

“A Rebuke for Sinful Fasts and Broken Sabbaths” | Isaiah 58

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Please turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 58 (pp. 617-618). Here Isaiah gives a rebuke to the house of Jacob for their sinful fasts and broken sabbaths, for their hypocrisy in seeking God while hating their neighbor.

Isaiah 58 (English Standard Version)

- 58** “Cry aloud; do not hold back;  
lift up your voice like a trumpet;  
declare to my people their transgression,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.
- 2 Yet they seek me daily  
and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that did righteousness  
and did not forsake the judgment of their God;  
they ask of me righteous judgments;  
they delight to draw near to God.
- 3 ‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not?  
Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’  
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,  
and oppress all your workers.
- 4 Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight  
and to hit with a wicked fist.  
Fasting like yours this day  
will not make your voice to be heard on high.
- 5 Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day for a person to humble himself?  
Is it to bow down his head like a reed,  
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?  
Will you call this a fast,  
and a day acceptable to the LORD?
- 6 “Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?
- 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
- 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,

- and your healing shall spring up speedily;  
 your righteousness shall go before you;  
 the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.**
- 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
 you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.'**  
**If you take away the yoke from your midst,  
 the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,**
- 10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry  
 and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
 then shall your light rise in the darkness  
 and your gloom be as the noonday.**
- 11 And the LORD will guide you continually  
 and satisfy your desire in scorched places  
 and make your bones strong;  
 and you shall be like a watered garden,  
 like a spring of water,  
 whose waters do not fail.**
- 12 And 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.**
- 13 "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,  
 from doing your pleasure on my holy day,  
 and call the Sabbath a delight  
 and the holy day of the LORD honorable;  
 if you honor it, not going your own ways,  
 or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;**
- 14 then you shall take delight in the LORD,  
 and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;  
 I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,  
 for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

Church hurt. People are talking a lot about church hurt and spiritual abuse these days and it's helped people realize how common it actually is. I've been surprised at how many people in this church have church hurt in their past, and as you hear different people's stories and as you read about many high-profile spiritual abuse cases from famous pastors and well-known churches, you often see some similar patterns. Oftentimes there's a charismatic leader, someone who's highly gifted, passionate, zealous, full of big emotions for God and doing God's will. These people appear to have an intense and strong relationship with God. Maybe they're fervent in worship or in prayer and fasting. They

attract a lot of followers. And people assume that because this leader is so zealous and fervent in seeking God and committed to their spiritual movement that they're very spiritually mature. But tragically, they're wrong. These charismatic leaders who express strong emotions for God also end up showing strong emotion toward those who get in their way, who don't get with their program. They spiritually abuse those under them in the name of protecting the vision and mission of the church. They hurt people under the guise of loving God. This is the kind of hypocrisy Isaiah rebukes Israel for here in Isaiah 58. Seeking God zealously while hating your neighbor is something God hates very much and will not tolerate. True humility toward God is expressed in humility toward others. Love for God is never to be void of love for neighbor. Our vertical relationship with God always has an essential horizontal expression.

So as we study Isaiah's 58<sup>th</sup> chapter, we'll consider five things: the rebuke, the requirements, the rewards, the Righteous One, and then we'll end with "So What?" and consider how we ought to live in light of this prophecy.

## **I. The Rebuke (58:1-5)**

First, the rebuke. Let's look at the first five verses. In verse 1 we hear God's call to Isaiah to confront Israel for their sin,

**“Cry aloud; do not hold back;  
lift up your voice like a trumpet;  
declare to my people their transgression,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.”**

It was often in the job description of God's prophets to do the dirty work of calling people out for their sin. Pointing out people's sin has never been popular. It's a major faux pas in our American culture, but it should be important to Christians. Wise and mature Christians know how dangerous their sins are and want other Christians to help them see their sin. The fool hates rebuke, while the wise person welcomes it as sharpening and helpful. Proverbs 9:8 says, **“Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.”** Isaiah's rebuke in this chapter probably wasn't originally received very warmly, but how will we receive it today? This rebuke wasn't just for Israel, but for all who hear God's Word. Are you ready and willing for God's Word to show you your sin and point you to your Savior?

