



The Fasted Life

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Is 58:5-12 "Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed, and for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the LORD? **6** "Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? **7** "Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover

him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? **8** "Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; **3** and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. **9** "Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, **10** and if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom {will become} like midday. **11** "And the LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. **12** "Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will raise up the age-old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

Fasting is not a fun topic and not enjoyable to do.

Isaiah is trying to convey something here that can be more satisfied than any meal, any bit of food we might enjoy.

The prophecy is aimed at the hearts of a people who were being "religious" – doing what they thought was right on Sunday but doing all things wrong during the week – oppressing employees, taking from their neighbor, etc. As long as they fulfilled their religious commitments, they thought they were OK.

Our practice needs to be BOTH vertical (toward God) and horizontal (toward those around us). The way we fast can get God's attention. Isaiah's message over 40 years of ministry was now having an effect. God is speaking to a people whose hearts are beginning to be open and the Lord is setting out what He wants.

2013 will be a good year. We want to consecrate ourselves and allow this message to set a tone in our hearts. We need to birth some things in this year and we cannot, we must not trust in our own strength. Fasting is about adjusting the attitude of our heart.

Fasting dessert, fasting TV, fasting enjoyments, food as a whole – doing something to declare that we need God more than these things. Let your fasting be to the end of joining with & supporting what God wants to do in this house.

I. Only About Me? No!; vs. 5

- Fasting is about more than myself. Sometimes fasting is about protection for ourselves (like Ezra). Sometimes we fast as an expression of consecration to God (like Daniel). Fasting works to make us more useful to God.

- Daniel set himself to be someone who belonged to God and demonstrate his devotion to the Lord.
- Fasting outwardly is not enough; it must have an outward expression that shows forth the reality of God and His centrality in my life.

II. Others Oriented? Yes!; vss. 6-7

- We are to be about more than serving our own interests.
- True fasting is fasting wickedness – a continual resistance to and abstaining from all manner of wickedness, wrong attitudes, actions & words.
- For instance, the man leads in the home, not with command, but with service, sacrifice, love. Consecration to God is reflected in the way that a man treats his wife. Doing so means living with your wife with the understanding that they are in a weaker position – that they are obligated to follow the man and the husband's leadership ought to reflect a sensitivity to this.
- Isaiah is calling people to fast wickedness of all kinds AND begin doing the right things.
- The fasted life is not simply about a period of time, but about a way of living we walk out of ALL THE TIME.

III. Outcome Of A Biblically Fasted Life; vss. 8-12

A. Vs. 8

1. Rising Insight – living like this will bring forth the light of illumination; like the dawn breaking.

2. Recover Quickly – the things that are not now sound or solid in your life will be established more quickly when we are consecrated to God

3. Righteousness Arrives Before You – you won't have to "blow your own horn"; the quality of your life will be heard of and recognized by others when you live in a way that consistently conforms to God's will.

4. Rear-Guard Glory – what is in your past will be covered and kept in secret. The “stuff” of what is in our past, God hides it as we live the fasted life. God’s glory will be our rear guard.

B. Vs. 9; Respond To Calls If We... – God will answer when we call. He is always close, but we don’t hear him because we aren’t as we should be. He doesn’t answer us often because our life isn’t as it should be. When you cry out to Him He will *localize* himself – make himself able to be heard and respond.

1. Remove Undue Burdens – God clarifies how we’re to relate to one another:

2. Refuse to Wrongly Accuse – we are to stop accusing & back-biting, looking critically at others. Such characterizes a “fasted life”

C. Vs. 10; Sun On Gloomy Days If We... – God will insure we have light in the darkness; not only will He give us the light we need of His presence, He will meet us with light in the midst of darkness. God will meet us as we meditate on the Word of God. By his Word we are able to confess the truth -- that God refuses to accuse us, therefore who is accusing us? If God be for us, who can be against us? God’s work on our behalf is to deliver us from condemnation. Getting this word breaks off the gloom and makes it like mid-day.

1. Supply Food To Hungry – if we help the afflicted by caring for those who are in need

2. Satisfy the Desires of the Afflicted – laboring to extend care, consolation, encouragement

D. Vs. 11 – When we live this way, God insures that we are cared for & ministered to:

1. That we are Steered By God Continually

2. That He will Satisfy You In Wastelands

3. There will Structural Strength in our lives

4. Spring Of Eternal Water – There has to be a “bubbling up” of water from our hearts...more than simply receiving the rain.

E. Vs. 12

1. Rebuilders Birthed – the generations that follow us will be imparted.

2. Raise Up Old Foundations – we hold to the foundations that have been laid

3. Repair Holes

4. Restore Pathways Of Life

Let this week's fast be more than a moment of going without, but let this fasting moment be an opportunity to the end of growth, transformation for us individually AND for our church as a whole!