

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Isaiah 58:3-12 (NIV)*

3 'Why have we fasted,' they say,  
    'and you have not seen it?  
Why have we humbled ourselves,  
    and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please  
    and exploit all your workers.

4 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.

5 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?

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice  
    and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free  
    and break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
    and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
    and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
    and your healing will quickly appear;

then your righteousness[a] will go before you,  
    and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

9 Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
    you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

"If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
    with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
    and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,

then your light will rise in the darkness,  
    and your night will become like the noonday.

11 The Lord will guide you always;  
    he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
    and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
    like a spring whose waters never fail.

12 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins

and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

### **General Question Bank**

**Observation** (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)  
**Know** (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)  
**Together** (What is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?)

### **Discussion/Topic Starter** (Ice Breaker)

What has been your previous experience with fasting? Have you tried it for health purposes? As a spiritual practice?

Isaiah 58: 3-12

O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

*\*\*\*Another way to ask: "Choose one verse or phrase from the passage that stands out to you. This could be something you're intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further." Now share it with the group.*

O: As you read this section of Scripture, what do you note about God's character? In other words, what can we learn about God from this invitation to fast in a different way?

I: In Sunday's sermon, Andrew referred to fasting as a response to a "grievous, sacred event." Where do you see this kind of "response" in the passage of scripture?

I: The words of Isaiah invite us to fast but indicate that our intentions and posture matter more than the mere practice of fasting. Why does our intention matter to God? (May be a simple answer, but I think still a good one to consider:)

A: As you consider fasting, does this passage change your perspective on fasting at all?

A: Where might God be inviting you to respond to the brokenness of the world? In other words, how might you approach fasting and prayer as acts of care for your neighbor?

A: Like the first part of the passage, are there areas where you might have "missed the point" in practices? Are there areas of life that feel self-focused – and might God be inviting you to a different posture towards his broader community?

-How will you respond this week? What one question do you want us to ask of you next week in regard to this?

### **Recommended Follow-up:**

**Pray:** Pray together, and really focus in on that we are meeting with God, He's in the room, and He wants us to KNOW Him. Pray together, spend some time being silent.

**Respond:** Spend this week responding to God's word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week's devotional guide.

## **An explanation on how Riverside structures these discussion guides<sup>1</sup>:**

Riverside defines a disciple of Jesus as a **“Know, Be, Do”** person. And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do” framework in our discussion guides. We believe the process for this transformation happens in community, hence the **“Together”** part of the Riverside mission as well.

Riverside leadership regularly asks questions around these areas:

- “What do we need to **know** about God?”
- “Who do we need to **be**?”
- “What do we need to **do**?”
- **“Together**, what is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?”

Here is what we mean by “Know, Be, Do” (based on [Colossians 1:9-10](#), see below)

**Know** – *“to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives..., growing in the knowledge of God.”* Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally, intimately, and deeply. This is also about knowing the scriptures, knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit, even knowing yourself.

**Be** – *“so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.”* Becoming more like Jesus (sanctification). This is about our character and our heart and our motivations, our passions and convictions change the more we get to Know Jesus (and others).

**Do** – *“bearing fruit in every good work, ...”* Knowing Jesus and Becoming like Jesus practically will change our actions. As we grow in these areas we will naturally DO the things that Jesus did while in the flesh on earth (living and loving like Jesus). Some broad categories around DO are evangelism and justice and service.

Notice *“bearing fruit in every good work”* then yields more *“growing in the knowledge of God.”* In other words, while “Know, Be, Do” are three distinct words, they are deeply interconnected.

As a side note, the next chapter states: *<sup>6</sup>So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. <sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (Col. 2:6-8)*

To aid in this process Riverside also has a **daily devotional guide available each week.**

## **Colossians 1:9-10, NIV**

*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...*