

## Isaiah 58

<sup>6</sup>Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup>Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator<sup>[a]</sup> shall go before you,  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup>Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

<sup>10</sup>if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD will guide you continually,  
and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup>Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

**Ash Wednesday – 2019**

**Isaiah 58:6-12**

**“Repairing the Breach”**

Help me Lord.

I’ve prayed that prayer.

Perhaps you have prayed that prayer.

I don’t know your circumstances.

Maybe I don’t want to share my circumstances.

But as much as I want people to believe that I have it ALL together,

Sometimes I need help.

God’s help.

The help that feels like desperation.

And God listens.

And says, “Here I am.”

God listens.

God says, “Here I am.”

And then God reminds me to remove the burden that I’ve unfairly placed on myself or others.

God reminds me to lower my pointing finger, or any other fingers.

God reminds me to watch my tongue – because hurting people can easily hurt people.

And then God helps me see the bigger picture.

That’s the beauty of this text.

God knows there is pain in this world – big pain.

Injustice

Oppression

Poverty

Homelessness

Shame

We are all vulnerable before the brokenness of this world.

The fast that God chooses is a fast from pain.

Maybe it's a fast from inflicting pain.

Lose the expectations and the stereotypes.

Maybe it's a fast from apathy.

See the need around you and do something about it.

Maybe it's a fast from despair.

You will be satisfied in the parched places, like a watered garden.

Help me, Lord.

Heal me, Lord.

Guide me, Lord.

Give me love for myself.

Give me love for your people.

Repair the breach.

Restore the streets for us to live in.

And build the foundation for generation after generation. Amen.