CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah Chapter 58 — True Fasting and Sabbath Delight

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 58 exposes one of the greatest dangers in religion:

Outward worship without inward righteousness.

The people of Judah were:

Fasting.

Seeking God.

Asking questions.

Observing religious practices.

Appearing eager to know:

God’s ways.

Yet something was deeply wrong.

Their worship looked:

Serious.

Their lives remained:

Selfish.

They fasted while:

Exploiting workers.

They humbled themselves outwardly while:

Quarreling.

They bowed their heads while:

Oppressing others.

They wore:

Sackcloth.

But refused to put away:

Sin.

God therefore commands Isaiah:

“Cry aloud, do not hold back!”

The prophet must expose the difference between:

Religious appearance.

And:

True devotion.

The people ask:

“Why have we fasted, and You have not seen it?”

They believe their religious activity should obligate:

God.

But God turns the question around.

The problem is not that:

He failed to see their fasting.

The problem is that:

He saw everything else too.

He saw:

The oppression.

The selfishness.

The fighting.

The hypocrisy.

The malicious speech.

The neglected hungry.

The unclothed poor.

The burdened worker.

Then God describes the fast He chooses.

It includes:

Loosing chains.

Removing yokes.

Freeing the oppressed.

Feeding the hungry.

Sheltering the homeless.

Clothing the naked.

Caring for one’s own family.

This does not mean fasting itself is:

Wrong.

Scripture contains many examples of sincere fasting.

The problem is:

Fasting separated from righteousness.

God refuses to allow religious discipline to become:

A substitute for obedience.

True fasting must be joined with:

Justice.

Mercy.

Compassion.

Repentance.

Then comes a repeated word:

“Then.”

Then:

Your light will break forth.

Then:

Healing will appear.

Then:

God will answer.

Then:

Darkness becomes light.

Then:

The Lord will guide.

Then:

He will satisfy.

Then:

He will strengthen.

Then:

You become a watered garden.

Then:

Ancient ruins are rebuilt.

True worship produces:

A transformed life.

And transformed lives become:

Repairers.

Restorers.

Builders.

Then the chapter closes with:

The Sabbath.

God does not describe the Sabbath merely as:

Restriction.

He calls it:

“A delight.”

The people were to stop treating God’s holy day as another opportunity for:

Self-interest.

Instead they were to honor:

The Lord.

And the result would be:

“You will find your joy in the Lord.”

That is the great destination of Isaiah 58.

Not merely:

Correct fasting.

Not merely:

Correct Sabbath observance.

But:

Delight in God Himself.

The central truth of Isaiah 58 is:

God rejects religious rituals that are separated from justice, mercy, humility, and obedience; the fasting He desires loosens oppression, feeds the hungry, shelters the vulnerable, clothes the needy, and cares for others, while genuine devotion produces light, healing, answered prayer, guidance, restoration, and ultimately delight in the Lord.

I. CRY ALOUD AND DO NOT HOLD BACK

Isaiah 58:1 — Sin Must Be Exposed

> **"Cry aloud, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Show My people their rebellion, and the house of Jacob their sins."**

God does not tell Isaiah to:

Whisper.

Hint.

Avoid offense.

He says:

Cry aloud.

Speak like:

A trumpet.

Why?

Because the people were:

Religious.

But rebellious.

Cross References

Ezekiel 33:7

God appoints Ezekiel as a watchman responsible to hear His warning and faithfully communicate it to the people.

Micah 3:8

Micah declares that God's Spirit gives him power, justice, and courage to expose Jacob's rebellion and Israel's sin.

Ezekiel 22:2

The prophet is instructed to confront Jerusalem with the reality of its sinful and violent practices.

Spiritual Principle

Love does not require:

Silence about sin.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A trumpet that refuses to sound because the alarm may offend someone has forgotten why it was made.

II. "SHOW MY PEOPLE THEIR REBELLION"

These are:

God's people.

Yet they still need:

Correction.

Spiritual Principle

Covenant privilege does not eliminate:

Accountability.

III. THE PROPHET MUST NOT HOLD BACK

The message is:

Uncomfortable.

Still necessary.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Faithful preaching does not invent sin, but neither does it hide sin God has already exposed.

IV. THEY SEEK GOD EVERY DAY

Isaiah 58:2 — Religious Appearance Without Obedience

> **“For day after day they seek Me; they seem eager to know My ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask Me for just decisions and seem eager to draw near to God.”**

Outwardly:

Excellent.

They seek.

Ask.

Draw near.

But God says:

> **“As if.”**

That phrase exposes:

Hypocrisy.

Cross References

Ezekiel 33:31

The people sit before God’s prophet and listen to his words, but they do not put them into practice because their hearts pursue selfish gain.

Matthew 15:8

Jesus describes people who honor God with their lips while their hearts remain far from Him.

Titus 1:16

Some profess to know God but deny Him through their actions.

Spiritual Principle

Religious activity can exist without:

Spiritual reality.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Seeking God with your calendar means little if your conduct keeps rejecting His ways.

V. THEY “SEEM” EAGER

Appearance can fool:

People.

Not:

God.

Spiritual Principle

God evaluates:

The heart.

And:

The life.

VI. ASKING FOR JUSTICE WHILE PRACTICING INJUSTICE

They wanted:

God’s justice.

Without practicing:

Justice.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is hypocrisy to demand that God be righteous toward us while refusing to be righteous toward others.

VII. “WHY HAVE WE FASTED?”

Isaiah 58:3 — Religious Performance and Exploitation

> **“‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and You take no notice?’ Yet on the day of your fasting you do as you please and exploit all your workers.”**

They expected fasting to:

Earn attention.

They thought:

We did the ritual.

Why did God not respond?

God answers:

I saw.

Everything.

Cross References

Zechariah 7:5

God asks whether Israel's fasting was truly directed toward Him or centered on themselves.

Matthew 6:16

Jesus warns against fasting for outward appearance and public admiration.

Malachi 3:14

The people complain that serving God seems useless when they do not receive the outcomes they expected.

Spiritual Principle

Religious discipline cannot purchase:

God's favor.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God is not impressed by the hunger in your stomach while you ignore the suffering caused by your hands.

VIII. "YOU DO AS YOU PLEASE"

Their fast had not produced:

Submission.

