



**Sermon Based Small Group
Leader Discussion Guide**

**Sermon Title: "God's Hand"
(Week 3 of the "2011: The Year You Make Contact" Sermon Series)**

**Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington
Week of January 16, 2011**

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<p align="center">Study Introduction (Group Leader)</p>	<p>Prior to meeting with your group, read through Isaiah 62:1-5.</p> <p><u>Introduction:</u></p> <p>Isaiah, a great prophet from the southern kingdom of Judah, began his ministry in 740 BC. A contemporary of the prophets Amos, Hosea and Micah, Isaiah is considered the greatest writing prophet of the Old Testament. He utilized prose and poetry to convey his stirring prophetic visions from God to the people of Judah. One of his favorite techniques was to personify nature and God. Readers will find examples of his artistic and powerful use of metaphor in this week's sermon text.</p> <p>The book of Isaiah can be broken into two basic divisions: The Book of Judgment, chapters 1-39; The Book of Comfort, chapters 40-66. In the first part, Isaiah warns the people of Judah of God's anger and impending judgment against them. In an effort to avert attack from their savage enemies, the Assyrians, Judah sought an alliance with this godless nation. Isaiah warned that punishment would come to Judah in the form of future defeat at the hands of the Babylonians and subsequent exile from their homeland. Their punishment had both political and spiritual implications.</p>

	<p>But God desired to restore his children. In the second part of the book, Isaiah prophesied that God’s compassion would be lavished on his people, again. God would restore his people by publicly vindicating them, reestablishing their name on the world stage, and demonstrating his protection of and pleasure in his people. This is the hopeful message of this week’s scripture text.</p>
<p>Personal Connection (Group Leader)</p>	<p>How does my story connect to the reading?</p> <p>Today, the group will consider how God wants to relate to us (give us a new name, hold us in his hand, take delight in us).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any of the ways God wants to relate to you difficult for you to believe or accept? If yes, then spend some time considering why this is so. • Think about some of the common stereotypes of God in our culture. What are some of the metaphors for God from the Bible? To which do you relate most? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A <u>metaphor</u> is a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance, as in “A mighty fortress is our God”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact would it make in your life to truly believe that God thoroughly delights in you?
<p>Ice Breaker</p>	<p>Which of these situations have you experienced?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being called to the principal’s office; 2. Getting called in by your employer; 3. Being pulled over by the police; <p>What was/would be your initial response? Did the encounter turn out as you had anticipated?</p> <p>Leader: The point of this Ice Breaker is to get people thinking about their reaction to interacting with authority figures. Is it positive or negative?</p>
<p>Big Idea</p>	<p>Our heavenly Father is not out to get us but to save us. In fact, he desires our very best. History shows that God wants to develop a close and growing relationship with each of us.</p>
<p>Sermon Text</p>	<p>Isaiah 62:1-5 (New International Version)</p> <p>1 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. 2 The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. 3 You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your</p>

	<p>God. 4 No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah (which means <i>my delight is in her</i>), and your land Beulah (which means <i>married</i>); for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. 5 As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.</p>
<p>Digging Deeper</p>	<p>Learning more about the lesson:</p> <p>Isaiah 62 paints a picture of what God is like and how he feels about us. This week’s passage offers a good example of the kind of relationship God wants to have with each of us.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I. He wants to call you by a new name</p> <p>Reread Isaiah 62:2, 4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you ever desired a fresh start, a second chance, or even a new name? What led to that desire and did you get your wish? <p>Leader follow-up question: Do you make New Year’s resolutions? Why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. How could having a new name, a completely fresh start, impact your relationships with others? 3. Imagine yourself standing face to face with God. By what name do you hear him calling you? <p>Leader note:</p> <p>The old name points to the time of Judah’s broken relationship with God. This time, their infidelity came through an alliance they sought with the savage Assyrians. The consequence for this hurtful act of unfaithfulness was as Isaiah had prophesied: their land was pillaged by invading armies and they endured a 48-year exile in Babylon (586-538 BC). The people felt forsaken by God. But, as the relationship was restored, so was their identity. The imagery of marriage and new names implies healing, reconciliation, and a fresh start.</p>

**Digging Deeper
(Continued)**

**Activity
(Optional)**

II. He wants to hold you in his hand

Reread Isaiah 62:3

1. When you read or hear this verse, what images come to mind?
2. Brainstorm as many figures of speech and idioms about the hand as you can with the group.

