

Sermon Discussion Questions  
October 29, 2023  
The Gospel According to Isaiah  
**THE TRUE FAST OF THE LORD**  
Isaiah 58:1-12

## 1. Opening Discussion Questions

- a. Do you fast regularly? Some people fast to lose weight. I've heard intermittent fasting for weight loss is demonstrably effective. You may have had to fast before a medical procedure. Some fast for spiritual or religious reasons, such as Lent, Ramadan, or Yom Kippur. If you fast for religious reasons, why do you do it? Is it to show God how sacrificial you are (not eating or giving up something for a period) to gain favor with God somehow? Is it a requirement of your faith?
- b. Did you know that there are different types of fasting? The most common one is fasting from food entirely (Daniel 10: 2-3). There is also fasting from just a particular type of food (Daniel 1:8-14). There is also fasting from both food and water (Acts 9:9). For you married couples, did you know that there is even fasting from sex in the Old Testament as described by Moses (Exodus 19:15) and mentioned in the New Testament book of 1 Corinthians 7:5. What type of fasting have you engaged in and what were the benefits?

## 2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. Don't Try to Manipulate God Using Religious Practices (Isaiah 58:1-5)
  - i. People like to think they can control God using religion.
  - ii. Things haven't changed!
- b. Sacrificially Care for the Most Vulnerable (Isaiah 58:6-7,9-10)
  - i. God always cares about the reality of our hearts, not our external appearances and practices.
  - ii. How are you caring for those in need?
- c. God Will Bless You When You Care About What He Cares About (Isaiah 58:8-12)
  - i. God blesses us when we prioritize what's important to Him.
  - ii. God will give you ongoing satisfaction when you align your heart to His.

### 3. Study/Discussion Points:

a. ***Sunday Afternoon*** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon, set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:

- i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
- ii. What new truth did you learn or what truth were you reminded of?
- iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
- iv. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. ***Monday*** – *Don't Try to Manipulate God Using Religious Practices (Isaiah 58:1-5)*

- i. Have you ever tried to manipulate God? It might be with a religious practice such as giving money to a church, fasting, baptism, or even serving. When life's circumstances don't go your way, do you seek God out in prayer and read the scriptures for the wrong reason? Instead of wanting to spend time with Jesus, you are thinking maybe, just maybe, if God sees me in the word, He will be more gracious to me.
- ii. Look at verse 2. Do you long for a deeper relationship with God?
  1. What activities do you engage in to help grow you in your relationship with God?
  2. Take an inventory of your life since you got saved. Where have you grown in your walk with Jesus, and in what areas have you not?

c. ***Tuesday*** – *Don't Try to Manipulate God Using Religious Practices (Isaiah 58:1-5)*

- i. The people of Judah are described as fasting in verses 3, 4. What type of reaction from God were they expecting?
- ii. What sins were the people of Judah engaged in while fasting?
  1. Self-gratification (1 John 2:16, Galatians 5:19-21).

2. Taking advantage of people who worked for them (Luke 6:31 and Proverbs 22:22-23)

3. Physically fighting among themselves. (Colossians 3:8 and Ephesians 4:30-31)

iii. Would you say the people were acting like hypocrites?

1. Hypocrisy comes from a Greek word that means “actor” or someone who wears a “mask.” This is not referring to a Covid mask!

2. Do you wear a “mask” to church? If so, why?

3. Take off your “happy face” and be vulnerable (and safe) at LRBC. If you can’t, why not?

**d. Wednesday – Sacrificially Care for the Most Vulnerable (vv. 6-7, 9-10)**

i. Did you know that the Bible talks about social injustice?

ii. Look at verse 6. Are there people in the world falsely imprisoned?

iii. Look at the beginning of verse 7 and verse 10. Are there people in the world who are starving from a lack of food security?

iv. Look at the end of verse 7. Are there people in the world who do not have clothes or a roof over their heads? Isn't this occurring right now with the displacement of millions of Palestinians? Did you know that homeless students are attending Prince William County Schools? Yes, homeless kids!

v. Look at verse 9. Help those who are oppressed, do not spread rumors and certainly don't point fingers.

**e. Thursday – Sacrificially Care for the Most Vulnerable (vv. 6-7, 9-10)**

i. In verses 8- 9, God states that those believers who engage in social injustices will be blessed with:

1. God's guidance

2. God's healing

3. God's protection

4. God's righteousness

- ii. Contemplate this paraphrase from a Scottish hymn that highlights some practical responsibilities of a Christ-follower with those in need:

“Let such as feel oppression’s load they tender pity share;  
And let the helpless, homeless poor be thy peculiar care.  
Go, bide the hungry orphan be with thy abundance blest;  
Invite the wanderer to thy gate and spread the couch of rest.  
Let him who pines with piercing cold by thee be warmed and clad;  
Be thine the blissful task to make the downcast mourner glad.  
Then, bright as morning, shall come forth, in peace and joy, thy days;  
And glory from the Lord above shall shine on all they ways.”

*f. Friday – God Will Bless You When You Care About What He Cares About (Isaiah 58:8-12)*

- i. Read Isaiah 58:8:

1. Do you recall the day when you received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?
2. List any adjectives that would describe how you felt at that moment.
3. What is meant by “wounds being healed?”
4. Are you godlier now than on the day you were spiritually baptized into Christ?
5. How has God protected you over the years? Have you ever thanked him?

*g. Saturday – God Will Bless You When You Care About What He Cares About (Isaiah 58:8-12)*

- i. What role does spiritual maturity or lack thereof, play in seeking social justice for others?
- ii. What role does spiritual maturity or lack thereof, play in a person's willingness to spread the Gospel message personally?
- iii. Look at the encouragement and promise regarding prayer in verse 9.

**4. Application:** In Isaiah 58, God identified for the people of Judah, through the prophet Isaiah, what was incorrect when they fasted. He encouraged them to change their thinking about fasting regarding Almighty God. God wants us to be genuinely Spiritual, not the counterfeit spirituality that Satan sponsors, which is based on human works and attention-seeking generosity and advocacy.

## **5. Prayer Points:**

- a.** Adoration – 1 Peter 4:16
- b.** Confession – James 5:16
- c.** Thanksgiving – Philippians 4:6
- d.** Supplications – James 4:2-3
  - i. Let's intentionally pray for the Holy Spirit to open our eyes, minds, and hearts to the person(s) He wants us to engage with this week.
  - ii. Let us pray for peace in Jerusalem and the salvation of the Jewish people.
  - iii. Let us pray for the Palestinian people, their safety, and salvation.
  - iv. Let us pray and respond to the practical needs of people in Prince William County.
  - v. Let us pray for financial stewardship and continued faith in the Yahweh- Jireh. (Genesis 22: 13-14)