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"SCORCHING GUILT"

Isaiah 58

INTRODUCTION:

Is fasting taught in the Bible? Does it follow as day the night that people who fast are more righteous?

Do you know what fasting is? Usually it is defined as self denial - afflicting soul or self.

(Modern notions) - many ailments of a patient, dieting is an essential part of the remedy. As a matter of health.

(Modern customs) - Fast for different motives.

Hannah - IS: 1-7 "Wept and did not eat" - Occasion of great distress brought loss of appetite. *Because she was without a child -*

Anab - I K. 21:4 "Would not eat bread" - time he was heavy and displeased, Naboth refused to sell his vineyard. Anger.

David - 2S 3:35 Demonstrated his grief at Abner's Death by fasting.

Est. 4:3 - Expression of sorrow. *Nation Sanger, Jews fasted.*

2 S 12:16-23 - As a funeral custom. *David for such child - Broke fast after death - it can not bring him back - I shall go to him but he shall not return to me.*

Judges 20:26, 2 Ch. 20:3 - Proclaimed on national scale, in the case of war.

Joel 1:13 - To seek divine favour and protection.

Fasting included certain abstinence from different kinds of food or total abstinence from food, as well as washing, anointing, sleeping, speaking, etc.

Judges 20:26 - For one day - Sunrise to Sunset. *Time of war.*

I S. 31:13 - 7 Days Fast. - *Burial, Soul & Sons.*

Dan. 10:3 - Daniel abstained from "Pleasant Bread" - flesh, wine, and anointing for 3 weeks.

Ex. 34:28 - Moses

I K 19:8 - Elijah, 40 Days.

Fasting today takes various forms as taught by the Roman Church and by a few Evangelicals

What is really the place of fasting in the Christian Life? In the Old Testament, under law, Moses and Israel were commanded to fast once a year and this was binding. Fasting was appointed due to national emergencies. Lev. 16:29-31

N. T. - Pharisees fasted twice in the week - No command of God to do this, but they made it a part of religion.

Matt. 9 - People asked Jesus - Pharisees fast often but your Disciples fast not! He told them that the children cannot mourn the bridegroom is with them.

Jesus did not prohibit fasting but he did not clearly advocate it. He did approve by saying "When thou fastest, anoint Thine head, and wash Thy face". He fasted 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil.

Mark 9:29 - "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting".

Early church - Antioch - When Paul and Barnabas was sent out - after a period of prayer and fasting.

In days of Wesley and Whitefield - fasting before converted.

There are still some folks today who believe that periodic abstinence from food is necessary in order to get through to God.

The Prophet Isaiah exposed the hypocrisy and Scorching Guilt of people for practicing fasting!

Outline:

- I. Sentinel Speaks - V. 1.
- II. Slavish Servitude - V. 2-5.
- III. Spiritual Secret - V. 6-14.

I. Sentinel Speaks - V. 1

Prophet - like a sentry or guard is to lift up his bugle and give a sharp, clear awakening call.

V. 1 - Speak up - cry aloud - from the throat - full voice - no merely lips. Speak to all guilty alike - spare not - unpalatable truth. Speak clearly - trumpet, tell of transgressions - sound alarm.

Not likely that many people would call themselves sinners for being too religious!

They were reasonably religious. Zealous for externals, not inward holiness.

Matt. 6:16.

Luke 18:12. Pharisee in his prayer said he fast twice a week -

Setting - Prophet or Sentinel is commanded to give full voice to telling the house of Jacob about their sins.

II. Slavish Servitude - V. 2-5.

V. 2 - Deceitfulness of works - fasting.

1. Practice some daily religion - seek daily.
2. Plenty of religious knowledge - self deception.
3. Prefer to be thought of as religious - delight approaching God.
4. Performed some religious ritual - ordinances.

He took note of their goodness.

Mal. 2:17.

They daily called upon God to seek why he was so slow in answering them. Their delight in outward observance was a hope that God would be satisfied. They appear in the eyes of the world as doing their duty, yet were short of Heaven and declared hypocrites. Regular, punctual.

We pose as a religious nation but - look at social wrongs - intemperance - formalism.

V. 3

5. Selfish fasting - They are displeased with the results of fasting - probably the fasting on the great day of the Atonement - Lev. 16:29,31.

Other fast from time to time appointed. I K. 21:9; 2 Chron. 20:3; Joel 1:14.

What did they expect from their performance?

They charged God with not performing. He did not answer their prayers because their fasting was not right. Zech. 7:5. They fasted but they continued in sin. Covetous - unmerciful.

Professed seeking for God was only hypocrisy. If fasting had been genuine they would have continued on.

If they had been repentant they would not have thought only of rewards.

V. 4 Proof that their fasting was wrong -- it led to wrangling!

Your fasting is not to make your voice heard in Heaven on High.

Self-Interest is the cause of your fasting. Contentious - Strife - Debate.

I K. 21:12. Day of Jezebel's fast.

Quarrels in the church, even coming to blows.

Fasting was empty, noisy and vain.

V. 5 - Man made fast.

1. Afflict his soul - genuine sorrow for sin.
2. Afflict his pride - Bullrush - withered and broken.
3. Afflict his nature - Sackcloth - Mortify the body - put ashes upon him.
4. Acceptable day of Lord - God will act - Nature is corrupt.

Wilt Thou call this a fast? Show of Rel. in the world. Prayers self-centered - not rise to top of head.

This is the wrong way to fast.

Mechanical - For sake of doing - fasting an end within itself. Day in the week I must eat no meat and so on or certain season - Lent - Abstain from or eat less and so forth.

