

The Fasting God Chooses

Isaiah 58:6–7 (NKJV)

Introduction

Israel was fasting, but God rejected their fasting because they were still quarreling, oppressing, and mistreating people.

Fasting is not about how long you can stay without food, but about how deeply God can change your heart.

The fast God chooses is not about empty stomachs but about changed hearts and actions.

1. The Fast God Chooses Stops Oppression (v.6a)

To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens...”

Oppression is not only physical but also emotional and spiritual.

You cannot fast and at the same time hurt people with your words, actions, or authority.

Fasting should soften your heart, not harden it.

Examples Today:

A husband who mistreats his wife but goes on a fast. God says, “That is not the fast I chose.”

A boss underpaying employees but praying and fasting. That is oppression.

A believer who speaks harshly, gossips, or controls others while fasting. That’s false fasting.

Illustration:

Pouring clean water into a dirty glass does not make it drinkable. Fasting without stopping oppression is like praying into a dirty heart.

Message: True fasting means you stop oppressing people with your words, behavior, or power.

2. The Fast God Chooses Frees People from Your Heart (v.6b)

...To let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?"

Many people do not imprison others physically, but they keep them locked in their hearts.

We hold grudges, anger, jealousy, and unforgiveness. That is oppression of the heart.

True fasting is when you open your heart's prison doors and let people go.

Illustration:

A bird in a cage cannot fly. Many of us keep people caged in our hearts through resentment. True fasting opens the cage and sets them free — and you get free as well.

Biblical Example:

Jesus on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34 NKJV). Even in suffering, He released people from His heart.

Message: If you are fasting but still keeping people bound in your heart, your fasting is only hunger strike. Release them and you will also be released.

3. The Fast God Chooses Shows Compassion (v.7)

"Is it not to share your bread with the hungry... when you see the naked, that you cover him..."

True fasting is not selfish — it overflows in mercy and generosity.

Fasting should open our hands to the needy.

Illustration: When you deny yourself food, use it to bless someone hungry. That is fasting in action.

Conclusion

The fast God chooses is not about food, but about freedom, forgiveness, and compassion.

When you fast this way, Isaiah 58:8 promises: "Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily..."

True fasting = stop oppression, free people from your heart, and show compassion.