



# LENT

## THE WAY OF REPENTANCE

WEEK FIVE: FOR MARCH 22 SERMON

# ISAIAH 58

## OPENER/LENT CHECK-IN

How has your time in the Lent practices been this week? Is there anything about these practices that you will continue to do after lent is over?

## CONTEXT

- Found in the final section of Isaiah, these verses shift the focus away from external enemies (like Babylon) to the internal “heart-health” of the community
- The chapter is structured like a courtroom drama where God acts as Judge, indicting the people for “going through the motions” of religion while practicing injustice.
- It uses sharp parallelism to compare two lifestyles: the People’s Fast (self-focused, argumentative, and shallow) vs. God’s Fast (others-focused, liberating, and restorative).
- The imagery moves from death (sackcloth, ashes, and parched land) to life (light breaking through, watered gardens, and rebuilt ruins).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about God/Jesus from this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do we learn about man/us from this passage?

3. In light of what you've learned today, what do you need to do to obey God?
  
4. In vv. 3-5 what is the complaint people have toward God? **People are frustrated that God hasn't noticed or rewarded their fasting and it reveals their heart was more on the act of religion than on the heart for others.** What are some way you go through the religious motions and yet harbor ungodly attitudes? **Help them be specific, rather than "I pray every day but am still grumpy in the mornings" to "I pray every day, but I'm still holding a grudge against my brother."**
  
5. What does vv. 6-7 say about the true fast? What is one specific "burden" you can help carry for someone in your immediate family or community this week, even if it disrupts your own schedule? **Push for specifics. Instead of "I'll be helpful," look for "I will offer to babysit for my sister so she can rest."**

## **PARTNER PRAYER TIME** split into pairs

Share one specific burden however large or small that you are carrying right now.

Ask your partner "What is one way I can encourage you this week?"

Pray for one another.