

## FASTING AND PRAYER – 2

### JANUARY 12, 2022

#### ISAIAH 58

A. God reveals improper fasting.

1. (1-5) Why aren't our prayers answered?

- Their fasting was an insincere, empty ritual. They were fasting so God would help them win arguments and for other selfish reasons. It was a shallow empty show with no spiritual substance behind it.
- **LUKE 18:9-14 (ESV)** Jesus wasn't impressed with the self-righteous pharisee who fasted twice a week, but the humble publican got His attention.

B. God reveals acceptable, proper fasting.

1. (6-7) Proper fasting begins with:

- Getting right with others. Stop oppressing others and start acting out of love and kindness.
- Getting right with God means getting right with people.

2. (8-12) The blessings God promises are revealed.

- If they would couple their fasting with righteous living and love, they would be blessed with light, guidance, satisfaction, strength, health and spiritual refreshing.
- Three things to stop: mistreating others, finger-pointing, and evil speaking (commission).
- Two things to do: reach out to the hungry, and to the afflicted in soul (omission).

3. (13-14) True sabbath keeping.

- The sabbath was another empty religious observance for the Jewish people of Isaiah's day.
- God calls them to honor Him and not do their own thing. Christ fulfilled the purpose and plan of the sabbath for us and in us. We observe the sabbath by setting aside every day to live for Jesus. Those who insist on a sabbath day rest must also observe a six-day work week. (Adam Clarke). This is how we delight ourselves in the Lord, and invite the blessings that accompany these two observances.

#### CLOSING:

God exposed the emptiness of two religious rituals as practiced in Isaiah's day: fasting and sabbath keeping. In fasting, one doesn't eat. In sabbath keeping one doesn't work. Our walk with God isn't defined by what we don't do. It's what we do and the motive behind it that pleases God.