're not what you think you are, you are what you think".

Martin Luther had a counsellor in whom he confided as James 5:17 says. He said that if you can get by without confessing your sin in the presence of a righteous man, do so, but I cannot. No wonder God could use him to change the course of history.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, she asked for the Living Water of Christ. Then Jesus said to her, "go call your husband". He immediately pointed out the sin in her life which had to go before she could receive Christ's streams of Living Water.

So we see in this text that God cannot tolerate sin. It offends Him. Sin separates people from God. It forms a wall of separation between God and the people He loves.

If we read the following verses in our text, there is a list of wretched sins which God hates, and forces Him to turn away from us.

"For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity." (Isaiah 59:3-4).

Shortly after the start of the revival in 1966, there was a young girl that also got converted and led others to Christ, daily. As we were visiting near Dalton, with a number of co-workers, she came and shared the following. She wasn't able to lead a single person to Christ the past week and it troubled her very much. She cried to God for the reason and the previous evening God spoke to her in a dream to read our text, Isaiah 59:2. She asked that the verse be read to her. As I read the verse to her, she exclaimed, "that's the answer and I also know what sin it was". Then she confessed her sin and afterwards God used her again to lead others to Christ.

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