

HOLYWHOLLYHOLY

The Book of Isaiah

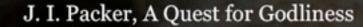
The True Fast



I. A Hypocritical Fast (58:1-5)



"The Puritans exemplified maturity; we don't. We are spiritual dwarfs. A much-travelled leader, a native American (be it said), has declared that he finds North American Protestantism, as it blatantly is, to be 3,000 miles wide and half an inch deep."





²⁷"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

Matthew 23:27



"Whenever God is worshiped at the expense of love of neighbor (as in Isaiah 58), it is an absolutely dependable sign that God is not being worshiped after all. Though it has two parts, the Great Commandment is a single commandment....In Isaiah 58, what is it exactly that bothers God about the fasting (vv. 4–12) and the sabbath ritual (vv. 13–14)? The fasting and ritual themselves? No. That there is too much sacrificing going on? No. What bothers him is that there is not enough sacrifice."



"What this verse is revealing is that people can look, act, talk, and delight in the things of God, yet still not be the people of God (cf. Matt 7:21–23). A good, moral, cultural Israelite knows how to act, talk, and behave in religious circles, but knowing the cultural expectations of an Israelite is not the same as knowing God."



²³"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

Matthew 23:23

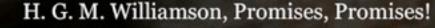


I. A Hypocritical Fast (58:1-5)

II. A True Fast (58:6-12)



"Those who fast in the terms that have been set out above are effectively being told that they will truly make a difference. Not only will their light be seen as a witness to those still lost in the darkness of despair, but they will be 'like a watered garden, like a spring of water' (verse 11) that gives nurture and succor to those in need, and 'you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in' (v. 12), as those who contribute effectively to the process of restoration, both physical and metaphorical."





¹⁰And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:10



18"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

Luke 4:18



³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold

Acts 4:34



¹⁰Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Galatians 2:10



²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

James 1:27



"Poverty is rooted in broken relationships, so the solution to poverty is rooted in the power of Jesus' death and resurrection to put all things into right relationship again."

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, When Helping Hurts



"Poverty is the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings."

Bryant Myers, Walking with the Poor



Our Four Critical Relationships:

- Relationship with God (First Great Commandment)
- 2. Relationship with Self (Gen 1:26-27)
- 3. Relationship with Others (Second Great Commandment)
- 4. Relationship with the Rest of Creation (Gen 1:28-30)



- I. A Hypocritical Fast (58:1-5)
- II. A True Fast (58:6-12)
- III. A Delightful Sabbath (58:13-14)



"Not only does the pursuit of God give strength to endure; it is the key to breaking the power of sin on our way to heaven. Matthew Henry...put it like this: "The joy of the Lord will arm us against the assaults of our spiritual enemies and put our minds out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks." This is the great business of life—to "put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his books.



I know of no other way to triumph over sin long-term than by faith to die with Christ to our old seductions, that is, to gain a distaste for them because of a superior satisfaction in God. One of the reasons this book is still "working" after twenty-five years is that this truth simply does not and will not change. God remains gloriously all-satisfying. The human heart remains a ceaseless factory of desires. Sin remains powerfully and suicidally appealing. The battle remains: Where will we drink? Where will we feast? Therefore "desiring God" is still a compelling and urgent message. Feast on God."





"It must be with piety and devotion: The joy of the Lord is your strength. Let it not be a carnal sensual joy, but holy and spiritual, the joy of the Lord, joy in the goodness of God, under the conduct and government of the grace of God; joy arising from our interest in the love and favor of God, and the tokens of his favor. This joy will be your strength, therefore encourage it. It will be your strength first, for the performance of the other duties of the feast: The more cheerful we are in our religious exercises, the more we shall abound in them.



Secondly, for all that which you have to do in conformity to the law of God which has been read to you. Holy joy will be oil to the wheels of our obedience. Thirdly, for the resisting of your enemies that are plotting against you. The joy of the Lord will arum us against the assaults of our spiritual enemies, and, put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks."



18"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:18-19



³Honor widows who are truly widows. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

1 Timothy 5:3-4



¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10