Spiritual Principle

True worship changes:

Self-will.

IX. THEY EXPLOIT WORKERS

Their religion and business ethics were:

Disconnected.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who sees you fast also sees how you treat people who work for you.

X. FASTING THAT ENDS IN FIGHTING

Isaiah 58:4 — Quarreling and Wicked Fists

> **"Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high."**

They deny themselves:

Food.

But not:

Anger.

Pride.

Violence.

Cross References

James 4:1

James explains that quarrels and conflicts arise from sinful desires battling within people.

1 Corinthians 11:18

Paul rebukes divisions among believers that corrupted their gathering and worship.

Proverbs 20:3

Avoiding unnecessary strife is honorable, while foolish people rush into quarrels.

Spiritual Principle

Self-denial without self-control is:

Incomplete.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A person can empty his stomach and still leave his heart full of anger.

XI. "EXPECT YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD"

Prayer and life are:

Connected.

Spiritual Principle

God refuses to be manipulated by:

Ritual.

XII. THE FAST GOD DOES NOT CHOOSE

Isaiah 58:5 — Outward Humility Alone Is Not Enough

> **“Is this the kind of fast I have chosen—only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?”**

Bowed head.

Sackcloth.

Ashes.

All can be legitimate.

But outward posture without inward repentance becomes:

Theater.

Cross References

Zechariah 7:5

God questions whether ceremonial fasting truly centered on Him.

Joel 2:13

God calls the people to tear their hearts rather than merely their garments and return sincerely to Him.

Matthew 6:16

Jesus warns against deliberately appearing miserable so others will notice fasting.

Spiritual Principle

God desires:

Heart humility.

Not:

Religious acting.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A bowed head means little if the heart underneath it is still standing proudly.

XIII. SACKCLOTH WITHOUT REPENTANCE

External symbols can become:

Substitutes.

Spiritual Principle

Symbols are valuable only when they express:

Reality.

XIV. THE FAST GOD CHOOSES

Isaiah 58:6 — Freedom from Oppression

> **“Is not this the fast I have chosen: to loose the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”**

God moves from:

Ritual.

To:

Justice.

Loose.

Untie.

Free.

Break.

Cross References

Luke 4:18

Jesus announces good news to the poor, liberty to captives, recovery of sight, and freedom for the oppressed.

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit-anointed mission includes proclaiming freedom to captives and release to those bound.

Psalm 146:7

The Lord executes justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, and sets prisoners free.

Spiritual Principle

True devotion produces concern for:

Freedom.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God is not looking for people who merely look humbled before Him while keeping others under their feet.

XV. LOOSE THE CHAINS

Some oppression is:

Systematic.

Relational.

Economic.

Personal.

Spiritual Principle

God cares about:

Burdened people.

XVI. BREAK EVERY YOKE

A yoke represents:

Burden.

Domination.

Oppression.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If our religion strengthens the yoke on someone else’s neck, we have misunderstood the heart of God.

XVII. SHARE YOUR BREAD

Isaiah 58:7 — Practical Compassion

> **“Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh and blood?”**

True fasting moves resources:

Toward need.

Food.

Shelter.

Clothing.

Family responsibility.

Cross References

Matthew 25:35

Jesus identifies acts of feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and caring for the needy as expressions of service rendered to Him.

James 1:27

Pure religion includes practical care for vulnerable people along with moral purity.

Ezekiel 18:7

A righteous person does not oppress others but gives food to the hungry and clothing to the naked.

Spiritual Principle

Compassion must become:

Action.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The bread you do not eat during a fast means little if you refuse to share bread with someone who has none.

XVIII. PROVIDE SHELTER

Faith notices:

Displacement.

Homelessness.

Vulnerability.

Spiritual Principle

Mercy is:

Practical.

XIX. CLOTHE THE NAKED

Need must not merely be:

Observed.

It must be:

Answered.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Seeing need without responding can become another form of hiding.

XX. “DO NOT HIDE YOURSELF”

Some people hide from:

Responsibility.

Spiritual Principle

True spirituality does not use religion to escape:

Human obligation.

XXI. THEN YOUR LIGHT WILL BREAK FORTH

Isaiah 58:8 — Light, Healing, Righteousness, Glory

> **“Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.”**

Notice:

Then.

Obedience leads into:

Blessing.

Cross References

Matthew 5:16

Jesus tells His followers to let their light shine so others see good works and glorify the Father.

Malachi 4:2

Those who fear God are promised healing and righteousness pictured like the rising sun.

Isaiah 52:12

God promises to go before His people and serve as their rear guard.

Spiritual Principle

True worship produces:

Visible light.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When compassion becomes visible, light becomes visible.

XXII. LIGHT LIKE THE DAWN

Gradual darkness gives way to:

Morning.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience changes:

Atmosphere.

XXIII. HEALING APPEARS

Hypocrisy wounds:

Community.

Righteousness begins:

Repair.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some healing begins when people stop asking God only to bless them and begin obeying Him toward others.

XXIV. RIGHTEOUSNESS GOES BEFORE

Character prepares:

The road.

Spiritual Principle

Righteousness becomes:

Testimony.

XXV. GLORY AS REAR GUARD

God behind:

Protecting.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When God’s people walk in His ways, His glory becomes a better defense than religious appearance.

XXVI. “HERE I AM”

Isaiah 58:9 — Answered Prayer and Removed Oppression

> **“Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk,”**

The people complained:

God does not answer.

God says:

Deal with:

The yoke.

The finger.

The speech.

Then:

Call.

Cross References

Isaiah 65:24

God promises a day when He answers before His people finish calling.

1 John 3:22

Confidence in prayer is connected with obedience and doing what pleases God.

Psalm 34:15

The Lord watches over the righteous and listens to their cries.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer cannot be separated from:

Character.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Before asking why heaven seems silent, ask whether God has already pointed to something on earth that needs to change.

XXVII. THE POINTING FINGER

Accusation.

Contempt.

Blame.

Spiritual Principle

Religion can coexist with:

Cruel speech.

But true righteousness cannot.

XXVIII. MALICIOUS TALK

Words matter.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A fasting mouth should also become a disciplined mouth.

XXIX. GIVE YOURSELF TO THE HUNGRY

Isaiah 58:10 — Light in Darkness

> **“And if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.”**

Not merely:

Give food.