In verse 2 we read about the religious zeal of Israel,

**<sup>2</sup> Yet they seek me daily  
and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that did righteousness  
and did not forsake the judgment of their God;  
they ask of me righteous judgments;  
they delight to draw near to God.**

Here we begin to see Israel's sin of hypocrisy. On the outside it looks as if they're zealous for following God. They seek God daily, they delight in knowing his ways, they pray to God, and they even "**delight to draw near to God.**" Just because someone has strong emotions for seeking God doesn't guarantee that they're the real deal. We must also see how they treat other people. Look now at verse 3, here Israel speaks as if they're shocked that God hasn't noticed how humble they are,

**<sup>3</sup> 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not?  
Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?'**

Here we see Israel's heart problem. They're fasting for the wrong reasons. They're fasting in order to be seen by God and merit his favor. This is the heart of the legalist, the one who believes they can please God through their external obedience to God's law. If they check the right boxes, say the right stuff, be at the right places, and do the right thing, then they'll be on God's good side. Jesus shared a parable of this kind of person in Luke 18, the parable of the pharisee and tax collector - it's one of my favorite parables. Jesus shares of two men who go to the temple. The first is a pharisee who stands and prays confidently, "**God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get**" (Luke 18:11-12). This pharisee trusted in himself that he was righteous and he had contempt for others who were worse people than he was. He believed he was in a different camp than sinners because he didn't do the really bad stuff they did and he was faithful in his fasting and generosity. He faithfully sought God, unlike the sinners. The Pharisee in Jesus' parable gets at the heart of God's critique of Israel in Isaiah 58. They had external obedience, but they also had pride and lacked love for others. We see this in the last half of verse 3 and into verse 4,

**Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,  
and oppress all your workers.**

**<sup>4</sup> Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight**

### **and to hit with a wicked fist.**

Their fasting was really all about themselves and their own pleasure. And while they rested and fasted, they oppressed their workers, perhaps making their servants work twice as hard so that they could rest during their special fast. Furthermore, as we see in verse 4, their fasts would erupt into quarrels and fights, and it would even get physical with others, probably abusing their servants. Talk about hangry. Just imagine these people, being so careful to observe the fast with all the other good Jews, but then getting so hungry and angry at their Jewish servants that they lash out at them. I can just imagine them putting their head on their pillow at night, proud of themselves for keeping the fast and being so faithful to God, while lacking any self-reflection on how they mistreated others.

God hates this kind of false, empty religion. Love for God looks like love for neighbor, we see that in the Ten Commandments – the first four focus on love for God and the last six focus on love for neighbor, and you cannot divorce a love for God from a love for neighbor. So how does God respond to this kind of hypocritical fasting? Look at the end of verse 4,

#### **Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.**

God responded to this sinful fasting by not responding to their prayers. Because they weren't showing mercy to their neighbors, they wouldn't receive mercy when they called out to God in prayer. This is really serious. And this isn't the only place in Scripture where we see God say that he won't listen to the prayers of those who mistreat others. Here are a few other verses,

- Prov. 21:13, **“Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.”**
- Jesus in the beatitudes said this in Matt. 5:7, **“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”**
- And James 2:13, which we read earlier, says, **“<sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.”**
- And the Apostle Peter tells husbands in 1 Pet. 3:7, **“<sup>7</sup> Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your**

**prayers may not be hindered.”**” Husbands, love and honor your wives, because if you don’t, your prayers may go unanswered.

God takes mercy very seriously and he will not listen to the cries of mercy from those who are merciless to their neighbors. Now of course there may be other reasons why God isn’t granting your prayers, but it’s important for us all to reflect on how merciful we are to others.

## **II. The Requirements (58:6-7, 13)**

So that’s God’s rebuke of Israel. Now let’s look at the second part of this passage: the requirements. What righteous living does God require of his people? What is the fast that pleases God? And how does God desire to be worshiped on his Sabbath day? Let’s look first at verses 6-7, and then we’ll jump down to verse 13.

**<sup>6</sup>“Is not this the fast that I choose:**

**to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?**

**<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?**

The fast that God delights in is far less about the act of not eating food and more about how people love their neighbor during the fast. In verse 6 we see that God desires for those who are oppressed to be set free, for their heavy yokes to be permanently broken and taken off, for them to be freed from enslavement to wicked treatment by those in power over them. In verse 7 we see that God desires for his people to still make food when they fast, but instead of eating it themselves, they are to give it to the hungry. They are also to house the homeless and clothe the naked.

