

A Trek Through Isaiah 79 - 58:1-14

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For this week:

- The prostitute's brood and the LORD's household 57:1-21

Context

<u>The Ideal and the Actual 56:1 - 59:13</u>
The waiting people 56:1-8
The divided people 56:9 - 57:21
Ineffective religion 58:1-14
The guilty people 59:1-13

- In the book of the Conqueror (56 - 66)
 - Question: How will God's people fulfill their promise?
 - Three areas of emphasis
 - The contrast between the ideal community and the actual community
 - God's glorious promises for the faithful.
 - A Conqueror: the third messianic figure who accomplishes God's purpose and fulfills His promises.
- This section (56 - 59)
 - Four parts which contrast the ideal (the people of God as they are intended to be) with the actual (how they actually are).
- Today we will cover part 3: Ineffective religion 58:1-14

Ineffective **religion** 58:1-14

- The prophet shows why Israel's religious practices are ineffective.
- Focus on two practices: fasting and Sabbath-keeping

- V1 Call to the prophet.

1 Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins.

- Command

- Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet;

- Command to the prophet
- To cry aloud; not hold back;
- like a trumpet.

- As God giving the law at Mt Sinai Num 19:16, 19 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled...19 And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

- Also as the trumpet warned the people of coming danger 1 Sam 13:3 Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear."

- Recipient

- My people... the house of Jacob

- Message

- Their transgressions. Rebellion against God.
- Their sins. Falling short of God's standard.

- V2 Israel's religious practice

2 Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God.

- Me.
 - Emphatic. God insulted.
 - Young: "Me from whom they have fallen away, they daily seek in worship"
- they seek me daily and delight to know my ways...they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God.
 - Diligent in religious practice daily
 - Outwardly seeking God
- as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God;
 - Heart diagnosis
 - Do not do righteousness
 - Have forsaken the judgment of their God
 - Judgment. Heb mishpat: verdict, law, justice

- V3-12 **Fasting**

- V3-5 Ineffective fasting

3 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. 4 Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. 5 Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD?

- V3a The people's complaint

- Why have we fasted...Why have we humbled ourselves
 - Parallel structure
 - No benefit seen
 - V3a you see it not.
 - Lit "You have not seen"
 - V3a you take no knowledge of it
 - You do not accept the worship.

- V3b-5 The LORD's reply

- V3b-4a Characteristics of their fasting
 - you seek your own pleasure,
 - (You) oppress all your workers.
 - you fast only to quarrel and to fight
 - V4b Results of their fasting
 - will not make your voice to be heard on high
 - V5 A show of humility
 - Humble himself...bow down his head...spread sackcloth and ashes
 - Actions to appear humble.
 - like a reed.
 - Sarcastic.

○ V6-7 Acceptable fasting 1

6 “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?”

- A true fast changes one’s focus from myself to God and to others
 - Contrast v3 Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure
- V6 Social action: end oppression
 - Parallel structure ABAB
 - to loose the bonds of wickedness...to let the oppressed go free
 - To end all wicked oppression
 - to undo the straps of the yoke...to break every yoke
 - Yoke. Cross bar with straps used to restrain animals.
 - Undo the straps. To set people free from bondage.
 - Break every yoke. Destroy the means of oppression.
- V7 Personal action: help the needy
 - Share your bread.
 - Bring the homeless poor into your house.
 - Cover the naked.
 - Not hide from your own flesh. Family members and relatives in need.

○ V8-9a Benefits 1

8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’

- Benefits of acceptable fasting:
 - New dawn
 - Healing. Restoring to wholeness.
 - Guidance and security
 - Parallel structure ABAB
 - Your righteousness. In the LORD.
 - As Is 52:12 For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.
 - Prayers answered
 - God with them

- V9b-10a Acceptable fasting 2

9 ... If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,

- V9 remove personal oppression
 - the yoke. Remove the means of oppression.
 - The pointing of the finger. A gesture of contempt.
 - Speaking wickedness. As v2 forsake the judgment of God
- V10 give personal charity
 - pour yourself out. Give of yourself, not just material items.
 - satisfy the desire of the afflicted. Not their own desires.

- V10b-12 Benefits 2

then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. 11 And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. 12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

- V10 your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday
 - Blessedness after sorrow.
- V11 the LORD will guide you continually
- V11 satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong
 - Scorched places. Exposed, unprotected, desolate
 - Desire satisfied.
 - Bones strengthened
- V11b-12 Results in three pictures
 - Like a watered garden.
 - Lush and green.
 - Bearing fruit and flowers.
 - Like an unfailing spring.
 - Supply of water which does not fail.
 - Like a city rebuilt
 - Ancient ruins...foundations of many generations.
 - Have existed for a long time.
 - May refer to Jerusalem being rebuilt
 - May be a picture of life and relationships restored.

- Application for NT believers

- Fasting is giving up food or something else.
- True fasting is not giving up something to appear holy or to earn favor with God.
- True fasting is getting our focus off our own desires and on honoring God and doing good for others.

- V13-14 **Sabbath-keeping**

- Third if-then

- V13 Acceptable Sabbath-keeping

13 “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;

- If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable

- Parallels upon parallels
- Turn back your foot from the Sabbath
 - Figurative: Stop treading on holy ground; desecrating the Sabbath
- from doing your pleasure
 - How they were desecrating the Sabbath
- Sabbath <> My holy day
 - Belongs to the LORD.
 - Is set aside for His use.
- call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable
 - What they were doing: their own pleasure
 - What is acceptable:

- To do things that result in real delight

- To do things that are honor the day as the LORD’s day

- if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly

- What they were doing
 - Going their own way
 - Seeking their own pleasure
 - Talking idly. Speaking their own words.
- What is acceptable
 - To honor the day

■ V14 Benefits

14 then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

- you shall take delight in the Lord
 - As Ps 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- I will make you ride on the heights of the earth
 - Rise above life’s difficulties
 - Even when in darkness (v11)
- I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
 - The covenant and all the promises given to Jacob
- for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.
 - Guaranteed by the Lord
 - According to His word.
- Application for NT believers
 - Heb 4:9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.
 - Keeping the Sabbath day is the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated in the New Testament
 - The OT Sabbath prefigures the rest that we have in Christ
 - Salvation accomplished. No more works.
 - Principles for NT believers
 - We have rest in Christ
 - At peace with God
 - No need to work for salvation
 - Don’t use that rest for our own pleasures
 - Rather use it for God.
 - Call it a delight
 - Honor it as holy

Discussion

We will break into three groups for discussion. The questions are

1. **Warning cry 58:1-2**
 - a. **Cry aloud, like a trumpet**
 - b. **Declare to My people their transgressions**
 - c. **Religious in appearance**
 - d. **In reality**
 - i. **Not doing righteousness**
 - ii. **Forsaking the judgment of God**
2. **Fasting 58:3-12**
 - a. **False fasting**
 - i. **Seeking my own pleasure**
 - ii. **Appearing religious**
 - b. **True fasting**
 - i. **Turning away from my desires**
 - ii. **Seeking good for others**
3. **Sabbath-keeping 58:13-14**
 - a. **NT: at peace with God**
 - b. **False Sabbath-keeping**
 - i. **Going my own way**
 - ii. **Seeking my own pleasure**
 - iii. **Talking idly**
 - c. **True Sabbath-keeping**
 - i. **Set apart for God**
 - ii. **Honoring Him**
 - iii. **Calling this a delight**

Remember to worship the Lord: (1) See (2) Know (3) Respond

For next week:

- The guilty people 59:1-13

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