But:

Give yourself.

Cross References

Proverbs 11:25

The generous person is refreshed, and the one who refreshes others will also be refreshed.

Daniel 12:3

Those who lead others toward righteousness are pictured shining brightly.

Matthew 5:16

Good works become visible light that directs glory toward God.

Spiritual Principle

Biblical compassion costs:

Something personal.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not call us merely to throw help toward hurting people; He calls us to give ourselves.

XXX. LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Darkness is overcome by:

Faithful action.

Spiritual Principle

Mercy shines.

XXXI. NIGHT LIKE NOONDAY

The transformation is:

Dramatic.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can turn the darkest moral night into noonday when His people begin walking in His light.

XXXII. THE LORD WILL GUIDE YOU ALWAYS

Isaiah 58:11 — The Well-Watered Garden

> **“The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”**

Four promises:

Guidance.

Satisfaction.

Strength.

Fruitfulness.

Cross References

Jeremiah 31:12

God’s restored people are compared to a well-watered garden and are promised abundance under His care.

John 4:14

Jesus describes the life He gives as water becoming an enduring spring within the believer.

Psalm 23:2

The Shepherd leads His people beside quiet waters and provides what they need.

Spiritual Principle

God nourishes those who live:

His way.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can make a garden out of a life surrounded by scorched land.

XXXIII. GUIDANCE ALWAYS

Not occasionally:

Always.

Spiritual Principle

God’s presence is:

Continual.

XXXIV. SATISFACTION IN A SUN-SCORCHED LAND

Environment:

Dry.

Soul:

Supplied.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not need your surroundings to become fertile before He can sustain you.

XXXV. STRENGTHEN YOUR BONES

Inner strength.

Spiritual Principle

God restores:

Vitality.

XXXVI. WELL-WATERED GARDEN

Fruitfulness.

Beauty.

Life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The person who pours himself out for others does not become empty when God is the spring.

XXXVII. WATERS THAT NEVER FAIL

Human resources:

Run out.

God:

Does not.

Spiritual Principle

Dependence belongs on:

The unfailing Source.

XXXVIII. REBUILDING ANCIENT RUINS

Isaiah 58:12 — Repairers and Restorers

> **“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the foundations of many generations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”**

This is a powerful identity.

Not:

Destroyer.

Repairer.

Not:

Abandoner.

Restorer.

Cross References

Amos 9:11

God promises to rebuild what has fallen and restore ruins.

Ezekiel 22:30

God searches for someone willing to stand in the gap and repair what is broken.

Isaiah 61:4

God’s restored people rebuild ancient ruins and renew devastated places.

Spiritual Principle

True religion repairs:

What sin has broken.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not save people merely to admire ruins; He raises repairers who rebuild them.

XXXIX. FOUNDATIONS OF MANY GENERATIONS

Restoration must be:

Generational.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness today can strengthen:

Tomorrow.

XL. REPAIRER OF BROKEN WALLS

Broken walls represent:

Exposure.

Weakness.

Loss.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some believers are called to become the answer to breaches they once only complained about.

XLI. RESTORER OF STREETS

The goal is not just walls:

But life.

Streets.

Homes.

Community.

Spiritual Principle

Restoration returns:

Habitable life.

XLII. HONORING THE SABBATH

Isaiah 58:13 — Calling God’s Day a Delight

> **“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 or doing as you please or speaking idle words,”**

Three repeated ideas:

Not your own way.

Not your own pleasure.

Not empty speech.

Instead:

Delight.

Honor.

Cross References

Exodus 20:8

Israel is commanded to remember the Sabbath and set it apart as holy.

Nehemiah 13:18

Nehemiah rebukes Sabbath desecration because it repeated covenant unfaithfulness.

Isaiah 56:2

Isaiah has already connected Sabbath faithfulness with covenant obedience.

Spiritual Principle

God’s holy day was meant to redirect attention from:

Self.

To:

God.

XLIII. “CALL THE SABBATH A DELIGHT”

Not merely:

Duty.

Delight.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God never intended holiness to mean learning how to endure Him.

XLIV. HONOR THE DAY

The issue is:

God-centeredness.

Spiritual Principle

Sacred time teaches:

Priority.

XLV. “NOT GOING YOUR OWN WAY”

This echoes the larger biblical problem:

Self-direction.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Many spiritual problems begin when “my way” becomes more important than “God’s way.”

XLVI. IDLE WORDS

Even speech belongs under:

God’s lordship.

Spiritual Principle

Worship includes:

The tongue.

XLVII. JOY IN THE LORD

Isaiah 58:14 — The Highest Blessing

> **“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.”**

The greatest promise is not:

Prosperity.

Land.

Inheritance.

It is:

> **“Joy in the Lord.”**

Cross References

Psalm 37:4

Those who delight themselves in the Lord find their deepest desires reshaped and answered in Him.

Deuteronomy 32:13

God is pictured bringing His people into abundance upon the heights of the land.

Deuteronomy 33:29

Israel is called blessed because the Lord saves, protects, and grants triumph over enemies.

Spiritual Principle

The goal of worship is:

God Himself.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If obedience gives you everything except delight in God, you have missed the highest blessing.

XLVIII. “THE MOUTH OF THE LORD HAS SPOKEN”

Final authority.

Spiritual Principle

The promise stands because:

God said it.

XLIX. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT HYPOCRISY

Religious acts.

Unrighteous lives.

Spiritual Principle

God refuses to separate:

Worship.

From:

Conduct.

L. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT FASTING

Fasting is not condemned.

Hypocritical fasting is.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The value of a fast is not measured only by what you refuse to eat, but by what God changes in your heart and life.

LI. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT JUSTICE

Break yokes.

Free oppressed.

Stop exploitation.

Spiritual Principle

Justice belongs inside:

Biblical spirituality.

LII. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT COMPASSION

Feed.

Shelter.

Clothe.

Care.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Compassion that never leaves the heart to reach the hands is still unfinished.

LIII. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT PRAYER

Prayer and obedience are:

Connected.

Spiritual Principle

We cannot deliberately ignore God’s commands while demanding:

His response.

LIV. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT SPEECH

Pointing finger.

Malicious talk.

