

Isaiah 58

11-16-05

“Camouflage Christian?”

1. **Intro:**

1.1. John & Lisa Gotz – home from Belize. (Knee surgery Mon)

2. **FASTING! (1-17)**

2.1. God only legislated **one** fast in the OT – the Day of Atonement.
(Lev.23:27-32)

2.1.1. During the captivity the Jews came up with several others(Zech.7).

2.2. **CAMOUFLAGE CHRISTIAN!** (1-5)

2.3. Camouflage = the concealing of things, especially troops and military equipment, by **disguising them to look like** their surroundings.

2.3.1. Sins cloaked w/an amazing **veneer** of religious fervor.

2.3.2. **How does God deal with it? Shout it from the rooftops!** (1)

2.4. They love to come to worship. They love to talk the language of the nearness of God. **But something is wrong!**

2.4.1. The danger is when we subtly slip from loving God to *loving* loving God! (Piper)

2.4.2. They were doing their **daily devotions**(2a); they delighted in **knowing Gods ways**(2b); they **asked God** for just decisions(2c); they delighted in **approaching God**(drawing near)(2d); they even **fasted & afflicted** themselves(3-5).

2.4.3. **How does this happen?** – It happens when we stop coming to truly worship God, but come to enjoy *the atmosphere created by worship*.

2.4.3.1. **Thus we open ourselves to hypocrisy.**

2.4.3.2. **But don't worry...you still look great on the outside!** ☹

2.5. (3b-5) **If your fasting leaves you: self-indulgent** in other areas(3b); **harsh** toward your employees(3c); it causes you to **quarrel** or even get angry enough to **hit** somebody(4a)...then you can be sure, your fasting is not acceptable to the God.

2.5.1. How you treat people at work or home on **Monday**, is the supreme test of acceptable worship from **Sunday!**

2.5.2. If your going to attack someone attack **your own sin!**

2.6. **Oh it's always easier to go through external activities** of religion than it is to **love God** from your heart. And let the love touch the lives of others.

2.6.1. **When the Pharisees were plotting Jesus' death, they refused to enter Pilate's hall!**

- 2.7. **THE 7-POINT FAST!** (6-10a)
- 2.8. “Fasting is no a **legalistic requirement** but a **spontaneous reaction** under special circumstances.” (J. Oswald Sanders)
- 2.8.1. Fasting is to starve **sin...not us!**
- 2.8.2. **“Fasting that is not aimed at starving sin while feasting on God is self-deluded.”** (Piper)
- 2.8.2.1. **Recommend Pipers Book** – A Hunger for God.
- 2.9. **[1] To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? (6)**
- 2.9.1. We need to live to free people, not to burden them!
- 2.9.2. Acts 15:10 **“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”**
- 2.9.3. We note that the **love for God** & the **love for neighbor** are two sides of the same coin!
- 2.10. **[2] To share your bread with the hungry (7a)**
- 2.10.1. “About 40,000 children die a day from hunger & from easily preventable childhood diseases.”
- 2.10.2. “About a billion of the world’s people live in conditions of **absolute poverty** w/o even the most basic resources available – no adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. 400 million are severely malnourished.”
- 2.10.3. **Take away food from your own mouth & put it in the mouth of the poor.** (I’ve never fasted this way)
- 2.10.3.1. Fasting is meant to awaken us to the hunger of the world, not just our own hunger.
- 2.10.4. American Consumerism (fasting from *goods*)– “Most of our life is a gorging of one artificially inflamed appetite after another. Any alteration of this pattern for the sake of ministry is a “fast” - and one that would please God more than a 100 skipped lunches w/a view to more pizza at supper.”
- 2.11. **[3] To bring to your house the poor (7b)**
- 2.11.1. Don’t hold to the mindset “*doesn’t government has programs for this sort of thing.*”
- 2.11.2. The good Samaritan didn’t say, “**One interrupted day will make very little difference in the problem of chronic violence in this region.**”
- 2.11.2.1. He saw this one need & did something.
- 2.11.3. **Ann Unmacht’s ministry - God’s Fan Club.**
- 2.11.4. **Bring to your house** – That doesn’t mean that any care short of that is hypocritical. Often, all-or-nothing paralyzes us.

