

Sermon Outline - Sun, March 13, 2022 – Need Less, Give More
Isaiah 58; Matthew 3:1-4

Keyword Summary – Fasting; Jubilee; Consumption; Giving

Overview –

This month in honor of Lent we are leaning into the practice of the Lenten season and thinking about how our Lenten practice can orient us toward Jubilee and particularly the work of economic justice. Our sermon is an invitation to Lenten practice so if you haven't set a practice or you fell off of your practice already or if you just need encouragement, hope that the message will speak to you where you are.

Exegesis –

- Isaiah was one of the most prolific, requoted prophets in the Bible. He lived during the 8th Century but there were people that followed him afterwards. The original prophet known as Proto-Isaiah probably wrote chapters 1-39, with another person/group, Deutero-Isaiah writing 40-55
- The section for today attributed to Trito -Isaiah (56-66) a third writer after the Exile and return
- Much of the Hebrew scriptures is focused on getting to Canaan, the ways the Israelites struggle to follow God, how they lose the land and make their way back – the dynamic plays out in Isaiah
- This passage is God calling the people out for the way their religious practice is not aligned with what God wants. In particular God is frustrated with their fasting and ceremonies for religious holidays
- You do elaborate stuff but it is not about me or what I have asked you to do – you are doing too much in some places (festivals, sacrifices, religious gatherings) and not nearly enough in others (feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, helping widows and orphans) – Let me get clear on what I want you to do – Your religious practice should move you closer to my commands.
- This message about fasting is really relevant in our Lenten season to make sure our fasting is not falling into the same trap as the Israelites.

Key Points

- 1 **Fasting IS NOT PERFORMATIVE** – it is not about religiosity and getting noticed
- 2 **Fasting IS NOT about DEPRIVATION** – we are not giving things up to “test our limits”
- 3 **Fasting IS about DISRUPTION** of our daily patterns to invite God's reordering
- 4 **Fasting IS PRACTICE and PRACTICAL** - uniting of the spiritual and physical to open us up to living Jubilee. Our Isaiah scripture names some specific ways that we can live out Jubilee in community
 - a. Share food – meet people's most basic need, but also add some fellowship and connecting
 - Share home – can we offer shelter and make shelter into home by building community
 - Share covering – can be concrete clothing but also any way that we support people in their vulnerability

Questions

1. Are there places in your life that you are just going through the motions without really leaning in. How can you invite holy disruption during this Lenten time?
2. What opportunities do you see during this Lenten season to fast from places that you have been investing time, talent or treasure so that you can redirect that towards a Jubilee oriented endeavor? (Try to get as practical as possible)
3. What practices of sharing food, home or covering can you intentionally plan during this season that will bring you into deeper alignment with the kind of fast that God requires?