

**Small Group Discussion Guide**  
Sermon Date: March 13, 2022  
Speaker: Pastor Raphael Warnock  
Sermon Title: "Building From the Bottom Up"  
Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-12

***"Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in" Isaiah 58:12***

**Sermon Summary**

The Israelites have found themselves forced out of their promised land and back in exile and slavery. Back into bondage and under oppression. What do you do when you find yourself in a place of exile, when you have to start all over again, back to square one? In the 58<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah, God tells the Israelites they will have to repair before they can rebuild. They wanted God's blessings but failed to see their own workings of oppression, not meeting the needs of the hungry and the poor. We must repent before God can bless.

God rebukes the Israelites for their disingenuous fasting. They delighted in the performance of the fast and wondered why God would not respond. God calls for the Israelites to consider the suffering and share resources with the poor, naked and outcast. Rev. Warnock elaborated why our leaders and fellow people need to fast from hatred, jealousy, racism and bigotry. We need to be the restorer of justice from the streets to the suites. We are suffering from the poverty of a broken covenant with one another because we're 'fasting' only for personal gain.

While our country's infrastructure seeks to rebuild our roads, bridges, and other structures in the natural, God's infrastructure plan (Is. 40:4-5) levels the playing field. God lays the lofty places to the ground and raises the low places high. When injustice and oppression ruin the lives and the land of God's people, the way to rebuild is from the ground up. God's children must repent and extend help to those in need; only then will God restore us to the 'watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail' (v.11). Similar to I-20 that runs through southern states, consisting of opposing political parties, various cultures and ethnicities, the King's Highway runs through all humanity and benefits everyone regardless of nationality, political affiliation, or creed. It is our calling as God's people to build this kingdom highway which connects us and helps us, if we learn to value one another as equals; then, we can rebuild our communities and nation, and the world, to what God predestined them to be. If we will live out God's vision of Building from the Bottom Up, we must:

1. **Repair/repent** (v.9-10): Repairing ourselves and our land requires us to acknowledge our wicked ways and cry out to the Lord, and then He will answer. Repentance includes removing the yoke from the things that hold us in bondage: blaming others, speaking wickedness. Then, repair can begin: our light shall then shine in the darkness, and the darkness shall be as the noonday.
2. **Rebuild:** God will rebuild the people and their land (v. 11-12). With God's guidance, our souls and bodies and land will be rebuilt for generations to come.
3. **Restore:** (v.12). We will be the restorers of the broken places in our lives and communities

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How has the goal of doing things in a partisanship way hindered or helped rebuild our communities and country?
2. How have you handled starting over when life circumstances have devastating outcomes?
3. How has God brought about restoration in your life, community, career, etc?
4. What would happen if God's people came together as one to fast and pray for the restoration of the broken places in society? Would we be willing to do so? Do we think God would respond?
5. What can we rebuild today that will impact generations to come?