



ISAIAH 58:6-12

What God Calls “True Fasting”(v. 6)

- Loosing bonds of wickedness
- Lifting heavy burdens
- Setting the oppressed free
- Breaking every yoke

➔ Real worship lightens someone else’s load.

What This Looks Like (v.7)

- Share your bread with the hungry
- Welcome the poor into your life
- Clothe those in need
- Do not hide from your own flesh

➔ Not charity at a distance—proximity and relationship.

➔ The person in need is family, not a project.

A New Way to See Each Other

- No “givers” vs. “receivers”
- No labels, no hierarchy
- One family at one table

➔ We don’t help “them”—we love our own flesh.

God’s Promises to This Kind of Community (v.8)

When we live this way:

- ☀️ Light breaks forth like the morning
- ❤️ Healing springs up quickly
- 🙏 God answers: “Here I am”
- 🛡️ God becomes our rear guard
- 🌿 We become like a watered garden
- 💧 A spring that never runs dry—even in drought

➔ Blessing is not individual—it’s shared by the whole body.

What Must Be Removed (v.9)

- The yoke
- The pointing finger
- Judgment and gossip

➔ A healthy church has no shame, no scoring, no labeling.

What We Give (v.10)

Not just resources—we extend our souls:

- Showing up
- Learning names
- Sitting with others
- Praying together
- Sharing life

➔ Everyone has something to give.

Who We Become (v.12)

- Builders of broken places
- Repairers of the Breach
- Restorers of Streets to Dwell In

➔ God uses *this very mix of people* to rebuild what is broken.

A Word to Everyone

If you have resources:

➔ Offer not just help—but relationship and presence

If you are in need:

➔ You are not a project—You are essential, valued, and needed in this family

Our Calling

Not to be the biggest or wealthiest church—but to be:

- ✓ A place where burdens are lifted
- ✓ A table where all belong
- ✓ A family where love is shared freely
- ➔ A living picture of God’s heart

“And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach...” – Isaiah 58:12

REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week on Father's Day, I received a delightful and unexpected gift. It was a beautifully hand-written card from a beloved niece of Donna's who is a faithful and Spirit-led prayer warrior.

The heart of her message of encouragement to me was the scripture that I am about to read you in its entirety and then, hopefully, shed God's own light on how it applies to this church, and to all of the Body of Christ.

The scripture is God's own words to His people. It is found in the 58th chapter of Isaiah.

Isaiah 58 opens with a congregation that is confused and a little wounded.

They've been fasting — skipping meals, humbling themselves, doing exactly what religious people are supposed to do — and things don't seem to be going their way.

"Why have we fasted," they ask God in verse 3, "and You have not seen?" They feel overlooked. Underappreciated.

And God's answer, through the prophet, isn't "try harder at fasting."

His answer is "you don't yet understand what fasting is for."

So, He tells them.

And what He says next is some of the most beautiful, most practical, most encouraging language in all of Scripture.

Let's read it together.

Isaiah 58:6-12

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?

Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

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, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.

The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In."

I want you to picture a table. Not a stage, not a podium — just a table.

On one side sits a family who drove here this morning in a car that runs, from a house with a working refrigerator.

On the other side sits a brother or a sister who folded up a sleeping bag a few hours ago, who isn't yet sure where tonight will be spent.

They are at the same table. Eating the same bread. Singing the same songs. Calling the same God "Father."

I once heard about a small fellowship — not so different from ours — where a woman who had been sleeping in her car for two months finally worked up the courage to come in on a Sunday morning.

She slipped into a back pew, braced for the sideways glances she'd learned to expect everywhere else.

What she got instead was a man sitting down next to her, introducing himself, asking her name, and then simply staying there through the whole service.

No clipboard. No intake form. Just a name learned, and a seat kept warm next to hers the following week, and the week after that.

Years later, by her own account, that single ordinary act — someone sitting down instead of standing back — was the moment she stopped feeling like a problem and started feeling like family. For her, it was life changing.

That is the picture I want planted in your mind as we dive into God's Word this morning, because I believe it is exactly the picture that Isaiah is describing.

If that is a picture of this room, and I believe that it is, I want you to hear something before we go one verse further: that is not a problem this church needs to solve.

