

# Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



## The Blessings of Doing What the LORD Desires

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### Devotion and Discussion Questions

**Key Texts (TLV):** Isaiah 58:12-14; Is. 58:1-14; Is. 61:1-4; Ex. 20:8-11; Ex. 31:17; 1 Cor. 13:3

One of the clearest truths in Isaiah 58 is also one of the hardest for us to live: my wants are aimed at building me, but His wants are aimed at building all. That is the issue running through this whole chapter. The problem was never merely fasting, nor was it merely Sabbath-keeping. The issue was desire. The people sought God, asked for His nearness, and even practiced spiritual disciplines, but their spirituality had quietly become centered on themselves. They were still driven by what they wanted, what they preferred, what they hoped to gain, and so even their worship became another expression of self.

That is why this passage feels so searching. It reminds us how easily our faith can become “me first” faith. We can fast and still be self-centered. We can pray and still be self-serving. Our “worship” can end up being all about our personal preferences. How it ministers to *me*, rather than how it exalts HIM. We can do religious things while missing the heart of God entirely. But the Lord, in His kindness, does not merely expose that problem—He shows us a better way. He calls us to a life where our desires are surrendered to Him, where our relationship with Him overflows in compassion toward others, and where the result is not emptiness but blessing, renewal, strength, and restoration. Is. 58:12-14 shows us what begins to happen when we truly do what the Lord desires.

#### 1. WHEN WE WALK IN GOD'S WAYS, HE MAKES US REBUILDERS

*“Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins, will raise up the age-old foundations, will be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of Streets for Dwelling.” (Is. 58:12).* The Lord says that when His people stop living for themselves and begin to walk in His heart, something starts to flow from them that brings restoration. The picture in verse 12 is not merely about bricks and stones. Isaiah is speaking of deeper desolations—the ruins of the ages, the devastation caused by rebellion, sin, selfishness, and generations of brokenness. The physical ruins of cities are only a picture of the deeper ruins in people, families, and communities. Yet the stunning promise is that the Lord will use His own people as part of the rebuilding. He gives us the dignity of participating in putting back together what sin has torn apart.

This is such a beautiful part of God's mercy. He does not just rescue us from ruin; He makes us agents of restoration. As His light rises in us, as His life refreshes us, as we become like a watered garden, the overflow of that life begins to strengthen what has been broken for a long time. He calls His people to be “Repairer of the Breach” and “Restorer of Streets for Dwelling.” In other words, He makes us people who help rebuild what has been broken through, and who help restore paths where homes, families, and lives can become whole again. This is what happens when devotion to God becomes more than private spirituality. It becomes transformative.

## **2. WHEN WE STOP PURSUING OUR OWN WILL, WE LEARN TO DELIGHT IN HIS**

*"If you turn back your foot from Shabbat, from doing your pleasure (חפֶּזֶת, chafetz, pleasure/will/delight/want) on My holy day, and call Shabbat a delight..." (Is. 58:13)*

Verse 13 brings us right back to the core issue of the chapter: whose *chafetz* (חפֶּזֶת)— whose pleasure, whose desire, whose will—is driving our spiritual life? The Lord says, in essence, that Shabbat is not about doing what I want on His holy day. It is not about bending sacred things around my preferences. It is about turning back, repenting, and learning again to call what He calls good a delight. Shabbat is given as a gift, not a burden. It is a day where we cease striving and remember that He is the Provider. It is a day where the compass of our hearts is reoriented toward Him, His goodness, and His order.

What makes this so powerful is that Shabbat sits right at the meeting point of loving God and loving others. It is upward and outward at the same time. It reminds us that all we are and all we have is from Him, and it teaches us to live in that reality in a way that affects the people around us. We cannot separate devotion to God from the way we treat others, and we cannot pretend that acts of compassion matter if they do not flow from a heart centered on Him. The Lord is after both. He is not looking for religious performance, but for hearts that truly delight in Him. And as we stop chasing our own *chafetz* – our own desires – even in spiritual things, we begin to discover that His ways are not restrictive—they are refreshing.

## **3. WHEN WE DELIGHT IN THE LORD, WE ENTER INTO THE FULLNESS OF HIS BLESSING**

*"Then you will delight yourself in ADONAI, and I will let you ride over the heights of the earth, I will feed you with the heritage of your father Jacob. For the mouth of ADONAI has spoken." (Is. 58:14).* At the beginning of the chapter, the people were frustrated. They had no real sense of delight in the Lord. Their religion felt empty because it had been built around self-gratification. But by the time we come to verse 14, the whole thing has turned. The Lord says that when His people surrender their desires to Him, when they stop making their spiritual lives about their own benefit, and when both their ethical and ceremonial lives become shaped by self-forgetfulness and obedience, then they will actually delight themselves in Him. What they had been seeking through performance is finally found through surrender.

And with that delight comes blessing. The Lord promises exaltation, nourishment, inheritance, and fellowship. He says He will cause them to ride over the heights of the earth and feed them with the heritage of Jacob. This is covenant language, secure language, relational language. It is the language of a Father giving His children what truly satisfies. The deeper truth is this: those who give themselves away find themselves; those who relinquish the throne receive the crown. The blessings of doing what the Lord desires are not shallow rewards. They are the joy of His presence, the strength of His provision, and the privilege of living in step with His heart.

## **CONCLUSION**

Isaiah 58:12–14 calls us to more than religious observance. It calls us to the heart of God. The Lord wants to purify us from self-centered spirituality, from using sacred things to serve selfish desires, and from reducing faith to performance. He wants to form in us a life that is truly centered on Him and overflowing toward others. When that happens, we become rebuilders of what has been broken, people who learn to delight in what He delights in, and sons and daughters who walk in the blessing of His presence and provision. This is the way of life, peace, and transformation.

Today, surrender your wants to the Lord again. Let Him search where your spiritual life has become about your preferences, your comfort, your timing, and your gratification. Repent where needed. Ask Him to teach you to call His ways a delight. Ask Him to make you a repairer of breaches, a restorer of what has been broken, a well-watered garden through whom His life can flow to others. And as you yield your heart to Him, trust that *“the mouth of ADONAI has spoken”* (Is. 58:14). What He promises, He will surely do.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. In what ways do you see the tension between your own desires and the desires of the Lord in daily life?
2. How does Is. 58 challenge the idea that spiritual practices are mainly about personal benefit?
3. What do you think it means practically to become a “Repairer of the Breach” in your home, congregation, or community?
4. How does Shabbat reveal both God’s heart for our relationship with Him and our relationship with others?
5. What would it look like this week for you to stop pursuing your own pleasure in spiritual things and begin delighting yourself in Adonai?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King*, we ask You to make our hearts sensitive to the voice of Your Spirit. Search us and show us where we have been driven by our own wants, our own preferences, and our own gratification, even in spiritual things. Teach us to do what You desire. Teach us to delight in what You call a delight. Turn our hearts back to You so that our lives would not be shaped by empty performance, but by real love, real obedience, and real fellowship with You.

Make us rebuilders, Lord. Let Your life flow through us so that what has been broken might be restored, so that wounded people might encounter Your kindness, and so that homes, families, and communities might be strengthened by Your grace. Make us like a well-watered garden, refreshed by Your presence and overflowing with Your life.

*B'Shem Yeshua*, In the name of Yeshua, amen.