Idle words.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Isaiah 58 treats the tongue as part of worship.

LV. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT LIGHT

Compassion causes:

Light.

Spiritual Principle

Righteous action becomes:

Witness.

LVI. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT HEALING

Healing follows:

Repentance and restored relationships.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Not every wound is physical; some communities need moral healing.

LVII. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT GUIDANCE

The Lord guides:

Always.

Spiritual Principle

God leads people who desire:

His ways.

LVIII. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT SATISFACTION

The sun-scorched land cannot stop:

God’s supply.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can satisfy you in a dry place without first moving you to a wet one.

LIX. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT RESTORATION

Rebuild ruins.

Repair walls.

Restore streets.

Spiritual Principle

Redemption makes:

Builders.

LX. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT SABBATH

For Israel, the Sabbath was:

Holy.

Covenantal.

A delight.

Spiritual Principle

Sacred rest teaches dependence on:

God.

LXI. WHAT ISAIAH 58 TEACHES ABOUT DELIGHT

The destination:

Joy in the Lord.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not merely want your religious schedule; He wants your delight.

LXII. ISAIAH 56 AND ISAIAH 58

Isaiah 56

Keep the Sabbath.

Practice righteousness.

Isaiah 58

Do not reduce Sabbath or fasting to:

Empty ritual.

Key Truth

The outward covenant signs matter only when joined with inward and practical faithfulness.

LXIII. ISAIAH 57 AND ISAIAH 58

Isaiah 57

God dwells with:

The contrite.

Isaiah 58

God rejects counterfeit:

Humility.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

True contrition revives the heart; fake humility only bows the head.

LXIV. ISAIAH 55 AND ISAIAH 58

Isaiah 55

Listen to God and receive:

True satisfaction.

Isaiah 58

Religious people ask why God does not:

Answer.

Spiritual Principle

Listening to God must precede demanding:

From God.

LXV. ISAIAH 52 AND ISAIAH 58

Isaiah 52

God is:

Rear guard.

Isaiah 58

The glory of the Lord becomes:

Rear guard.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who guarded the redeemed exiles still guards people walking in obedient righteousness.

LXVI. ISAIAH 61 AND ISAIAH 58

Isaiah 58:

Free oppressed.

Repair ruins.

Isaiah 61:

Liberty.

Rebuilding.

Restoration.

Key Truth

True worship participates in the restorative character of God’s kingdom.

LXVII. JESUS AND TRUE FASTING

Jesus taught that fasting should not become:

Performance.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual discipline must remain:

God-centered.

LXVIII. JESUS AND THE HUNGRY

Matthew 25 connects care for:

The hungry.

The stranger.

The naked.

With:

Service to Christ.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You cannot claim to love the King while remaining indifferent to the people He tells you to see.

LXIX. FASTING AND JUSTICE

The fast God chooses has:

Social consequences.

Spiritual Principle

Private devotion should produce:

Public righteousness.

LXX. FASTING AND COMPASSION

The hungry become:

Central.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

True fasting creates room not merely in the stomach but in the heart for someone else's need.

LXXI. FASTING AND FREEDOM

Chains.

Yokes.

Oppression.

Spiritual Principle

God's heart moves toward:

Liberation from unjust bondage.

LXXII. FASTING AND FAMILY

> **"Do not hide yourself from your own flesh and blood."**

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is possible to appear compassionate publicly while neglecting responsibilities privately.

LXXIII. RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY

Looks near to:

God.

Lives far from:

His heart.

Spiritual Principle

Hypocrisy is:

Contradiction.

LXXIV. THE DANGER OF TRANSACTIONAL RELIGION

They say:

We fasted.

Why did You not act?

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Spiritual disciplines are not coins inserted into heaven to purchase the answer we want.

LXXV. GOD SEES THE WORKER

The employer fasts.

Worker suffers.

God notices:

Both.

Spiritual Principle

God’s worship standards extend into:

Economics.

LXXVI. GOD SEES THE QUARREL

Religious observance does not hide:

Conflict.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You cannot cover a clenched fist with sackcloth and call it holiness.

LXXVII. BOWED LIKE A REED

Flexible externally.

Stiff internally.

Spiritual Principle

Posture cannot replace:

Repentance.

LXXVIII. SACKCLOTH AND ASHES

Useful symbol.

Useless disguise.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A symbol of repentance becomes hypocrisy when repentance itself is missing.

LXXIX. LOOSE WICKED CHAINS

Freedom begins by confronting:

Injustice.

Spiritual Principle

Righteousness acts.

LXXX. UNTIE THE YOKE

Some burdens were created by:

People.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not ask God to remove burdens you insist on placing on someone else.

LXXXI. SET THE OPPRESSED FREE

Freedom.

Spiritual Principle

God values:

Dignity.

LXXXII. BREAK EVERY YOKE

Not merely loosen:

Break.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some injustices do not need adjustment; they need removal.

LXXXIII. SHARE BREAD

Hospitality begins with:

What you have.

Spiritual Principle

Generosity requires:

Release.

LXXXIV. SHELTER THE WANDERER

Make room.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who gives us shelter teaches us not to be indifferent to those without it.

LXXXV. CLOTHE THE NAKED

Preserve:

Dignity.

Spiritual Principle

Compassion sees:

Embarrassment.

Need.

Humanity.

LXXXVI. DO NOT HIDE

Indifference often begins with:

Avoidance.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If you never look at suffering, you can always tell yourself there was nothing you could do.

LXXXVII. LIGHT BREAKS FORTH

The result is:

Visible.

Spiritual Principle

Righteousness shines.

LXXXVIII. DAWN

Night ends:

Gradually.

Then decisively.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

One obedient dawn can begin after a long religious night.

LXXXIX. HEALING QUICKLY APPEARS

Transformation follows:

Repentance.

Spiritual Principle

Restored obedience can begin repairing:

Long damage.

XC. GLORY BEHIND

Protection.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You do not need hypocrisy to protect your reputation when God’s glory guards your path.

XCI. CALL AND GOD ANSWERS

Prayer restored.

Spiritual Principle

Fellowship deepens with:

Obedience.

XCII. “HERE I AM”

What beautiful words.

God’s presence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The people wanted God to notice them; true repentance brings them to the place where God says, “Here I am.”