- 2.12. [4] To clothe the naked (7c)
- 2.13. [5] To not hide yourself from the your own flesh (7d)
- 2.13.1. This means be sympathetic, feel what others feel because we have the same flesh they do.
- 2.13.2. Heb.13:3 “Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also”
- 2.13.2.1. Put your flesh(self) in their flesh(self).
- 2.13.3. Take a trip to Bombay(*Mumbai* – largest city in India 12 mill) that will do more to change your values & priorities than many statistics.
- 2.14. [6] To not point the finger or speak wickedness (9)
- 2.14.1. Put away gestures & words that show raw contempt for other people. (Piper)
- 2.14.1.1. Literally “the sending/or letting loose” of the finger!...maybe closer to our crude gesture of the middle finger, than merely pointing at them.
- 2.15. [7] To extend our soul(ourselves) to the hungry (10)
- 2.15.1. Not just give **food**, but give **ourselves...our souls!**
- 2.15.2. Not just satisfy the **stomach** of the afflicted, but the **soul** of the afflicted.
- 2.15.3. It’s not just giving **things**, but giving **self!**
- 2.15.4. It’s not just **relief**, but **relationship**.
- 2.16. **THE 7-POINT PROMISE!** (10b-14)
- 2.17. There are rewards for fasting – **Mt.6:18**
- 2.17.1. **Yet, don’t dishonor God by turning His free grace into a business transaction.** (John Piper)
- 2.17.2. God doesn’t respond because it provides Him new knowledge about our faith & devotion.
- 2.17.2.1. He knows our hearts better than we know them ourselves.
- 2.17.3. **God is committed to rewarding these acts of the human heart that signify human helplessness & hope in God.** (Piper)
- 2.18. **Q: What will happen in our lives, & in our churches, & in our community if we prescribe this 7-point fast?**
- 2.19. [1] Your light shall break forth (8a); also 10b your light shall dawn in the darkness.
- 2.19.1. We have **light** instead of **darkness**.
- 2.20. [2] Your healing shall spring forth (8b); also 11 Strength to your bones.
- 2.20.1. We have **healing** instead of **disease**.
- 2.20.2. **So this is not a job description but a doctor’s prescription!**

- 2.21. [3] The glory of the Lord will be our rear guard (8c); also 9 He will be there when we call.
2.21.1. It will be **glory** instead of **disgrace**.
- 2.22. [4] The Lord will guide you (11a)
2.22.1. Don't miss "*continually*"! – He is our perpetual guide.
- 2.23. [5] The Lord will satisfy you (11b)
- 2.24. [6] The Lord will make you like a watered garden (11c)
2.24.1. Life becomes a **watered garden** instead of a **dismal swamp**.
- 2.25. [7] The Lord will restore ruins (12)
2.25.1. How many ruined things/lives may be repaired by the **fasting** of God's people for the sake of the poor?
2.25.2. Look at the **miseries, dysfunctions, violations, afflictions, oppressions** that could be healed & restored by the beautiful **fasting** given to us here by Isaiah!
- 2.26. (13,14) **Delight yourself in God** & sit with Christ in the heavenly places, & feed at the heavenly table.
- 2.27. **There's nothing magical about fasting.** It's just one way of telling God that your priority at that moment is to be **alone with him**, sorting out whatever is necessary, and you have canceled the meal, party, concert, or whatever else you had planned to do in order to fulfill that priority. When friends need to be together, they will cancel all other activities in order to make that possible.
- 2.28. Prayer: Lord, help us not to have a **religion of habit** but a **religion of the heart!** Lord, turn some of our **religious fasts** into **righteous feasts!**