

True Worship

Isaiah 58:8-14

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**BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP**

Isaiah 58:8-14 – Blessings of true worship (NIV)

⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, ¹⁰ and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. ¹¹ The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. ¹² Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. ¹³ “If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, ¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

v8-9 – What would be the result if God’s people coupled their worship with lives of righteousness and love?

Then your light shall break forth like the morning: When they call out to God, then the LORD will answer. They would have lives full of light, full of healing, full of righteousness, full of the glory of the LORD.

What did the Lord want His people to stop doing?

- They must stop oppressing others, treating them as animals bound with a yoke.
- They must stop pointing their finger at others and see where they are to blame themselves.
- They must stop speaking wickedness.

How are people being oppressed today?

By not paying them what they should be making, by not having uniform justice, by taxing everything excessively. By labeling people as oppressors when they are not. By canceling those who question the official narrative. By having selections rather than elections.

Why do people blame others for the very thing they are doing themselves?

They seek to deflect attention from themselves. This often works in politics especially when media bias works in your favor... the seriousness of the allegation is usually enough; nothing has to be proven because “perception is reality” and it is all too easy to be seen as guilty until proven innocent.

- People blame others when they fail to take responsibility for themselves... a hallmark of unbelievers.

What does it mean to speak wickedness?

It could be anything that does not honor God and brings harm to others. Wickedness is worse than just sin, it is knowing what is evil and doing it anyway.

v10 – What did the Lord want His people to start doing?

They needed to minister to the hungry with more than food; they had to extend their soul to the hungry. They had to look for the afflicted soul and seek to satisfy it.

James 1:27 – Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

We worship God when we represent Him in helping those who are needy.

How can we make a connection with others to better address their needs of their soul?

You must get to know them; and that requires humbling yourself to set aside your own agenda to learn about them:

Philippians 2:3 – Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

How is failing to minister to people in need actually sin?

Failing to do help those in need are sins of omission. If we will walk right with God, we must open our eyes and do what is our loving duty before Him.

What will be the result of acting in obedience to God?

Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday: To the repentant, God promises blessing. Not only will they have light, but even their darkness shall be as the noonday!

- Light represents knowledge of the truth.

v11 – What is the promise to those who do more than just empty religious rituals?

The LORD will guide you continually: This is a promise for those who do more than just empty religious rituals. To have the guidance of the LORD, empty religious ritual isn't enough. We need to seek God with both sincere hearts and sincere actions.

And satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones: Those who serve God with sincere hearts and actions enjoy a health and life of the soul that is impossible for the superficial follower of God to know.

Does this mean that Christians in active fellowship with the Lord are healthier than worldly Christians?

Generally, yes... we do live in a fallen world so bad health happens but certainly Christians in active fellowship with the Lord will avoid doing things with unhealthy consequences.

v12 – What was the promise to those who served God with sincere hearts and actions during Isaiah's day?

Those from among you shall build the old waste places: They will also accomplish things for God's kingdom. They build and are called *the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell in.*

- You can't build anything for God's kingdom on the foundation of a superficial walk with God.

What is the principle here that applies to today?

How there needs to be a rebuilding work today! We live in a broken world. In every direction there are breaches which are wide and deep.

- There are broken hearts and broken homes, and that which once was sacred is but a waste place.
- Once there was a carefully guarded fence around the sanctity of family life, sex life, and the right to personal privacy, now there is just a waste place.

The wall of protection is in ruins, and life has lost all its meaning.

What are the characteristics of a life right with God revealed in this passage?

- It is an enlightened life: *Your light shall dawn in the darkness.*
- It is a guided life: *The LORD will guide you continually.*
- It is a satisfied life: *And satisfy your soul in drought.*
- It is a fragrant life: *Like a watered garden.*
- It is a freshly sustained life: *Like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*
- It is a productive, healing life: *You shall build the old waste places.*

v13 – What is the proper attitude one should have regarding the Sabbath?

The Sabbath was another empty religious observance for the Jewish people of Isaiah's day. God calls them to take a delight in the heart and in the purpose of the Sabbath — to honor Him, not doing your own ways.

Are Christians required to keep the Sabbath today?

The New Testament makes it clear that Christians are not under obligation to observe a Sabbath day...

Colossians 2:16-17 – let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ

This is because Jesus fulfills the purpose and plan of the Sabbath for us and in us...

Hebrews 4:9-11 – There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience

Galatians 4:10 tells us that Christians are not bound to observe days and months and seasons and years.

- The rest we enter into as Christians is something to experience every day, not just one day a week.
- Our Sabbath rest is knowing we don't have to work to save ourselves, but that our salvation was accomplished in Jesus (Hebrews 4:9-10).

What should we say to those who insist in observing the Sabbath?

If they are going to be consistent, then they must also insist on a six-day work week... Exodus 20:9, in the command regarding the Sabbath, says *Six days you shall labor and do all your work.*

So, if Christians do not observe the Sabbath, why do we go to church on Sunday?

There is a principle in Sabbath observance that honors God... setting aside a special day to cease from your usual earn-a-living tasks to rest and meet with fellow believers.

Mark 2:27 – *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*

v14 – What results when we observe the principle behind the Sabbath and not treat it as an empty religious ritual?

Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD: God will bless us, and we shall delight, not only in the blessings, but in the LORD Himself.

In this chapter, God exposed the emptiness of two religious rituals as practiced in Isaiah's day: fasting and Sabbath keeping...

What is similar between fasting and Sabbath keeping?

Both of these are expressions of not doing things. In fasting, you don't eat. In Sabbath keeping, you don't work.

- An important aspect of this chapter is that what we don't do isn't enough to make us right with God.
- Our walk with God shouldn't only be defined by what we don't do. What do we do for the LORD?

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- Stop oppressing others, pointing fingers, and speaking wickedness; minister to the needy instead.
- Avoid empty rituals and practice pure and undefiled religion instead; it makes for a healthy body & soul!
- God has called us each to a *Repairer of the Breach, & Restorer of Streets* in this is a fallen world.
- We keep the Sabbath when we delight in the Lord every day!