XCIII. REMOVE THE POINTING FINGER

Blame culture.

Spiritual Principle

Mercy and accusation cannot rule the heart:

Together.

XCIV. REMOVE MALICIOUS SPEECH

Words can:

Oppress.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some yokes are made from wood; others are made from words.

XCV. GIVE YOURSELF

Beyond:

Possessions.

Spiritual Principle

Love becomes:

Personal.

XCVI. SATISFY THE AFFLICTED

Not merely:

Acknowledge.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Compassion asks not only, “Did I notice?” but, “Did I help satisfy the need?”

XCVII. LIGHT RISES IN DARKNESS

Faithful living has:

Witness.

Spiritual Principle

Holiness brightens:

Dark places.

XCVIII. NIGHT BECOMES NOON

Radical change.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can transform a dark reputation through a genuinely transformed life.

XCIX. ALWAYS GUIDED

God’s response:

Leadership.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience and guidance are:

Connected.

C. SATISFIED IN DROUGHT

Divine supply.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When God is the source, drought becomes the background rather than the ending.

CI. STRONG BONES

Durability.

Spiritual Principle

God gives strength to:

Continue.

CII. WATERED GARDEN

Life overflowing.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A life watered by God becomes a place where others can find shade and fruit.

CIII. UNFAILING SPRING

Reliability.

Spiritual Principle

God’s supply is:

Deeper than circumstances.

CIV. ANCIENT RUINS

Damage from:

Generations.

Spiritual Principle

Old brokenness can still be:

Rebuilt.

CV. FOUNDATIONS OF MANY GENERATIONS

Long-term restoration.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God may use one faithful generation to repair damage inherited from several unfaithful ones.

CVI. REPAIRER OF BROKEN WALLS

Identity transformed.

Spiritual Principle

God names people by:

Restorative work.

CVII. RESTORER OF STREETS

Community renewed.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Biblical revival should eventually make broken places more livable.

CVIII. FEET ON THE SABBATH

Even movement becomes:

Consecrated.

Spiritual Principle

Holiness affects:

Choices.

CIX. “MY HOLY DAY”

The day belongs:

To God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Sabbath was not Israel lending God a day; it was Israel recognizing the day was already His.

CX. SABBATH AS DELIGHT

Joyful holiness.

Spiritual Principle

God-centered rest is:

Gift.

CXI. HONORABLE

Value what God:

Values.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You cannot call God holy while treating what He calls holy as insignificant.

CXII. NOT YOUR OWN WAY

Self-rule interrupted.

Spiritual Principle

Worship dethrones:

Self.

CXIII. NOT YOUR OWN PLEASURE

The Sabbath corrects:

Constant self-focus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There is a difference between receiving God’s gifts joyfully and making every day revolve around personal appetite.

CXIV. NOT IDLE WORDS

The tongue again appears.

Spiritual Principle

Sacred time requires:

Sacred attention.

CXV. DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Highest destination.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The deepest spiritual maturity is not merely enjoying what God gives, but enjoying God.

CXVI. RIDE ON THE HEIGHTS

Triumph.

Spiritual Principle

God lifts:

The obedient.

CXVII. INHERITANCE OF JACOB

Covenant blessing.

Spiritual Principle

God remains faithful to:

His promises.

CXVIII. “THE LORD HAS SPOKEN”

Certainty.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The last word of faith is not, “I feel it,” but, “God has spoken.”

CXIX. TRUE FASTING VERSUS FALSE FASTING

False Fasting

Bows head.

Wears sackcloth.

Exploits workers.

Quarrels.

Fights.

Points fingers.

Speaks maliciously.

True Fasting

Breaks yokes.

Frees oppressed.

Feeds hungry.

Shelters homeless.

Clothes naked.

Supports family.

Key Truth

The difference is not how dramatic the ritual looks but how deeply the heart has been changed.

CXX. TRUE WORSHIP VERSUS RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCE

Performance

Wants to:

Be noticed.

Worship

Wants God to be:

Honored.

Performance

Looks:

Humble.

Worship

Lives:

Humbly.

Performance

Keeps rituals.

Worship

Practices:

Mercy.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Religion asks, “Did people see what I did?”

True worship asks, “Did God change how I live?”

CXXI. THE “THEN” OF ISAIAH 58

Then:

Light.

Then:

Healing.

Then:

Answered prayer.

Then:

Guidance.

Then:

Satisfaction.

Then:

Strength.

Then:

Fruitfulness.

Then:

Restoration.

Then:

Joy in God.

Spiritual Principle

God’s blessings are connected to:

Covenant faithfulness.

CXXII. ISAIAH 58 AS A JUSTICE CHAPTER

Oppression.

Exploitation.

Yokes.

Workers.

Hungry.

Poor.

Naked.

Key Truth

Isaiah refuses to let worship become disconnected from how people treat people.

CXXIII. ISAIAH 58 AS A COMPASSION CHAPTER

Share.

Shelter.

Clothe.

Give yourself.

Satisfy needs.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Mercy is not peripheral to godliness; it is one of its visible fruits.

CXXIV. ISAIAH 58 AS A PRAYER CHAPTER

False fasting:

Prayer unheard.

True obedience:

> **“Here I am.”**

Spiritual Principle

A changed life restores integrity to:

Prayer.

CXXV. ISAIAH 58 AS A RESTORATION CHAPTER

Healing.

Garden.

Spring.

Rebuilding.

Repairing.

Restoring.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

True revival leaves repairs behind.

CXXVI. ISAIAH 58 AS A DELIGHT CHAPTER

The chapter begins with:

Religious frustration.

It ends with:

Joy in the Lord.

Key Truth

God wants to move His people from duty without righteousness to obedience filled with delight.

CXXVII. TWELVE GREAT CONTRASTS IN ISAIAH 58

1. Loud Religion → Hidden Rebellion

2. Fasting → Exploitation

3. Bowed Head → Proud Heart

4. Sackcloth → Wicked Fists

5. Empty Ritual → Practical Mercy

6. Yokes → Freedom

7. Hunger → Shared Bread

8. Darkness → Light

9. Silence from Heaven → "Here I Am"

10. Drought → Well-Watered Garden

11. Ruins → Restored Streets

12. Religious Burden → Delight in the Lord

Key Truth

Isaiah 58 turns empty religion inside out and reveals worship as a life of righteousness, mercy, prayer, restoration, and delight in God.

