

Exhortation To Fasting Unto the Fulfillment of Justice
Isaiah 58
Jerry Marek 1/12/10

1. Effectiveness in Prayer

*“And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night?”
(Luke 18:7)*

- a) My question to you is this: “If we are a community that prays for the release of God's justice and promises, should we not be preparing ourselves to walk in the fulfillment of our prayers?”
- b) Our goal is to be effective in prayer, but we must actively prepare ourselves to walk in the fulfillment of our prayers. If we are committed to praying for those in need we must also be committed to personally assisting the needy in practical ways. (Micah 6:8; James 1:27)
- c) The effectiveness of our intercession is directly proportionate to the motives and righteousness of the ones interceding. (1 Peter 3:11-12; Psalm 34:17-18)

“There is no victory without hearts of purity.” From “*Joshua*” by Jason Upton

2. Blessings and Authority of Fasting

- a) Definition of fasting: Going without food and/or drink for a period of time and for a stated purpose. *(Some people perceive that abstaining from things such as media, entertainment, events etc... are a form of fasting. These types of consecration are pleasing in God's sight but they are not the same as fasting. This is important to understand if we want to receive the authority and blessings of fasting.)*
- b) It is necessary to be as purposeful in fasting as we are in prayer. **Isaiah 58:6-8** provides a scriptural foundation to describe the authority and blessings of fasting.
- c) Declaration of the 'Justice' Fast: **Isaiah 58:6**
 - To loose the bonds of wickedness...
 - To undo the heavy burdens...
 - To let the oppressed go free...
 - To break every yoke...
- d) A lifestyle that Demonstrates the Sincerity of our Fast: **Isaiah 58:7**
 - To share your bread with the hungry...
 - To take the poor into your home...
 - To clothe the naked...
 - To not hide from your fellow man...
- e) The Rewards of a Fasted Lifestyle: **Isaiah 58:8**
 - Your light (testimony/life) shall break forth...
 - Your healing will come quickly...

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- Your righteousness shall go before you...
- The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard...

3. The Lifestyle and Inheritance of the Believer

- a) Intimacy and Prayer-** You shall call and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'
- b) Righteousness-** Take away the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and the speaking of wickedness. (*Proverbs 6:12-19*)
- c) Justice-** Extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul.
- d) Holy Testimony-** Your light shall dawn in the darkness and your darkness shall be as the noonday. (*Psalms 37:5-6*)
**A holy testimony hinges upon a life of intimacy, prayer, righteousness and justice.*
- e) Guidance and Strength through Trial-** The Lord will guide you continually, satisfy your soul in drought, strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden...
- f) Restoration and Continuance-** Those from among you will rebuild the ruins, raise up the age old foundations, repair the walls, and restore the streets...
- We have been given a ministry of restoration. In this life it can be, but is not limited to, the meeting of needs in times of disaster, war or famine.
 - This blessing continues throughout the Millennial Kingdom, when we will partner with Jesus as He personally and physically gives leadership to the rebuilding of Israel and the nations.

4. The Feast of the Fast

a) Calling the Sabbath a Delight

- *A holy day, honorable to the Lord...* A Sabbath is a feast day, given to resting in the Lord's presence, not to pursuing work or ministry. Many miss the importance of Sabbath by pursuing too many things. If we are too busy to take a Sabbath, we are essentially saying to God that we are too busy to take delight in Him. Consider the Sabbath as God desiring a date with His beloved. The Sabbath was given to us that we might experience the exquisite pleasures of God.
- *Not finding our own pleasure...* The Sabbath was not intended to be a day for seeking our own pleasures. In a culture that is so media centered, taking a Sabbath often means sitting in front of a tv or pursuing other like pleasures. Nothing in Scripture supports this. The Sabbath was given to us that we might spend an entire day focused on the glory of God, undistracted by earthly duties.
- *Not speaking your own words...* The Sabbath was given in a corporate context. Though taking a Sabbath to be alone with God is good, it is best when enjoyed in community.

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To not speak our own words is simply to avoid 'chit chat' or small talk. God wants us to rest, but not be idle. We have a Father in heaven who wants to dance and play with His children. Let us in turn rejoice and worship Him for His love and faithfulness.

- True fasting and Sabbath are given in context together because God desires that we take a day to rest, but not to neglect justice. Our undefiled religion doesn't stop, and we must continue to do good. (*Luke 6:9*)

b) Blessings of the Sabbath

- *Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord...* The Lord promises to meet us when we commit to doing things His way. He desires to bless us, but He does it on His terms. When the Lord's ordinances are rightly used, they are avenues of grace which draw us deeply into the His wonderful presence.
- *He will cause you to ride on the heights...* In keeping the Sabbath, God will give to us the fulness of our inheritance and destiny. The greatest things are given to those who have completely given themselves to loving Him. Whether Jew or Gentile, you will inherit the fullness of the unique blessing God has intended for you. Intimacy with God is the reason the Sabbath is so important. Our greatest treasures are found in communion with the HOLY.