Benefits expected - Fast for the immediate results you hope to receive. You have put a nickle in the slot, now you expect results. Somebody prays alright, so you decide this is a method by which I can get what I want.

Some give money to the church with only desire of expecting the Lord to multiply their material gains. Prosperious.

Prophet says you are guilty of sin.

III. Spiritual Secret - V. 6-14.

Is there a correct way to fast? A person must feel led to fast for spiritual reasons. Led of the Spirit.

It was being done in the wrong way - some disfigured the faces, put ashes upon their heads, and called attention to their fasting. Look at me - I am sacrificing, sounds his trumpet on street corners.

Pious Look - Face

Dress - Early quakers dressed -- Difference Non-Christian and Christian - Church and World. Some of this is good in the day of the Minnie! We used to send missionaries to the Cann. Islands and try to get the naked savages to put on clothes. Not so now - it is reverse. They could teach us a few things.

Pharisees wore certain dress as do some religious leaders today, but this is no guarantee of true righteousness.

Bible teaches that it is not the way to differentiate between Christian and Non-Christian.

All desire to be unlike the world. Some think that dress and fasting make holy people. They get the praise of men, but that is all - God sees in secret, the heart.

If you are going to fast be normal about it - wash your face, anoint your head, and go before your Heavenly Father in secret!

Don't worry about your impression upon men, give self entirely to God - please him. Fast God's way in sincere honour to him. Whole life, not one day.

What is the fast God has chosen?

1. Loose the bands of wickedness - get rid of wickedness and lawlessness in your soul.

Dissolve every tie with sin - in your soul and those you have with fellowmen. The sin that binds you.

2. Loose the heavy burdens - oppressed by your conscience - get relief from the shackles. There are some things you can do to help in your sympathy and co-operation.

3. Loose every yoke - the oppressed must go free. Break the yoke of evil habit. Love of the world, every wrong you hold in your heart, let it go!

V. 7 - Positive Action.

4. Feed the hungry - poor - distribute. Job. 31:16-21. Homeless must be taken in and cared for. Not only set the captives free but care for - give good food - break bread for the hungry - true fasting.

- ✓ 5. Provide shelter for the poor - cast out - here is a person not capable of earning a living - open your compassion - I John 3:17 - Lodging. *if you see & shut your eyes*
compassion, how dwelled
one of food in your?
- ✓ 6. Put Clothes upon the naked - Relieve them in their poverty. Matt. 15:5. Serve others, make this your Christian concern, help others, this is part of fasting.

What good will it do you to fast and miss a meal on Friday, when your neighbors is hungry and has no bread!

V. 8 - What are the results of true fasting? Are there any results we can depend upon in fasting?

Yes, we expect rewards - when you fast good things will follow.

- ✓ 1. Wisdom will come - light breaks as the morning - glorious understanding - prosperity. God's love will shine like a light upon this one.
- ✓ 2. Healing will come - health - speedily. The bruised - recovery.

Moral disease cannot stand the light. Health is sometimes known by outward appearances, rosy cheeks.

Sick church - never pleased with its officers, or ministry. Healthy church cannot be idle.

- ✓ 3. Soul will be refreshed - righteousness shall go before Thee. No longer vain type. But like the armour of God. Feeling of security. Righteousness conducts your life into peace and prosperity - righteousness with God and men.

- ✓ 4. Presence of God with you - idea, pillar of cloud and fire, symbol of God's Glory went behind and separated the Egyptians from Israel.

God's people, safe from all sides - providence.

V. 9

- ✓ 5. Prayers will be answered - with iniquity out of your heart, no longer point your finger in scorn and speak vanity against others. Pointing at those on different social level or superior position.

Forgetful of self, compassion for others.

V. 10 - Why is God's light with you?

Rewards of benevolence - we give from a spirit of true charity.

Heart goes with the gift. Light rise out of obscurity. Calamities shall suddenly be succeeded by prosperity.

V. 11 - Spiritual Condition contrasted to a garden. True fasting - weariness - sustain like a well watered garden.

V. 12 - A heritage for next generation. Something to pass on. Because you repair and restore highways of right-living.

Waste places - fallen in decay.

Breaches - of every kind.

Old Paths - walk in.

V. 13 - True fasting takes pleasure in the Sabbath. Strict observance needed. Neglected - First religious ordinance instituted by God.

Walk not in own way of Pleasure.

Mind the things of God.

Everything you do on this day, put a high honour upon the day - high thoughts.

Rev. 1:10 - Put honor up this day. *"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day" - This is your place.*

Foot - Instrument of motion.

Prov. 4:27. Acts 1:12.

Keep your foot from going on your own ways. God claims it as his day - mostly broken by carnal delights instead of spiritual delights.

"Speaking Thine own words" - your own words would call the Sabbath weariness. Speak Spiritual truths.

V. 14 - The Prophets conclusion - if men turn from false fasting.

A. Choice place in the earth - ride high places. Rewards those which delight in Sabbath.

B. Why do we know this - mouth of the Lord. Sure fulfillment - promise of Lord.

Seeth in secret with reward. Openly. Take the Lord's word for it.

Gal. 4:10. *Days, months, times, years - Paul - fear I wasted my labour upon you - more concerned with flesh - spirit -*

God speaks - whole earth is to rest. Productive labour. Prevention of disease.

Prolongation of human life. Prosperity of the soul.

John Wesley - A scholar, gifted - loved books, music, architecture but turned from all for his Lord. Visiting the beautiful grounds of an English nobleman, he said, "I, too, have a relish for these things; but there is another world." (S. S. Times).

That is true meaning of fasting.