

Isaiah 58 (Inward Purity)

by Hans R. Waldvogel

The sermon on Isaiah 58 emphasizes the importance of inward purity, true fasting, and the necessity of forgiveness in our relationship with God.

Scripture: Isaiah 58:1

Topics: "True Worship", "Inward Purity"

Description

Hans R. Waldvogel emphasizes the call for inward purity as outlined in Isaiah 58, urging believers to examine their hearts and motivations behind their religious practices. He critiques superficial fasting and highlights that true fasting involves acts of compassion, justice, and the liberation of the oppressed. Waldvogel stresses the importance of forgiving from the heart and allowing God's light to cleanse our inner selves, which leads to genuine worship and healing. He reminds the congregation that God desires truth in the inward parts rather than mere outward rituals. The sermon challenges listeners to reflect on their spiritual state and to pursue a deeper relationship with God through purity and love.

Transcript

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speaker icon 1. Nothing Between (Tindley) (3:16)

speaker icon 2. Isaiah 58 (23:17)

speaker icon 3. O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee, verses 1-2 (1:11)

Selected Verses:

Isaiah 58:1-14. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. 2Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

3Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. 4Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his

soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? 6Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

8Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. 9Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; 10And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: 11And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 12And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

13If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Opening:

(...) something that might be helpful to us: Isaiah 58. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily..." That's what we've been doing. Now here's our photograph: "...delight to know my ways." That what we've been doing. That's the reason we've come here: to listen to sermons. "They ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God." That's us.

But now, "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?" A woman said, "Now, I've fasted 21 days and I've got nothing yet. How long did you fast?" "Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate..." That ain't us, of course. "...and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul?" And here's something that often comes to my mind when I see the altar filled with people who sort of make a vacuum cleaner out of their nose: "a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush?" (laughter) Excuse me; you didn't know that was possible. (laughter) "...and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?"

Well, I'm just using this as an illustration to show us that there's something better coming, thank God. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

There's something in that. You know, if you don't forgive from the heart... Now, we forgive. We've been taught to forgive. But down in the heart, there are these biting little things. You've got somebody by the throat in your heart. We don't do it outwardly at all, but in our heart, there is the memory of grievances. Somebody has grieved us.

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Selected Quotes:

How clean, how pure this heart of mine must be! We talk about "every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure," and then we allow this impurity in our hearts. We don't allow the light to shine.

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How many people have you got by the throat this morning? And God sees it, and He'd like to let the light shine into my soul. And He says, "This is the fast that I have chosen." One act of purifying my heart, and that's what He means when He says, "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." We clean up, really, and we let the light shine. Oh, let that light shine through you, and it'll expose all that rubbish and all that uncleanness! And when God says, He "seeketh such who worship Him in Spirit and in truth," He means people that really want to please Him.

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Father will not forgive us our transgressions if we don't forgive from the heart. But to forgive from the heart means more than to say it with my lips, or to act it with a superficial smile. It means a cleansing of my heart, where the love of Jesus Christ takes the place of my natural love, which fails in every instance.

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"See that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently." Beloved, if that isn't the result of our weeks of prayer then we've wasted our time. If the result is not a truly purifying of ourselves "even as He," we will not be "partakers of Christ." But here He shows us the way to divine healing: He says, "Your health shall spring forth speedily." That's where the fountain of healing has been stopped. The love of Jesus Christ is dead, or lying dormant. And God wants us to wake up and realize what it means to worship God "in spirit and in truth." It means to present to God a vessel that is "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use," in which the Master can show forth His virtues, His glory. The highway of holiness is the way not of hypocritical religion but of love, and joy, and peace.

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"Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward part." And he says, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else I would give it." People are willing to kneel here for hours, and lots of people are willing to fast. God says He doesn't desire that in the first place, but He desires "a broken and a contrite spirit" that "trembles at His word."

...

"If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity--." You know what it is, the putting forth of the finger: "Oh, if the Lord knew who that woman is, and who that man is, and what she did, and what he did..." How is it that we know all about it? Why is it that we're interested in it when God said, "Don't you judge," and when Jesus said, "I judge no man. Don't judge"? Oh, that's the reason we're not more greatly blessed, folks.

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Illustrations:

An illustration of "it looks clean when the shades are drawn." (from 5:21)

An illustration from Napoleon at a Spanish monastery. "Now your house, your heart is a temple of God, a house of prayer, a 'temple of the living God.' But you've got a basement there, a torture chamber where thoughts, feelings, judgments, criticisms crawl around. God says He's going to try it on you. He says, 'Wherewith thou judgest another thou thyself shalt be condemned.' Oh God, how guilty we are before God!" (from 10:23)

An illustration of a father's care. (from 15:53)

References:

An American folk ballad: Frankie and Johnnie: "I shot my man, 'cause he done me wrong."

A book about Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

Audio Quality: Poor

More Information...

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