That is not an awkward mixture we need to manage, or a gap we need to apologize for, or a fact we tiptoe around.

According to the prophet Isaiah, that is what true worship looks like. That table — rich and poor, housed and unhoused, all of us with our hearts and hands open — that is the picture God has been after the whole time.

I want to walk through this passage with you this morning — slowly and carefully— because I believe with everything in me that this text was written for a room exactly like this one.

Not a wealthy congregation looking for a guilt trip.

Not a struggling congregation looking for a lecture on its own need.

A family.

A mixed, beautifully ordinary family of people with much and people with little, being shown by God what He actually delights in — and what He promises to every single one of us when we live it out together.

Look at how the passage begins.

Isaiah 58:6

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?"

Four pictures in a row — loosing, undoing, freeing, breaking — and every single one of them is about a weight coming off of somebody.

God could have stopped after the first phrase. He didn't.

He stacked picture on top of picture, as if He wanted to make sure no one could mistake what He meant.

Bonds get loosed. Burdens get undone. The oppressed go free.

The yoke — that wooden bar laid across an animal's neck so it can be driven and worked — gets broken clean off.

God is not interested in a fast that makes you feel spiritual while someone two feet away from you stays crushed under a weight you could have helped lift.

He says, plainly: real worship has weight-lifting built into it.

Somebody's yoke gets lighter because you were here.

Then He gets specific.

Isaiah 58:7

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?

"Share your bread with the hungry." God says. Not your leftovers — your bread, your actual food.

"Bring to your house the poor who are cast out." He exhorts us. Not a program, not a drop-off location — your house.

"When you see the naked, that you cover him." Not from a distance — close enough to see, close enough to act.

And then comes the phrase that I think is the hinge of this entire passage, the phrase I most want you to carry out of this room today:

"and not hide yourself from your own flesh."

In the Hebrew, that word for "flesh" is basar — Basar is kinship language.

It's the word you'd use to describe your own family, your own blood.

God is saying, "the hungry person, the person cast out, the person without clothing — that is not a stranger.

That is your own flesh. Stop pretending you don't see your own family."

I want to say something directly to whoever in this room doesn't have a permanent address tonight.

Please hear me clearly: you are not a ministry project to this church.

According to the very Word of God, you are our flesh. You are family.

The fact that you are sitting in this room, in this family, this morning is not charity being extended downward — it is kin recognizing kin.

And I want to say something to those in this room that have a house, a paycheck, a pantry that isn't empty.

What God is asking of you is not pity from a distance.

It's not writing a check, so that you don't have to look someone in the eye.

It's "bring to your house." It's proximity. It's setting a chair at your table for your own flesh.

That is a far higher calling than charity, and it is also a far greater privilege than charity.

Charity feels good for an afternoon. Family lasts forever.

Now watch what happens the moment this community starts living this way.

Isaiah 58:9-10

Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall

call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'

I need you to notice something about the grammar God uses here, because it changes everything about how we should hear this.

Every "you" in this passage is plural.

This is not a promise to the individual donor as a reward for generosity while everyone else watches from the sidelines.

This is a promise to the whole household of God — the giver and the receiver together, the housed and the unhoused together, as one body experiencing one outpouring of light.

This matches exactly what the Apostle Paul says about the church: if one member suffers, the whole body suffers with it; if one member is honored, the whole body rejoices with it.

Light breaking forth isn't something that happens to the generous person while the needy person stands outside in the dark, grateful for the spillover.

God's glorious light breaks forth on the entire household.

Healing springs up in Abundant Life Church and glorifies the whole Body of Christ.

When the person who had nowhere to sleep is welcomed at the table, and the person who set the extra chair eats with him, the light dawns on both of their faces at the very same moment.

Neither one of them is the project.

They are both the temple where God's glory is now dwelling.

This is good news for every single person in this room, no matter what side of the table you sat down on this morning.

You are not watching someone else receive a blessing meant for them. You are standing inside a blessing meant for all of us.

Notice, too, the picture of protection tucked into verse 8: it says that when we move forward in the righteousness that God delights in, He says "the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard."