CXXVIII. TWELVE GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH 58

1. Sin Must Sometimes Be Confronted Clearly

Principle:

Faithful truth-telling is part of prophetic ministry.

2. Religious Activity Can Hide Rebellion

Principle:

Seeking God outwardly is not enough if obedience is absent.

3. Fasting Cannot Manipulate God

Principle:

Spiritual disciplines are not payment for divine favors.

4. True Humility Is More Than Appearance

Principle:

God wants broken hearts, not merely bowed heads.

5. God Cares About Justice

Principle:

Oppression contradicts true worship.

6. Compassion Must Become Practical

Principle:

Feed, shelter, clothe, and care.

7. True Obedience Produces Light

Principle:

A righteous life becomes visible testimony.

8. God Answers People Who Walk Sincerely with Him

Principle:

Integrity strengthens fellowship with God.

9. Generosity Leads to Fruitfulness

Principle:

Those who pour themselves out can become well-watered gardens.

10. God Makes His People Restorers

Principle:

Revival should rebuild broken places.

11. God’s Holy Day Was Meant to Be a Delight

Principle:

Holiness and joy are not enemies.

12. The Greatest Blessing Is Delight in God

Principle:

God Himself is the ultimate reward of true worship.

CXXIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does God command Isaiah to do?

Cry aloud, raise his voice like a trumpet, and expose the people’s rebellion.

Question 2

Were the people outwardly religious?

Yes.

They sought God regularly and appeared eager to know His ways.

Question 3

What was wrong with their religion?

Their lives contradicted their worship.

Question 4

What did they ask God about fasting?

Why He had not noticed or responded to their fasting.

Question 5

What did God reveal about them?

They pursued selfish interests and exploited workers even on fasting days.

Question 6

What else accompanied their fasting?

Quarreling, strife, and violence.

Question 7

Why would God not accept that kind of fasting?

Because outward religious humility was contradicted by inward and practical wickedness.

Question 8

What kind of fast does God choose?

One that loosens wicked chains, breaks oppressive yokes, and frees the oppressed.

Question 9

What practical acts of compassion are mentioned?

Feeding the hungry, sheltering the poor, clothing the naked, and caring for family.

Question 10

What happens when people practice true righteousness?

Their light breaks forth like dawn.

Question 11

What happens to their healing?

It quickly appears.

Question 12

Who becomes their rear guard?

The glory of the Lord.

Question 13

What does God say when they cry for help?

“Here I am.”

Question 14

What must be removed?

Oppression, pointing fingers, and malicious speech.

Question 15

What happens when people give themselves to the hungry?

Their light rises in darkness.

Question 16

How does God promise to guide them?

Always.

Question 17

What picture describes their fruitfulness?

A well-watered garden and unfailing spring.

Question 18

What restoration work will they do?

Rebuild ancient ruins and restore broken foundations, walls, and streets.

Question 19

What title will they receive?

Repairer of Broken Walls and Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

Question 20

How should the Sabbath be regarded?

As holy, honorable, and a delight.

Question 21

What must not dominate the Sabbath?

Self-will, personal pursuits, and idle speech.

Question 22

What will those who honor God’s day find?

Joy in the Lord.

Question 23

What is the highest lesson of the chapter?

God wants genuine worship expressed through justice, compassion, obedience, and delight in Him.

CXXX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 58 asks difficult questions.

Am I More Concerned with Looking Spiritual Than:

Living Righteously?

Do I Seek God Daily but Ignore:

Something He Already Told Me?

Do My Religious Practices Make Me:

More Loving?

More Just?

More Merciful?

More Patient?

Do I Think Prayer or Fasting Gives Me:

Leverage Over God?

Do I Complain When God Does Not Answer:

The Way I Want?

How Do I Treat:

Employees?

Coworkers?

Family?

Poor people?

People with less power?

Am I Fasting from Food but Still Feeding:

Anger?

Pride?

Gossip?

Bitterness?

Is My Head Bowed While My Heart Is:

Proud?

Am I Helping Loosen:

Yokes?

Or creating them?

Do I Share:

My Bread?

My Time?

My Resources?

Myself?

Am I Hiding from someone whose need I already:

See?

Is there a pointing finger I need to:

Lower?

Is there malicious speech I need to:

Stop?

Is my life producing:

Light?

Do I want God to say:

“Here I am”?

Am I becoming a:

Well-watered garden?

Or spiritually:

Dry?

What broken wall could God use me to:

Repair?

What ruined foundation could I help:

Rebuild?

What broken relationship could I help:

Restore?

Do I see worship as:

Burden?

Or:

Delight?

Is my deepest joy found in:

God Himself?

CXXXI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God Sees More Than the Fast”

The people thought God should notice:

Their hunger.

God also noticed:

Their injustice.

Principle:

God never evaluates a spiritual discipline apart from the life surrounding it.

CXXXII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“A Bowed Head Cannot Substitute for a Changed Heart”

The reed bends.

The heart:

Does not.

Principle:

Outward humility is worthless when inward pride remains untouched.

CXXXIII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Fast God Chooses Breaks More Than Appetite—it Breaks Yokes”

Principle:

True spiritual discipline should make us more sensitive to the burdens others carry.

CXXXIV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Some Yokes Are Made from Ropes; Others Are Made from Words”

Isaiah condemns:

Oppression.

Pointing fingers.

Malicious talk.

Principle:

Our words can become instruments of bondage or instruments of restoration.

CXXXV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“You Can Become a Well-Watered Garden in a Sun-Scorched Land”

The environment may remain:

Dry.

God can still make you:

Fruitful.

Principle:

Fruitfulness depends more on the Source watering you than the climate surrounding you.

CXXXVI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God Saves People Who Then Become Repairers”

Ruins.

Walls.

Streets.

Foundations.

Principle:

Grace does not merely rescue us from brokenness; it can commission us to repair brokenness around us.

CXXXVII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Highest Reward of Worship Is Not What God Gives You but God Himself”

Isaiah ends:

“You will find your joy in the Lord.”

Principle:

True worship eventually moves beyond seeking blessings from God into delighting in God Himself.

