

## Isaiah 58

<p>1 “Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to <b>my people</b> their <b>transgression</b>, to the <b>house of Jacob</b> their <b>sins</b>.</p>	<p>God’s command to Isaiah.</p>
<p>2 Yet <b>they</b> seek me daily and delight to know my ways, <b>as if they</b> were a nation that did <b>righteousness</b> and did not forsake the judgment of their God; <b>they</b> ask of me <b>righteous</b> judgments; <b>they</b> delight to draw near to God.</p>	<p>Israel has forsaken the Fear of the Lord. Prov 7:1. Israel, the wife of God has forsaken her covenant and is living as a prostitute. Isr expects God to act righteously towards them, but they themselves have a form of piety but no tzedekah. Spirit of religion.</p>
<p>3 ‘Why have <b>we</b> <b>fasted</b>, and you see it not? Why have <b>we</b> humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’</p>	<p>God commanded only one fast</p>
<p>Behold, in the day of <b>your fast</b> you seek <b>your own pleasure, (or business)</b> and <b>oppress</b> all your workers. 4 Behold, you <b>fast</b> only to <b>quarrel and to fight</b> and to <b>hit with a wicked fist</b>.</p>	<p>This is what Israel does while “fasting”:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry on with business as usual for own pleasure</li> <li>2. Oppress their workers</li> <li>3. Quarrel and fight and are violent</li> </ol>
<p><b>Fasting</b> like <b>yours</b> this day will not make <b>your</b> voice to be heard on high.</p>	
<p>5 Is such the <b>fast</b> that I choose, a day for a <b>person to humble himself?</b> Is it to <b>bow down his head like a reed,</b> and to <b>spread sackcloth and ashes under him?</b> Will <b>you</b> call this a <b>fast</b>, and a day acceptable to</p>	<p>What does God want?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A humble and repentant heart</li> <li>2. Sackcloth and ashes</li> </ol>
<p>6 “Is not this the <b>fast</b> that I choose: to <b>loose the bonds of wickedness,</b> to <b>undo the straps of the yoke,</b> to let the <b>oppressed (or bruised)</b> go free, and to <b>break every yoke?</b> 7 Is it not to <b>share your bread with the hungry</b> and bring the <b>homeless poor into your house;</b> when you see the <b>naked, to cover him,</b> and <b>not to hide yourself from your own flesh?</b></p>	<p>Gal 5:22-23. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.</p>
<p>8 <b>Then</b> shall <b>your</b> light break forth like the dawn, and <b>your</b> healing shall spring up speedily; <b>your righteousness</b> shall go before <b>you;</b> the glory of the LORD shall be <b>your</b> rear guard. 9 Then <b>you</b> shall call, and the LORD will answer; <b>you</b> shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’ (יְהוָה אֵינִי)</p>	<p>A truly repentant heart leads to a right relationship with God, which overflows in righteousness (not self-righteousness).</p>
<p><b>If</b> you take away the <b>yoke</b> from <b>your</b> midst, the <b>pointing of the finger,</b> and <b>speaking wickedness,</b> <b>10 if</b> you <b>pour yourself out for the hungry</b> and <b>satisfy the desire of the afflicted,</b> <b>then</b> shall <b>your</b> light rise in the darkness and <b>your</b> gloom be as the noonday.</p>	<p>Matt 18: 21-35. The parable of the unforgiving servant.  The result of a truly righteous heart.</p>

<p><b>11</b> And the LORD will <u>guide you continually</u> and <u>satisfy your desire in scorched places</u> and <u>make your bones strong</u>; and <u>you shall be like a watered garden</u>, like <u>a spring of water</u>, whose waters do not fail.</p> <p><b>12</b> And <u>your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt</u>; you shall <u>raise up the foundations of many generations</u>; you shall be <u>called the repairer of the breach</u>, the <u>restorer of streets</u> to dwell in.</p>	<p>When Israel one day, finally, humbles themselves, repents and comes into a right relationship with God... look what will flow from that!</p>
<p><b>13</b> “If you turn back <u>your foot</u> from the Sabbath, from <u>doing your pleasure (business)</u> on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a <u>delight</u> and the holy day of the LORD <u>honourable</u>; if you <u>honour it</u>, <u>not going your own ways</u>, or <u>seeking your own pleasure, (business)</u> or <u>talking idly</u>;</p> <p><b>14</b> <u>then you shall take delight in the LORD</u>, and I will make <u>you ride on the heights of the earth</u>; (or <i>land</i>)</p> <p>I will <u>feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father</u>, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”</p>	<p>Stop trampling the Sabbath underfoot.</p>

**Prov 1:7.** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

### **Fasting**

Lev 23:27. The only day that Israel was commanded to fast.

Reasons for fasting: 1. Impending danger (Josaphat, Esther). 2. Seeking an answer from the Lord (Dan 10). 3. Seeking wisdom from God (Acts 13:2 – choosing a new disciple). In repentance (David praying for his sick child 2Sam 12). Many more reasons.

### **Sackcloth and ashes:**

OT symbol of mourning and/or repentance. Sackcloth = coarse material made of goat hair.

The Bible gives us examples when this was used as a symbol of mourning. David mourned for the death of Abner 2Sam 3:31, when Jacob thought that Joseph had been killed Gen 37:34.

In Esther we see how the Jews fasted while wearing sackcloth and ashes in the face of impending disaster Esther 3:8-15, 4:1, 4:3.

Not only did Israel do this, but we see how the people of Nineveh did the same when Jonah announced God's judgement on them: Jonah 3:5-7.

King Hezekiah did the same when faced with the Assyrian army: Isa 37:1.

Daniel 9:3, when he fasted and prayed for an answer from God.

In the NT we read about the 2 witnesses that will prophesy for 1260 days, wearing sackcloth.

Very simply, sackcloth and ashes were used as an outward sign of one's inward condition. Such a symbol made one's change of heart visible and demonstrated the sincerity of one's grief and/or repentance. It was not the act of putting on sackcloth and ashes itself that moved God to intervene, but the humility that such an action demonstrated

### **Sabbath:**

In Ex 16 and 31 God commands Israel to keep the Sabbath, (last day of the week) holy. The prophets (Jer 17, Nehemiah 13) they are reprimanded from not doing so, (as here in Isaiah 58). Part of the Mosaic law – the marriage contract.

Sabbath is a sign of the Mosaic covenant (Ex 31).

They were to Rest from their works. Sadly the Rabis added over 1000 religious laws to God's law.

**Summary:**

For Israel: Fear the Lord your God. Turn back to your Husband and your marriage contract. Live righteously.

**Application for us:**

Search the true meaning of Righteousness for us as followers of Christ today

Sabbath: This was part of the Mosaic law, that Jesus fulfilled. Thus Sabbath-keeping was fulfilled in Him. This is no longer a requirement. Jesus is our permanent rest. What does that mean?

The first church assembled every day of the week, but mostly (it seems) on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.

Do not neglect the gathering of the believers (Heb 10:25). But we are free to gather whenever practically.

Let us not judge each other over what day we choose to worship the Lord (Rom 14:5-6, Col 2:16). We should be worshipping him every day of the week.