The righteous fast that God requires doesn’t find its full expression in not eating, but in taking extra time to devote oneself to the justice of the oppressed and the provision of the poor. True religion finds its most mature expression not merely in acts of love to God, but in acts of love toward neighbor. Look at the last line of verse 7 again, “**and not to hide**

**yourself from your own flesh?”** Fake holy people hide from their own flesh and blood, from the poor and weak and oppressed, from the needy dirty people. They view these kinds of people as holding them back from following God. We would do better to view our holiness not so much in how we're separate and different than sinful people, but in how we love and help those who are sinful, weak, poor, and oppressed. Holiness moves toward others in love, and that movement toward the lowly is a movement toward God. The pharisee in Jesus' parable viewed his holiness as separation from sinners, and for that he was unholy. The tax collector who beat his breast and cried out, **“God have mercy on me, a sinner”** didn't try to compare himself with other men – he only compared himself with God, and in the light of God's holiness, he saw himself as a sinner and God as a generous giver of mercy. And so the tax collector went home righteous, holy, and justified. What about you? Have you isolated your life from the poor and needy, the homeless, the sick, the mentally ill, the sojourner, the orphan? I know there are certain seasons in life when you need to care for children, for aging parents, for your own personal health, but check yourself for a moment, is there an openness in your heart to open your home, your wallet, your calendar to help those in our society with the greatest needs? That's the kind of fast that God chooses, a fast focused on serving others more than achieving a personal piety goal.<sup>1</sup>

Now look down at verse 13, and let's see what kind of worship God requires on his Sabbath day:

**13 “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,  
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,  
and call the Sabbath a delight  
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;  
if you honor it, not going your own ways,  
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;**

Not only was Israel fasting the wrong way, they were also breaking the Sabbath. Just as they had made fasting all about the pursuit of their own pleasure and wants, they were doing the same thing with the Lord's holy day. They didn't delight in the Sabbath, instead they probably saw it as a barrier to doing what they wanted to do. Worship and resting in

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<sup>1</sup> Fasting shouldn't ever be an end in itself as if you're checking a box for doing a hard, godly thing. I've met people who would do 40 day fasts like what Jesus did, but it always seemed to me as if the fast was an end in itself, a pious achievement on par with Christ, an act sure to get God's attention to bring about revival. I don't think that is the heart we should have in our fasting.

God's work and salvation wasn't a delight to them. But God requires his people to worship and rest on his holy day, to enjoy the blessing of rest from work and to enjoy the blessing of having a right relationship with God and worshipping him with the people of God.

Is the Lord's Day, Sunday, a delight to you or a burden? Are you just here to check the box of what you think God requires of you so you can stay on God's good side? That's the wrong way of looking at it. Here's an illustration. One of the funniest and most famous interviews of an NFL player was of Seattle Seahawks former running back Marshawn Lynch. NFL players are required to take questions from the media, and Marshawn Lynch hated those interviews. One time he didn't participate and was hit with a \$100,000 fine by the NFL. So after that Marshawn found his own ways to participate in as minimal a way as possible. Before Super Bowl 49, Marshawn sat in front of the media, asked if his time had started and then answered every question with "I'm just here so I won't get fined." He gave this same answer 29 times and as soon as his required time was up, he grabbed his cell phone and was out.<sup>2</sup> Hopefully you aren't attending church with the same attitude Marshawn Lynch had with media interviews. Kids and teens, are you just here at church so you won't get in trouble with your parents? Adults, are you just here to do your religious duty? Are you just here to stay on God's good side? If that's your attitude this morning, you don't understand the Lord's Day and the freedom and rest there is in worshipping God with God's people. On the Lord's Day we get to hear the greatest news imaginable from God's word, that we can be forgiven of our sins and have an everlasting relationship with God through Jesus Christ – there's nothing greater than that. Resting in God's love for you in Christ, gaining wisdom and guidance for life from his word, and having fellowship with God's people, getting to love and serve them and getting out of your self-centered world – if you can tell me what's greater than that, come up to me afterwards and let's talk. So check your heart attitude, take off your worldly glasses and look at the Lord's Day from heaven's perspective. The worship God requires of you on the Lord's Day is for your ultimate good, for own peace and joy and freedom.

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<sup>2</sup> The next day he had to sit in front of the media again, and he changed his answer to "You know why I'm here."