In ancient travel, the rear guard was the most exposed and dangerous position — the place where stragglers, the slow, the weak, and the wounded were most vulnerable to attack from behind.

God says, when this community lives this way, He Himself takes up that position.

He guards the back of the line, where the weakest and the most tired are walking.

That is an extraordinary promise for a room like ours, where some of us know exactly what it feels like to be the one struggling to keep up at the back of the line.

God says He is at the rear, watching over the very people the world tends to walk away from.

And then verse 9 adds one more promise: "Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'"

This is not a vague spiritual nearness. This is the kind of nearness where you call out and a voice answers back, immediately, personally — "Here I am."

If you have ever cried out to God from a place of real need — financial, physical, emotional, or the ache of not knowing where you'll lay your head

— this verse is telling you something important: that cry does not go unanswered in a community that is living the way Isaiah describes.

God positions Himself close enough to answer.

Verse 9 continues:

Isaiah 58:9b

"If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness..."

Read that again. After talking about feeding the hungry and housing the cast-out, the very next yoke God wants removed isn't a yoke of poverty — it's a yoke of judgment.

It's the pointed finger. It's the whispered comment. It's the way a community can quietly start sorting itself into "the ones who give" and "the ones who need," and start talking about the second group when they're not in the room.

God says: take that away. Not soften it. Not manage it more politely. Take it away from your midst entirely.

There should be no conversation in this church, where we talk about "the poor" as if that generic phrase describes someone who is your own flesh, standing three feet from you at the coffee bar.

There is no ledger here of who has given and who has received.

We are not a church that quietly keeps score, that lets need become gossip, that lets someone's hardest season become the thing people whisper about in the parking lot.

God calls that wickedness in the very same breath He calls feeding people righteousness.

Removing the finger-pointing is not a footnote to this passage. It is part of the fast that God has chosen.

Let me get practical for a moment about what taking away that finger actually looks like among us.

It looks like a need being met quietly, person to person, rather than announced from a podium.

It looks like never assuming we know someone's whole story just because we know one piece of it.

It looks like resisting the temptation, even in well-meaning prayer requests, to describe a brother or sister by their hardship instead of their name.

It looks like a meal shared because we enjoy each other's company, not because someone is being "ministered to."

None of us in this room is a case study. All of us in this room are simply each other's family.

Verse 10 continues,

Isaiah 58:10

If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.

Notice what God says again — not "if you extend your wallet." If you extend your soul.

This is bigger than money, which is wonderful news for a church like ours, because honestly, between all of us, we may not have a lot of money to extend.

But every single person in this room, regardless of bank balance, has a soul.

And every single person in this room has had moments — maybe this very week — where someone else's soul was extended toward you.

Extending your soul looks like showing up.

Remembering someone's name and using it.

Sitting next to the person nobody else sat next to.

Praying with someone and using their name instead of promising to pray and forgetting later.

It looks like a man with almost nothing, sitting under an overpass, praying with real faith for the businessman in this church who's terrified about Monday's interview

— and it looks like that businessman receiving that prayer as a gift from a brother, not a kindness toward a charity case.

It looks like two people, neither one of them wealthy by the world's measure, trading rides to work and church and trading prayers for each other's children, because both of them have decided the other one is worth showing up for.

I have known churches with enormous budgets that could not extend a soul to save their lives, and I have known rooms with almost no

money in them at all that were so rich in this kind of giving that people walked out healed.

This verse promises light breaking out in darkness — not because the treasury got bigger, but because somebody's soul reached out toward somebody else's.

So, hear this, whoever you are this morning, whatever is or isn't in your pocket: you have something to give. You are not exempt from this verse because you have little. You are invited into it.

Now comes one of the most tender promises in the whole Old Testament.

Isaiah 58:11

The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

I love this verse for a church in our position, because notice what it does not say.

It doesn't say, "you'll never run low." It says, "you will be satisfied in drought", in the dry season, in the lean month, in the week the offering plate comes back thinner than hoped... you will still be like a spring whose waters do not fail. A true Oasis.

The promise isn't that the congregation's resources will always be abundant. The promise is that the source isn't the congregation. The source is the Lord who supplies and guides continually.

