



Whatever you do for the least of these . . .

Being His hands and feet

Isaiah 58:1-11, Matthew 25:31-46, James 2:14-18

Isaiah 58:1-11



“Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins. ² For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. ³ ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. ⁴ Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. ⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Isaiah 58:1-11



⁶ “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

¹⁰ and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

- God chastises His people for empty religion - **Isaiah 58:1-5**
- God says true fasting is compassion and action for the poor and the oppressed - **Isaiah 58:6-8**
- God promised blessings if they live as he desires - **Isaiah 58:9-11**

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

Proverbs 11:25

“A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”

Proverbs 14:31

“Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God.”

Proverbs 19:17

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.”

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

Proverbs 21:13

“Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered.”

Proverbs 22:9

“The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.”

Proverbs 28:27

“Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses.”

Proverbs 29:7

“The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.”

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

Proverbs 31:8-9

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 10

“If anyone is poor among...not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need. . . Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.”

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

Ezekiel 16:49

“Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.”

LOOK AFTER THE POOR AND NEEDY

GOD HATES OPPRESSION!

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

Matthew 5:42

"Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

Matthew 19:21

Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Matthew 22:39

"Love your neighbour as yourself."

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

Luke 3:11

“Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”

Luke 12:33

“Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

Luke 14:12-14

¹² Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

1 Timothy 6:17-18

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.”

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT POVERTY AND OPPRESSION?

James 2:16-17

"If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

1 John 3:17-18

"If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

Isaiah 58:1-11



A NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF ISAIAH 58

Acts 2:42-47

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ **They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.** ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”*

Isaiah 58:1-11



A NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF ISAIAH 58

Acts 4:32-34

*"...No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they **shared everything they had.**³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And **God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all**³⁴ that **there were no needy persons among them...**"*

Isaiah 58:1-11



EARLY CHURCH EXAMPLE OF ISAIAH 58

“Why do we not observe that it is their [the Christians’] benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead, and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase atheism [unbelief of the pagan gods]? For it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galileans [Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us. Teach those of the Hellenic faith to contribute to public service of this sort.”

– Julian the Apostate

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT AN ISAIAH 58 CHURCH ISN'T

Communism - the political and economic doctrine that aims to replace private property and a profit based economy with public ownership and communal control of these things.

Socialism - social and economic doctrine that calls for public rather than private ownership or control of property and natural resources, and a high tax burden on the people to pay for its programmes.

Isaiah 58:1-11



WE WILL BE JUDGED ON HOW WE RESPOND

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Isaiah 58:1-11



WE WILL BE JUDGED ON HOW WE RESPOND

Matthew 25:31-46 cont.

37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Isaiah 58:1-11



WE WILL BE JUDGED ON HOW WE RESPOND

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

44 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did **not help you?**’

45 “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT AN ISAIAH 58 CHURCH IS

Mother Teresa

*“Like a man says to me that you are spoiling the people by giving them fish to eat. You have to give them a rod to catch the fish. And I said **my people cannot even stand, still less hold a rod. But I will give them the fish to eat, and when they are strong enough, I will hand them over to you. And you give them the rod to catch the fish. That is a beautiful combination, no?**”*

*“We try to pray through our work by **doing it with Jesus, for Jesus, to Jesus.** That helps us to put our whole heart and soul into doing it. The dying, the cripple, the mental, the unwanted, the unloved **they are Jesus in disguise.**”*

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT ARE WE ALREADY DOING?

- Food Bank
- Budgeting
- Individuals giving their time and resources
- Meals
- Te Manawa Ora Firewood
- Other.. .

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT IS GOD CALLING US TO DO?

“If you can’t feed a hundred people, then just feed one!”

“We can’t help everyone, but everyone can help someone” – President Ronald Reagan.

“...loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke . . . and . . . spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed...” – from Isaiah 58

Isaiah 58:1-11



WHAT IS GOD CALLING US TO DO?

- Contribute to the food bank
- Help those we see in need
- If we can help, help
- Do something as a DIG Group
- If you cant help someone in need – find someone who can
- Be a voice for the needy and downtrodden
- Seek justice for those who have been treated unjustly
- Pray for people who are sick and visit them
- Visit those in prison
- Take an extra lunch to school
- Start with our church family

Isaiah 58:1-11



GOD DESIRES A CHURCH WHO WILL:

*“...loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke...share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood... do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and...spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed...” - **Isaiah 58:6-7, 9-10***

Isaiah 58:1-11



GOD'S PROMISE

*Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I... then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. ¹¹ The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden; like a spring whose waters never fail. - **Isaiah 58:8-9,11***



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