



Sunday November 06, 2016
The Chosen Fast (Part-1) : Preparation

The Bible presents fasting as a "spiritual discipline" in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Lord Jesus did say that His people will fast during the time after His ascension until His return (Matthew 9:14-17).

Fasting bring to us many benefits:

- 1, Expresses Repentance** - in expressing our turning away from sin or the things of the world and turning toward God
- 2, Strengthens Focus** - to help us in our pursuit of God, in our seeking God, e.g. in times when you need to hear from God, get clarity on direction and receive guidance.
- 3, Increases Intensity** - to undergird and intensify other spiritual areas such as our faith, prayer, desire for God, e.g. Matthew 17:20-21
- 4, Develops Discipline** - develops self-control, which is a fruit of the Spirit, and keeps the flesh under
- 5, Deepens Consecration** - that we are setting ourselves apart for a specific purpose, e.g. before going out on a time of ministry, or as the Elders in Antioch did before they prayed, commissioned and released Paul and Barnabas for missions (Acts 13:1-4)

Fasting changes us. It does not change God.

Fasting moves us and positions us into a place where we should be in order to receive from God.

There are many different kinds of fasts that we can do:

- 1, Refraining from food - a single meal, or a couple of meals.
- 2, Refraining from certain kinds of foods for a period of time.
- 3, Refraining from certain activities for a period of time, e.g. someone may 'fast' watching TV and instead spend that time in spiritual activity.
- 4, The fasted life is one where you are keeping certain things away from you on an ongoing basis because you choose to.

We can fast individually, in a small group with a few people or even corporately in a larger gathering.

We would like to spend some time in Isaiah 58

Read full chapter Isaiah 58:1-14



We will divide this series into 3 sermons, where we address specific aspects of 'The Chosen Fast' .

Preparation : Getting ready to fast correctly.

Positioning : For whom and why are you going to fast. You can fast for yourself or fast on behalf of someone else or on behalf of a group or community

Promises : What God has promised to us when we fast correctly.

Today

Preparation : Getting ready to fast correctly.

Isaiah 58:3-4

A, We do not fast to impress God.

'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?' (vs 3)

58:3...The LORD says to them, "The truth is that at the same time you fast, you pursue your own interests and oppress your workers. (Good News Bible)

58:3..."Well, here's why: "The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit. You drive your employees much too hard. (Message Bible)

B, We are not fasting to pursue selfish interests

C, Our relationships and how we treat people is important as we prepare to fast (vs 3-4):
don't oppress those who work for you
don't get into strife, bickering and quarrels

Isaiah 58:5

Chosen = acceptable, pleasing, find excellent, asked for

D, We do not fast to get God's or people's sympathy through our acts of self inflicted pain and self denial :

"A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?" (vs 5)

Isaiah 58:6-7

This is what God has asked for or is pleased with when we fast:

- To loose the bonds of wickedness(NKJV); to break the chains of injustice (MSG);
Remove the chains of oppression (GNB)



- To undo the heavy burdens(NKJV); get rid of exploitation in the workplace (MSG); Remove the yoke of injustice (GNB)
- To let the oppressed go free(NKJV); free the oppressed (MSG); let the oppressed go free (GNB)
- You break every yoke(NKJV); cancel debts (MSG)
- To share your bread with the hungry(NKJV); sharing your food with the hungry (MSG); Share your food with the hungry (GNB)
- Bring to your house the poor who are cast out(NKJV); inviting the homeless poor into your homes (MSG); open your homes to the homeless poor (GNB)
- When you see the naked, that you cover him(NKJV); putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad (MSG); Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear (GNB)
- Do not hide yourself from your own flesh (NKJV); being available to your own families (MSG); do not refuse to help your own relatives (GNB)

We see something very important in these two verses - that I need to be treating people well, in right relationships with people , showing compassion to people - as part of my preparation to fasting and seeking God.

Some more instructions in verses 9-10

Isaiah 58:9-10

- Take away the yoke from your midst (NKJV); get rid of unfair practices (MSG);put an end to oppression (GNB);
- Stop The pointing of the finger (NKJV); quit blaming victims (MSG);put an end to every gesture of contempt (GNB);
- Stop speaking wickedness (NKJV); quit gossiping about other people's sins (MSG);put an end to every evil word (GNB);
- Extend your soul to the hungry (NKJV); be generous with the hungry (MSG);give food to the hungry (GNB);
- satisfy the afflicted soul (NKJV); start giving yourselves to the down-and-out (MSG);satisfy those who are in need (GNB);

One more instruction:

Isaiah 58:13

(NKJV) If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words,

(MSG) "If you watch your step on the Sabbath and don't use my holy day for personal advantage, If you treat the Sabbath as a day of joy, GOD's holy day as a celebration, If you honor it by refusing 'business as usual,' making money, running here and there--



(GNB) The LORD says, "If you treat the Sabbath as sacred and do not pursue your own interests on that day; if you value my holy day and honor it by not traveling, working, or talking idly on that day,

Now we know that in the New Testament, we are not bound to "the Sabbath", but the key here is to taking time to honor God. We do this by gathering together with other believers on a designated day (Hebrews 10:25) and honoring God in our working, talking and all areas of life. I cannot live a life that dishonors God, and then expect my fast to produce desired outcomes.

So in summary, as we prepare to fast, God looks at how we live our life - our motives, our relationships, our caring of the poor and needy, and our honoring Him in all we do.

This then is part of our preparation before we fast. We need to get these areas of our life right before God.