### III. The Rewards (58:8-12, 14)

Those are God's requirements for fasting and for his sabbath day. Now let's consider point #3: the rewards. The Lord promises blessing and reward for living out the requirements of his holy law, of loving neighbor, fasting genuinely, and worshiping God rightly on the Sabbath. So far the tone has been pretty negative, but the tone really changes with the amazing blessings God promises for obedience to his commands. Look with me first at verses 8-12:

- 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up speedily;  
your righteousness shall go before you;  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.**
- 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.'**  
If you take away the yoke from your midst,  
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
- 10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry  
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
then shall your light rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be as the noonday.**
- 11 And the LORD will guide you continually  
and satisfy your desire in scorched places  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters do not fail.**
- 12 And 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.**

Now jump down to verse 14 for the blessings that come from observing the Sabbath rightly,

- 14 then you shall take delight in the LORD,  
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;  
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

So what kind of blessings do we see promised here for obedience to God's requirements? God promises healing, righteousness, the nearness and protection of God, light and guidance from God, a close, intimate relationship with God, ancient ruins being rebuilt, the heritage of Jacob – these are some of the best blessings God could promise. And

as you read these blessings it almost reads like what life in Eden with God was like. In verse 11 there's the promise of life like a watered garden and verse 9 speaks to having such a close relationship with God that you speak to him and he responds saying "**Here I am**" because his presence is right there with you. No gloom and sadness, only light and joy.

So these promises, the more you think about them, the more they sound like the blessings of heaven rather than mere earthly blessings. So why does it sound as if these heavenly, Edenic blessings can be earned by obedience to God's requirements? I think what's happening here in Isaiah 58 is similar to what Jesus says to a rich man in Matthew 19. Turn to Matthew 19 verse 16. In Matthew 19 a rich man comes to Jesus and asks him the all-important question, "**Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?**" (Matt. 19:16). And so how does Jesus respond? Does he say, *Repent and believe in the gospel* as he often preached (Mark 1:15)? No. Jesus gives him the law, not the gospel! Verse 17: "**17 And [Jesus] said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."** **18 He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, <sup>19</sup> Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** **20 The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?"** **21 Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."** **22 When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."**

Why did Jesus give him the law? Why did he give the same demand as Isaiah 58, that the rich man must give generously to the poor? Jesus wanted to show that the only way to eternal life through the law is through perfect obedience. This is what us Reformed theologians call the covenant of works or the covenant of life, that eternal life with God is promised on the condition of perfect obedience. But when we're faced with the laws demands, it convicts us and we crumble like the rich man, because we know we can never be as loving to God and to our neighbor as is required by God. And so how will we respond to the law's unreachable requirements? Jesus' disciples responded in verse 25 by asking "**Who then can be saved?**" Jesus responds to them saying, "**With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible**" (Matt. 19:25-26). That is what we must feel when

we read the requirements and the rewards of Isaiah 58, that it feels impossible to earn the rewards of heaven, that we can never love the poor and the needy as well as what God requires and we can never observe the sabbath as faithfully as what God has asked. And when we understand that it's impossible to merit the reward of heaven, we should turn to Jesus with empty hands and cry out like the tax collector, **"God be merciful to me, a sinner."** With man salvation is impossible, but it isn't impossible with Jesus.

#### **IV. The Righteous One (Isa. 9, 60, 61)**

Jesus is the righteous one, the one who never sinned, the one who fulfills all the requirements of God's law, who fasted perfectly and perfectly loved the poor and needy, who was perfectly merciful to all and delighted in the Sabbath, and showed mercy to the needy on the Sabbath – this Jesus is the righteous one, the only one who deserves the promised blessings of God. If we just read Isaiah 58 and if we isolate it from the rest of Isaiah's message as if there is no perfect Savior coming, no suffering servant, then we'd just be left with a legal, moral teaching with no hope outside of ourselves. All we'd be left with is the feeling that we must love the poor better and must observe the sabbath better in order to merit God's favor. And eventually we'd either be blinded by our pride or we'd be honest with ourselves and despair. But the message of Isaiah is one of hope in a coming Savior. Isaiah 58 promises that there will be no more gloom and there will be light for those who meet God's requirements, but do you remember what God promised way back in Isaiah 9? Isaiah 9:1 says,

**"But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish...."** Verse 2

**<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone."** Verse 6  
**"For to us a child is born..."**

Light was coming for those who lived in darkness and gloom, and it would come not because of their obedience to God's law, but because Jesus is God's free gift to sinners!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> And Isaiah 60:1-2 also promises the coming light of God, Jesus Christ, saying,  
**"Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.**

<sup>2</sup> **For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the Lord will arise upon you,**