An idiom is an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meaning of the language: kick the bucket, hang one's head.

Leader: *hand in, handout, hands off, hand-me-downs, hand it over; lend a hand, ask for her hand, have our hands full, hand to mouth, wash our hands, hand it to you, etc.* We use the image of hands in terms of everyday speech. Similarly, those who penned the Scriptures in ancient times employed the imagery of hands to convey a memorable, meaningful message.

Activity

Match the following Bible verses with their basic message:

___ *“Whatever you find to do with your hands, do it with all your might” (Eccl. 9:10)*

___ *Hear my plea for mercy when I cry out to you for help, when I lift my hands toward your holy temple! (Psalm 28:2)*

___ *So I want the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger or dispute. (I Timothy 2:8)*

___ *“Open your hand to your fellow Israelites who are the poor and needy” (Deut. 15:11)*

___ *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky displays his handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1)*

a) Indicates helpfulness towards others.

b) Uplifted hands are a gesture of prayer.

c) God’s strength and power are shown through his creation of the world.

d) Your work ethic should be purposeful, motivated by loyalty to God (implied by audience).

e) Worship God with a clean heart.

Leader: Eccl. 9:10 (d), Ps. 28:2 (b), I Tim. 2:8 (e), Deut 15:11 (a), Ps. 19:1 (c)

The New Testament confirms this image as true to God’s desire.

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my

<p>Digging Deeper (Continued)</p>	<p>hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand." (John 10:27-29)</p> <p>3. Consider that you are held securely in the Lord's all-powerful hand. What difference does that make to you?</p> <p>(Leader follow-up question): What implications would being held have on the way we experience all that life brings us, good and bad?</p> <p>Leader: The point is that God promises security in his love. We will face hard times, but he will be with us, strengthening us to demonstrate to the world around us his glory as we work "hand in hand" with him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">III. He wants to delight in you</p> <p>This section finishes with the image of God as the bridegroom rejoicing over the restored Jerusalem, his beautiful bride. The days of estrangement were over; all nations would perceive God's complete adoration of his people. Jerusalem would become a source of encouragement for God's people who had been lacking hope.</p> <p>Reread Isaiah 62:4-5</p> <p>1. What does this figure of speech in these verses mean for Christians?</p> <p>Leader: One thought is that, just as Jerusalem became a source of encouragement for others, Christians also are a living sign of hope to our communities and world.</p> <p>2. What is it about being in love or being loved that can be so intoxicating?</p> <p>Leader: If you or your group would like to look deeper into biblical wedding imagery, additional Scripture can be found in the SBSG Additional Resources section of the church website, northwestbaptist.com.</p>
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<p>Taking it Home</p>	<p>How will I live it? Apply it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What adjectives describe God’s impression of these people? Leader: for example, saved, glorious, vindicated, splendid, held, royal, inhabited, married (spoken for/accepted), chosen, delightful, pleasing. 2. Can you believe that God sees you in this way? 3. God wants to relate to you by: calling you by a new name, holding you in his hand, delighting in you. Do you believe this? With which of these is it hardest for you to relate, to believe? 4. What impact did God’s promise have on the people of Jerusalem? How can this promise as applied to Christians, encourage you and bring hope to the world around you? 5. For more on the power of messages like this check out http://truefaced.com.
<p>Prayer Focus</p>	<p>How can I connect with God and others through prayer?</p> <p>Leader Tip: Some people are comfortable praying out loud, while others prefer to pray silently. Either is okay. The point is to connect people to God and with each other in a loving, supportive environment. If the group is large, you might want to break into smaller groups for prayer time.</p> <p>A group Care Coordinator is responsible for recording prayer requests and praises and emailing the list to the group during week.</p> <p><u>During the study</u>, allow the members to pray for each other as needs are voiced.</p> <p><u>After the study</u>, encourage group participants to share any prayer requests or praise reports.</p> <p><i>Record prayer requests and praises here and on the other side of this page:</i></p>