CXXXVIII. THE TRUMPET VOICE

Urgent correction.

Spiritual Principle

Some sins require:

Clear speech.

CXXXIX. DAILY SEEKING

Frequency does not guarantee:

Sincerity.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You can repeat a spiritual practice every day and still resist the God the practice is supposed to help you seek.

CXL. “AS IF”

God sees the difference between:

Appearance.

Reality.

Spiritual Principle

Hypocrisy lives in:

The gap.

CXLI. FASTING WITHOUT JUSTICE

Contradiction.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You cannot become holy by denying yourself food while denying someone else fairness.

CXLII. EXPLOITED WORKERS

God notices:

Power relationships.

Spiritual Principle

Workplace conduct is:

Spiritual conduct.

CXLIII. QUARRELING

Uncontrolled desires.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The discipline of hunger has accomplished little if the appetite for conflict remains untouched.

CXLIV. WICKED FISTS

Religious violence.

Spiritual Principle

Violence invalidates claims of:

Humility.

CXLV. HEAD LIKE A REED

Appearance of:

Submission.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A reed bends because the wind moves it; true humility bows because the heart has surrendered.

CXLVI. SACKCLOTH

Symbol.

Spiritual Principle

Symbols must serve:

Truth.

CXLVII. CHAINS OF WICKEDNESS

Sin binds.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

True worship should make us enemies of unnecessary bondage.

CXLVIII. CORDS OF THE YOKE

Oppression organized.

Spiritual Principle

Injustice can become:

Structured.

CXLIX. SET THE OPPRESSED FREE

God values:

Liberation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The worshiper who loves God should care when another person is crushed beneath a burden.

CL. SHARE YOUR BREAD

Sacrifice becomes:

Generosity.

Spiritual Principle

True fasting should make someone else:

Less hungry.

CLI. SHELTER THE POOR WANDERER

Hospitality.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A roof becomes ministry when it shelters someone who has none.

CLII. CLOTHE THE NAKED

Preserve dignity.

Spiritual Principle

Mercy covers:

Shame.

CLIII. CARE FOR FAMILY

Responsibility begins:

Near.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not travel far to perform compassion while neglecting the person God placed at your door.

CLIV. LIGHT LIKE DAWN

Hope.

Spiritual Principle

True righteousness has:

Brightness.

CLV. HEALING

Restoration.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The same community wounded by hypocrisy can begin healing through obedience.

CLVI. RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE YOU

Character becomes:

Forerunner.

Spiritual Principle

Integrity opens:

Credibility.

CLVII. GLORY BEHIND YOU

God protects.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When righteousness goes before and God’s glory stands behind, the believer is surrounded by what hypocrisy could never provide.

CLVIII. “HERE I AM”

Presence.

Spiritual Principle

The reward of restored fellowship is:

God Himself.

CLIX. REMOVE OPPRESSION

Repentance is:

Specific.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not merely say “be better”; He identifies what must go.

CLX. REMOVE THE FINGER

Stop:

Blaming.

Spiritual Principle

Humility loosens:

Accusation.

CLXI. REMOVE MALICIOUS TALK

Speech purified.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

One test of revival is whether the tongue has changed.

CLXII. GIVE YOURSELF

Love requires:

Presence.

Spiritual Principle

Compassion is more than:

Donation.

CLXIII. SATISFY NEEDS

Effective mercy.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Good intentions are not the same as needs actually met.

CLXIV. DARKNESS BECOMES NOONDAY

Transformation.

Spiritual Principle

God creates:

Clarity.

CLXV. GUIDANCE ALWAYS

Continuity.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God’s guidance is not reserved only for dramatic crossroads.

CLXVI. SATISFY IN DROUGHT

Provision.

Spiritual Principle

God supplies:

Internally.

CLXVII. STRONG BONES

Resilience.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not merely make His servants busy; He strengthens them to endure.

CLXVIII. GARDEN

Fruit.

Spiritual Principle

A restored life becomes:

Productive.

CLXIX. SPRING

Overflow.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A spring receives and releases water continually; so should a life sustained by grace.

CLXX. ANCIENT RUINS REBUILT

Old damage:

Repaired.

Spiritual Principle

Age does not make brokenness:

Irreversible.

CLXXI. MANY-GENERATION FOUNDATIONS

Legacy.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What you rebuild today may support people you will never meet.

CLXXII. REPAIRER

Identity from:

Service.

Spiritual Principle

God can rename a person through:

Restoration.

CLXXIII. RESTORER

Not destroyer.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Ask whether your presence leaves places more broken or more restored.

CLXXIV. SABBATH FEET

Choices restrained.

Spiritual Principle

Worship changes:

Movement.

CLXXV. SABBATH DELIGHT

Holiness enjoyed.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A holy day becomes a burden when God Himself is not our delight.

CLXXVI. LORD’S DAY HONOR

Priority.

Spiritual Principle

God deserves:

Attention.

CLXXVII. OWN WAY

Self displaced.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Sabbath trained Israel to remember that life does not revolve around human productivity or preference.

CLXXVIII. JOY IN THE LORD

Final reward.

Spiritual Principle

God is:

Enough.

CLXXIX. ISAIAH 58 AS A WHOLE

The chapter moves:

From religious hypocrisy.

To:

True compassion.

From unanswered complaint.

To:

> **“Here I am.”**

From darkness.

To:

Light.

From drought.

To:

Garden.

From ruins.

To:

Restoration.

From religious obligation.

To:

Delight.

Key Truth

God’s goal is not to produce people who merely perform religious duties but people whose worship transforms their treatment of others, their speech, their priorities, their communities, and their delight in Him.

CLXXX. TEN GREAT MOVEMENTS IN ISAIAH 58

1. Hypocrisy Is Exposed

The people appear religious while continuing in rebellion.

2. False Fasting Is Rejected

Ritual cannot cover exploitation, fighting, and selfishness.

3. True Fasting Is Defined

Yokes are broken and oppressed people are freed.

4. Compassion Becomes Practical

The hungry are fed, the homeless sheltered, and the naked clothed.

5. Light Breaks Forth

True righteousness becomes visible.

6. Prayer Is Restored

God answers:

> **“Here I am.”**

7. Darkness Becomes Noonday

Merciful living produces testimony.

