



# ShalomAZ Ministries

*In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption*

## **“So Busy Performing, We Missed the King”**

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### **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

#### **Key Texts: Luke 7:28-35**

Yeshua came to bring good news, healing, and restoration. But when the Messiah actually showed up, many of the most religious people missed Him—because He didn't fit their expectations. In contrast, the tax collectors and sinners responded with repentance, recognizing the goodness of God's ways. The Kingdom of God is not about religious performance; it's about responding to God's voice with humility and obedience. Isaiah 58 and Luke 7 both reveal a common trap: demanding that God respond to our performance rather than surrendering our lives in response to His heart.

True repentance isn't simply about agreeing with God in our heads or words—it's about aligning our lives with His truth. When God speaks, the faithful response is to trust and obey. Anything less, no matter how spiritual it looks, is still resistance. The Kingdom is not built on ceremony but on surrendered hearts. Let's not miss the purpose of God by insisting He play our tune. Instead, let us become children of wisdom who move in step with His.

#### **1. YOU DON'T REALLY AGREE UNTIL YOU OBEY**

It's one thing to say “God is right,” but quite another to live like we believe it. In Luke 7:29–30, even the tax collectors—considered outcasts and sinners—responded to God's call through immersion. They heard John's prophetic message and aligned their lives with God's justice. That simple act of obedience was their way of saying, “God is right, and I was wrong.” But the Pharisees and Torah scholars, despite all their knowledge, refused to respond. Their rejection of immersion wasn't just a rejection of John—it was a rejection of God's purpose for their lives.

Real agreement with God is proven in action. It's easy to affirm God's ways verbally while continuing to live in self-reliance, pride, or compromise. Obedience may be costly. It may mean confessing sin, returning what isn't ours, forgiving those who've wronged us, or humbling ourselves before others. But if we truly trust that God is good, then we will walk in what He says. Obedience isn't a burden—it's the fruit of trust. If we're unwilling to obey, then we haven't truly agreed with God at all.

#### **2. THE DANGER OF PERFORMANCE WITHOUT HEART**

Yeshua compared the religious generation of His day to children in the marketplace demanding that others dance to their tune. They wanted God on their terms—when He didn't act the way they expected, they dismissed Him. That same pattern shows up in Isaiah 58. God's people fasted, prayed, and looked holy, but their hearts were far from Him. They exploited workers, ignored the poor, and pursued self-interest while pretending to worship. Their religion became a performance—a way to manipulate God into giving them what *they* wanted.

When we reduce our walk with God to religious motions—congregational attendance, rituals, words, or appearance—we risk missing His heart completely. God isn't impressed by how much we do if we're doing it for ourselves. True worship always leads to transformation. It brings us to humility, repentance, and love for others. If our "worship" doesn't lead us to justice and mercy, it's not the kind God desires. The question isn't, "Am I doing spiritual things?" but "Am I doing what pleases the Lord?" He doesn't want a show—He wants surrendered hearts.

### **3. REAL WORSHIP IS A LIFE OF JUSTICE AND MERCY (LOVE)**

When Yeshua said, "Wisdom is vindicated by all her children," He meant that real spiritual wisdom is proven by the fruit it produces. The tax collectors and sinners may have had broken hearts, but their hearts were open. They responded to God's voice, repented, and bore fruit in keeping with repentance. Meanwhile, the religious elite, though well-versed in Scripture and public piety, were unmoved by the voice of God in their midst. They couldn't recognize the music of Heaven because they were too busy playing their own tune.

True worship isn't about our comfort, traditions, or preferences. It's about loving what God loves and doing what He calls us to do. Isaiah 58 reveals that God's idea of worship is feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and setting the oppressed free. That's what a heart aligned with His looks like. Worship doesn't stop with lifted hands—it continues with open hands, ready to serve, give, and love. When we stop demanding that God respond to us and we start responding to Him, we become the kind of people who reflect His heart in a hurting world.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the end, the Lord calls us to step away from empty performance and truly respond to the King in our midst. The religious leaders missed God's purpose for their lives because they insisted on their own terms. But those who humbled themselves, listened, and obeyed—those who let their hearts be changed—became the true worshipers God desires. The invitation is clear: stop demanding that God dance to our tune, and instead learn to move to His. Let our lives be shaped by His voice, our worship marked by justice and mercy, and our hearts surrendered fully to His reign.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What does it mean to "affirm God's justice" in your life today?
2. How do you know when you're performing versus truly repenting?
3. What fruit of obedience has been most difficult for you to walk out?
4. Why do you think the Pharisees rejected John's call, even though they were religious?
5. How does Isaiah 58 challenge the way you think about worship?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Abba, we come before You with open hearts. Forgive us for the times we've performed instead of truly repented. Teach us to hear Your voice and respond in humility. Let our worship go beyond songs and services—let it be justice, mercy, and surrendered obedience. We don't want to miss You, Lord. Make us children of wisdom who reflect Your heart.

In Yeshua's name, amen.