

20200112 True Fasting
By Pastor Eric Mann
Isaiah: 58:1-12

True Fasting

Isaiah 58:1-12 (CSB)

¹“Cry out loudly, don’t hold back!
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Tell my people their transgression
and the house of Jacob their sins.
²They seek me day after day
and delight to know my ways,
like a nation that does what is right
and does not abandon the justice of their God.
They ask me for righteous judgments;
they delight in the nearness of God.”
³“Why have we fasted, but you have not seen?
We have denied ourselves, but you haven’t noticed!”
“Look, you do as you please on the day of your fast,
and oppress all your workers.
⁴You fast with contention and strife
to strike viciously with your fist.
You cannot fast as you do today,
hoping to make your voice heard on high.
⁵Will the fast I choose be like this:
A day for a person to deny himself,
to bow his head like a reed,
and to spread out sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast
and a day acceptable to the Lord?
⁶Isn’t this the fast I choose:
To break the chains of wickedness,
to untie the ropes of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free,
and to tear off every yoke?
⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
to bring the poor and homeless into your house,
to clothe the naked when you see him,

and not to ignore your own flesh and blood?

⁸Then your light will appear like the dawn,
and your recovery will come quickly.

Your righteousness will go before you,
and the Lord's glory will be your rear guard.

⁹At that time, when you call, the Lord will answer;
when you cry out, he will say, 'Here I am.'

If you get rid of the yoke among you,
the finger-pointing and malicious speaking,

¹⁰and if you offer yourself to the hungry,
and satisfy the afflicted one,

then your light will shine in the darkness,
and your night will be like noonday.

¹¹The Lord will always lead you,
satisfy you in a parched land,
and strengthen your bones.

You will be like a watered garden
and like a spring whose water never runs dry.

¹²Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins;
you will restore the foundations laid long ago;
you will be called the repairer of broken walls,
the restorer of streets where people live.

Isaiah called out the sins of God's people so that they could make things right with God.

- 1. We need to deal with the sin of disunity in this church.**

In Matthew 12:25 Jesus says, "Every kingdom divided against itself is headed for destruction, and no city or house divided against itself will stand."

God wants us united behind His plan to reach the lost with His Gospel in a way that puts the needs of the lost ahead of our personal preferences and comfort.

- 2. We need to address the sin of gossip in our church.**
- 3. We need to deal with pride and arrogance in our church.**

4. We need to do a better job of welcoming and reaching out to people who are different from us.

When God's people confess their sins and turn away from them, instead choosing to follow God with their whole lives, then God restores them quickly. He listens to their prayers.

¹²Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins;
you will restore the foundations laid long ago;
you will be called the repairer of broken walls,
the restorer of streets where people live.

Matthew 5:23-24 (CSB)

²³So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

Lord, we repent of our sin of being divided against our brothers and sisters in Christ. You said that as your followers we would be known for how we love one another, so we ask for your forgiveness when we as a church have failed to be united with one another, and have not been a reflection of who You asked us to be.

Congregation: Lord, forgive us.

Father, we repent of our sin of gossip. We have complained and criticized one another, repeated things we heard, and have hurt one another with our words. We ask that you would help us to use our words to encourage and build one another up, and we are sorry for the times we hurt each other instead.

Congregation: Lord, forgive us.

Lord Jesus, we repent of our pride and arrogance. We have at times felt we were better than others, we have not been open to learning and improving our skills, and we have been unwilling to serve in ways we felt were beneath us. Help us to follow your example of leaving your throne in order to show us the ultimate example of humility and service.

Congregation: Lord, forgive us.

Almighty God, we repent of our sin of rejecting those who are different than us. Your heart is for all the nations to worship you, and in the diversity of race and culture you show us the diversity of your own self. Help us to become a church where any person can come and feel that this is a church for them to meet and experience You.

Congregation: Lord, forgive us.

Thank you, Father that you are a God who sees the brokenness of your people's hearts, you know the sincerity of our prayers, and you forgive and restore us to yourself when we turn to you. Thank you for your forgiveness. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Communion:

Now, we come to our time of Communion. At our church we invite anyone who has made a decision to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior to join us for communion. We believe that the juice and the bread are symbols of Jesus' blood and body. These symbols help remind us of Christ's sacrifice for us as we look forward to His return.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (CSV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.