That matters for everyone in this room who has looked around at our lack of a building, and quietly worried, "we don't have enough to really help anybody."

And it matters for everyone in this room who has looked at their own empty hands and thought, "I have nothing to offer this church."

This verse was written for both of you at once.

The Oasis doesn't run on what's in our hands.

It runs on the One who keeps filling the spring and Who is the spring itself.

Think for a moment about what a garden oasis actually looks like in a dry country like ancient Israel. All around it, the hills are brown and cracked.

The wells in the surrounding villages have gone shallow and bitter. But this one Oasis — fed by a spring that does not fail — stays green.

People walk past the dust and the drought just to stand inside its shade for a few minutes.

That is the picture God is painting for this church.

We do not have to be the wealthiest church in the valley to be that Oasis garden.

We only have to keep our roots sunk down into the spring that does not fail and let whoever walks by find shade here.

Now we come to the verse I most want to leave ringing in your ears.

Isaiah 58:12

Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

A breach, in this language, is a broken-down wall — a gap where the city's defense has crumbled, where the wind and the cold and the enemy all get in.

And God says something remarkable here: the people who repair that breach are described as coming "from among you."

Not imported. Not outsourced to a wealthier congregation across town, not handed off to a government program, not waiting on someone with more resources to show up and fix it.

From among you. From this room.

From exactly this mix of people God has gathered here this morning — some of you with houses, some of you without one tonight, and God says the repair work comes from you, together, as you are, right now.

And then look at the title He gives this rebuilding community: "Restorer of Streets to Dwell In."

Streets — to dwell in. I don't think I need to explain to anyone in this room what it means to long for somewhere to dwell, somewhere to belong.

Some of you carry that longing every single night.

And here is the staggering thing about this text: God's vision for His repaired and restored people is not a monument or a museum. It's a dwelling place. It's room for people to live.

That is what this church gets to be, regardless of what's in the offering plate.

Not the biggest building in Simi Valley. Not the wealthiest congregation. The repairer of the breach.

The place where the wall that the world built — the wall separating "people with means" from "people without" — gets pulled down, brick by brick, until what's left isn't two camps but one family, with room enough at the table and room enough at the door for everyone God brings to it.

So let me speak a closing word to each of you, because I don't want anyone to walk out of here unsure of where they stand in this passage.

If you have some measure of material means this morning — a paycheck, a pantry, a roof — please hear this: what's being asked of you is not guilt, and it's not distance-giving so you can feel finished and move on.

It's proximity. It's a chair at your table. It's treating the brother or sister next to you as exactly what Isaiah calls them — your own flesh — and discovering, to your own surprise, that your light breaks forth in the giving every bit as much as it does in theirs in the receiving.

And if you are here this morning carrying everything you own, or carrying nothing at all but the clothes on your back — please hear this just as clearly: you are not the exception in this passage.

You are not a side note to someone else's obedience. You have a soul to extend, prayers to offer, a presence in this room that this church needs every bit as much as it needs anyone's checkbook.

You are not a project for us to complete. You are family for us to love, and you have love to give right back.

Together — every one of us, exactly as we are, exactly as God assembled us in this room — we are the ones described in Isaiah 58 verse 12.

Not a wealthier church somewhere else. Us.

From among us will come the builders of the old waste places. From among us will come the repairers of the breach.

From among us, by the grace and the provision of a God whose spring does not fail, will come the restorers of streets where people can finally, simply, dwell in harmony.

May our light break forth like the morning.

May our healing spring up speedily.

And may this church become known, not for what we had, but for what we gave away to our own flesh — until the whole world can see what God always meant a family to look like.

Remember the woman I told you about earlier — the one who slipped into the back pew, braced for sideways glances, and instead found a man willing to simply sit down and learn her name.

That church didn't have a special program for her.

They didn't have a strategy meeting about "outreach to the homeless."

What they had was Isaiah 58 written on their hearts before they ever opened a Bible to it —

a refusal to hide from their own flesh, a willingness to remove the pointing finger, and enough faith in a spring that does not fail to believe there would be enough love to go around.

I believe that is exactly who God is calling us to be. Not a wealthier church somewhere else doing all this someday.

Just Us. In this room. This morning. ...and every day.

Let's pray.