8. God Gives Guidance and Fruitfulness

His people become like well-watered gardens.

9. Ruins Are Rebuilt

The redeemed become repairers and restorers.

10. Worship Becomes Delight

The chapter ends with joy in the Lord.

Key Truth

Isaiah 58 moves from counterfeit religion to authentic worship by showing that devotion to God must transform how His people treat others and ultimately lead them into delight in Him.

CLXXXI. FINAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 58 begins with:

A trumpet.

God says:

“Cry aloud.”

Why?

Because His people were:

Religious.

But not:

Righteous.

That may be harder to confront than:

Open unbelief.

They prayed.

They fasted.

They sought God.

They asked questions.

They appeared:

Spiritual.

But God looked past:

The ritual.

And saw:

Workers being exploited.

Arguments.

Anger.

Violence.

Selfishness.

Malicious speech.

Neglected poor.

So the people said:

Why does God not:

See us?

God’s answer was:

I see more than you think.

I see the fast.

I also see:

The rest of your life.

That is sobering.

God does not evaluate worship by:

Sunday alone.

Or:

The fast.

Or:

The prayer meeting.

Or:

The Bible study.

Or:

The offering.

He sees:

How we treat people.

How we use power.

How we speak.

How we work.

How we give.

How we forgive.

How we respond to:

Need.

Then God says:

This is the fast I choose.

Break:

Chains.

Undo:

Yokes.

Free:

Oppressed people.

Feed:

The hungry.

Shelter:

The homeless.

Clothe:

The naked.

Care for:

Your family.

That means true worship must eventually become:

Visible.

Then:

Light breaks forth.

Then:

Healing.

Then:

God says:

“Here I am.”

What a reversal.

At the beginning they complained:

God does not notice us.

Now God says:

Here I am.

What changed?

Not:

God’s location.

Their:

Lives.

Then God says:

Stop pointing:

Fingers.

Stop malicious:

Speech.

Give yourself to:

The hungry.

And your darkness becomes:

Noonday.

Then He promises:

Guidance.

Satisfaction.

Strength.

Water.

Fruitfulness.

You become:

A garden.

A spring.

Then:

A repairer.

That may be one of the greatest ministry pictures in the chapter.

What does a godly person do?

Repairs:

Broken walls.

Restores:

Streets.

Raises:

Foundations.

Maybe there is something broken around:

You.

Family.

Church.

Community.

Relationship.

Ministry.

Faith.

Trust.

Truth.

God may not have called you merely to:

Point at the breach.

He may be calling you to:

Repair it.

Then the chapter ends with:

The Sabbath.

God says:

Call it:

A delight.

What a way to end a chapter exposing:

Empty religion.

The answer to dead religion is not:

No devotion.

It is:

True devotion.

Not:

No fasting.

But:

True fasting.

Not:

No holy day.

But:

A holy day enjoyed rightly.

Not:

No obedience.

But:

Obedience flowing from delight.

And the final promise is:

“You will find your joy in the Lord.”

That is where true religion ends.

Not:

Look at me.

Not:

Reward me.

Not:

See my fasting.

Not:

Notice my sacrifice.

But:

I delight in:

The Lord.

So Isaiah 58 asks:

Do I look religious?

Or:

Am I righteous?

Do I fast?

Or:

Do I change?

Do I bow my head?

Or:

Has my heart bowed?

Do I point fingers?

Or:

Repair breaches?

Do I talk about compassion?

Or:

Share bread?

Do I complain that God is distant?

Or:

Remove what He says is blocking fellowship?

Do I want:

His gifts?

Or:

His presence?

And when all is said and done:

Is God Himself:

My delight?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Search our:

Hearts.

Expose:

Hypocrisy.

Rebellion.

Selfishness.

Empty religion.

Forgive us when we have looked:

Spiritual.

Without living:

Righteously.

Father, help us not use:

Prayer.

Fasting.

Church attendance.

Bible study.

Giving.

Religious activity.

As substitutes for:

Obedience.

Teach us true:

Humility.

Give us hearts that are:

Broken before You.

Not merely heads that are:

Bowed before people.

Father, show us every:

Yoke.

Chain.

Burden.

Injustice.

That we have helped create or failed to confront.

Teach us to:

Feed the hungry.

Shelter the vulnerable.

Clothe the needy.

Care for family.

Give ourselves to:

The afflicted.

Father, remove from us:

Pointing fingers.

Malicious words.

Gossip.

Accusation.

Cruel speech.

Give us mouths that:

Heal.

Encourage.

Bless.

Father, let our light:

Rise.

Bring healing where there has been:

Brokenness.

Let righteousness go:

Before us.

Let Your glory stand:

Behind us.

When we call:

Answer.

Let us hear:

“Here I am.”

Father, guide us:

Always.

Satisfy us even in:

Dry places.

Strengthen us.

Make our lives like:

Well-watered gardens.

Unfailing springs.

Use us to:

Rebuild ruins.

Raise foundations.

Repair broken walls.

Restore streets.

Father, teach us to honor what:

You call holy.

Move us beyond:

Duty.

Into:

Delight.

And above every blessing You could give:

Teach us to find our deepest joy in:

You.

May our worship be:

True.

Our compassion:

Practical.

Our righteousness:

Visible.

Our prayer:

Sincere.

Our lives:

Restorative.

And our joy:

In You.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

> **“Is not this the fast I have chosen: to loose the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?” — Isaiah 58:6**

Central Truth

The Lord rejects outward religious practices that coexist with injustice, exploitation, conflict, selfishness, and malicious speech, and instead calls His people to worship that produces repentance, liberation from oppression, generosity toward the hungry and vulnerable, care for others, integrity in speech, practical restoration, and delight in Him; such genuine devotion produces light, healing, answered prayer, divine guidance, fruitfulness, and lives known for repairing what sin has broken.

Isaiah 58 in One Sentence

Isaiah exposes Judah’s hypocritical fasting as empty religion because it coexists with exploitation, strife, violence, and selfishness, defines the fast God desires as freeing the oppressed and caring practically for the hungry and vulnerable, promises light, healing, answered prayer, guidance, fruitfulness, and restoration to those who practice genuine righteousness, and concludes by calling God’s people to honor the Sabbath as a delight so that their deepest joy may be found in the Lord Himself.