Jesus is the light of the world who has come and shown in this dark world. He has brought truth and hope to a world without direction and without a drop of hope. And in Isaiah 61, Jesus is promised to come and usher in a kingdom where the oppressed captives are free and the poor are no more,

**“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;”**

And do you remember how we read in Isaiah 58:12<sup>4</sup> how God promised to rebuild the ancient ruins of his people if they obey him? Well in Isaiah 61:4 God promises that the ancient ruins will be built up with the coming of the kingdom that Jesus will establish,

**4 They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.**

Jesus, the righteous one, he will bring to his people all the promised blessings of Isaiah 58, not because of their obedience to the law, but because of his obedience to the law and because of his grace and kindness and generosity and mercy. Don't put your hope in your obedience to God's law. Let God's law humble you and put your faith and trust in Jesus, the righteous one, the one who is bringing a kingdom of prosperity and peace.

## **V. So What?**

So what? How ought we to live in light of Isaiah 58 and really the whole gospel message of Isaiah? Three things. First, live in right relationships with those around you. Consider how Jesus had mercy on you and share that mercy with those around you. You

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and his glory will be seen upon you.”

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 58:12 <sup>12</sup> **And 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.**

will never be holy enough on your own, so don't try to earn God's favor by loving the poor and the needy around you. Rest in the gospel of Jesus Christ, that God loves you because you are in Jesus, and you're his adopted child. Think how generous God's been to you in Christ and how you don't deserve his blessings, and then share what you have with others. Loving others is how you can live a holy life before God. Don't view other people as getting in the way of your spiritual growth, but rather as the very opportunities God has for you to become more like him.

There are many ways we can be generous to the poor in our community and give to those who are needy in our own church body. Talk with the mercy committee about ways you can help our church body. Go on a trip to Crow Creek. Volunteer with Next Chapter Ministries, Teen Challenge, or the Landing. Donate to our Community Schools box in the foyer or to a local food shelf. You can also get involved with Together for Good and help local families with very tangible needs, or meet local needs through the CarePortal. There are so many ways we can love those who have needs and share the mercy of God. So let's live in right relationships with the needy around us. Let's not ignore them.

Second, let's worship God rightly. As we fast, let's fast the right way. John Calvin wrote about how fasting should be auxiliary or supplemental to prayer and other good works that God desires for us to do. So let's fast in order to improve our prayerfulness, to help focus ourselves on the needs of others, perhaps to help us focus on turning away from specific sin, or to increase our longing for the return of Jesus, our bridegroom.<sup>5</sup>

Let's also worship God rightly on the Lord's Day. Be faithful in coming to worship each Sunday and grow in your delight in the Lord's Day. If you have a bad attitude on Sundays, take some time to reflect on how important worship is and how amazing the promises of the gospel are. You might complain that you don't have friends at church, but worship on Sundays is so much more than just a hangout time with friends. You have a church family and many opportunities to love others and grow in wisdom according to God's word. And you can't put a value on that. Some of you need to make Sunday worship a greater priority. Obviously some of you are employed on Sundays in jobs that show mercy

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<sup>5</sup> Let's fast with the humble knowledge that Jesus fasted perfectly for 40 days in the wilderness, never succumbing to temptation. Let's fast but not get too prideful about our fasting. We sin when we fast, so don't try to get on God's good side with fasting. You can only get on God's good side through faith in Jesus, and then he'll you'll never be on God's bad side.

to others and that's totally fine, but maybe you're here and you've been making the Lord's Day your day, a day for your personal goals and wants and comforts. Repent from that and open your eyes to all the good things that God has for you with corporate worship and living out the one another of Scripture with the church.

And finally, live with the right hope. Isaiah 58 paints an amazing picture of people giving to the poor and bringing justice to the oppressed, and we want that so badly for our world. But we need to put our hope not in any earthly government to make that happen or in any church program or parachurch ministry. The kingdom of heaven won't come through us, but only with the second coming of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 65 says that Jesus will create new heavens and a new earth, a kingdom where there will be no more weeping, no more death, no more conflict. The wolf and the lamb shall live together on God's holy mountain. Then there will be no more poor, no more injustice, no more oppression. Put all your hope in the coming of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:13)<sup>6</sup> and the forever kingdom he will establish. Yes, we can help the poor and we can fight injustice, but our ultimate hope in lasting change needs to be in Christ's second coming and his eternal kingdom. Live with right hope in Christ's coming kingdom.

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<sup>6</sup> <sup>13</sup> Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:13)