

# A Call to Fast

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[ 0 : 00 ] A little later today, approximately 10 hours from now, our week of corporate prayer and fasting begins.! Our week of corporate prayer and fasting begins.

! And I'm trusting the Lord to use this passage that we're about to read and the sermon that we're about to hear to lay a foundation for our week.

So please follow along as I read. Cry aloud. Do not hold back. Lift up your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their transgression. To the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways.

As if they were a nation that did righteousness. And did not forsake the judgment of their God. They ask of me righteous judgments.

[ 1 : 09 ] They delight to draw near to God. Why have we fasted and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves and you take no knowledge of it?

Behold, in the day of your fast, you seek your own pleasure and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose? A day for a person to humble himself?

Is it to bow down his head like a reed and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose? To loose the bonds of wickedness? To undo the straps of the yoke? To let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke?

[ 2 : 21 ] 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 him and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn. And your healing shall spring up speedily. Your righteousness shall go before you.

The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call and the Lord will answer. You shall cry and he will say, here I am.

If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness. If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted.

Then shall your light arise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places.

[ 3 : 24 ] And make your bones strong and you shall be like a watered garden. Like a spring of water. Whose waters do not fail. And 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 dwell in.

If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath. From doing your pleasure on my holy day. When called the Sabbath a delight.

And the holy day of the Lord honorable. If you honor it. Not going your own ways. Or seeking your own pleasure. Or talking idly.

Then you shall take the light in the Lord. And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth. I will feed you. With the heritage of Jacob your father.

[ 4 : 21 ] For the mouth. Of the Lord. Has spoken. This is God's word. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father how.

Much we need to hear from you. Well we want to hear from you this week. But we. In this moment. Need to hear from you. Knowing that. In many ways.

It will serve as a foundation. As a rudder. For this week. So Lord would you come. And would you speak. And would you enable us to hear.

Lord. Would you grant me grace. And. The anointing that I need. To bring your word to your people. Lord acknowledge my.

Insufficiencies that are many. And I thank you Lord. That you make your ministers. Sufficient and able servants. And I ask that that would be my portion this morning.

[ 5 : 23 ] In Jesus name. As the apostle Paul concluded his letter to the Romans. In Romans chapter 15. And verse 4.

Paul shares. A very. Important insight about the Old Testament. That it's easy for us to miss. And this is what it is. He writes in verse 4.

For whatever was written. In former days. In former days. Was written for our instruction. That through. Endurance. And through the encouragement.

Of the scriptures. We might have hope. When Paul refers to. What was written in the former days. Or the scriptures.

What he's referring to is the Old Testament. And since the Old Testament was. Well is. The record of God's dealings. With the nation of Israel corporately. I think it should be clear to us.

[ 6 : 23 ] That the lessons that we are to learn. Are not as much individual lessons. But corporate lessons. And this is a very important point. Especially when we add to.

These words of the apostle Paul. The words of Stephen. That are recorded in Acts chapter 7. Verse 38. Where Stephen refers to the church. Or he refers to the nation of Israel.

As the church in the wilderness. Or as the congregation in the wilderness. And so when we read the books of the Old Testament. We are to read them with this understanding. That God has given us.

The Old Testament. As a record of his dealings. With this old covenant people. So in other words. The Old Testament. The Old Testament. Is to instruct the new covenant people of God.

Based on the experiences. Of the old covenant people of God. This is so important for us to. To grasp. That God is. Is through. The record of his dealings.

[ 7 : 25 ] With the nation of Israel. Instructing and teaching his church. The church. The church. Paul goes on in Romans.

In Romans. In Romans 15. And in verse 5. Verses 5 through 7. He writes. May the God of endurance. And encouragement.

Grant you to live. In such harmony with one another. In accord with Christ Jesus. That together. You may with one voice. Glorify the God and Father.

Of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore. Welcome. One another. As Christ. Has welcomed you. For the glory.

Of God. What you would see is. Paul is expressing a corporate desire. He's expressing the desire. He's expressing the desire that. The endurance.

[ 8 : 22 ] And the encouragement. That comes to us. From the instruction of the Old Testament. Would enable us to live. Together. In harmony. Will enable us to glorify God.

With one voice. And Paul knowing that the church. Is comprised with. Many different people. From many different backgrounds. In many circumstances.

He says to us. Therefore. Welcome one another. As Christ. Has welcomed. You. And that's what we're called to.

We're called to. Hear these instructions. Of how God had a. A corporate people. Take those lessons. And allow them to encourage us. And to strengthen us. That we may live together in harmony.

And that we may with one voice. Bring glory. To God. And so as we consider. Isaiah 58. This morning. In preparation for our week of.

[ 9 : 21 ] Prayer and fasting. Here's the question. I want us to be thinking about. What are the lessons. That God wants to teach us.

About fasting. From Israel's experience. In Isaiah 58. In Isaiah 58. I want us to think about that. This morning. What are the lessons. That God wants us. To think about. As we consider.

His dealings. With the nation of Israel. As recorded. In Isaiah 58. And here's what I believe. The overarching lesson is. That God.

Wants to teach us. From this passage. I believe God wants to teach us. That the fast. That God calls for. That he calls us to.

Fuels. Repentance from sin. Compassion for others. And passion for God. I believe that when we. [ 10 : 19 ] Take this. Chapter. Chapter. In its entirety. It helps us to see this. It helps us to see that.

We cannot truly. Fast. As God calls us to fast. And not trying from sin. And not show compassion for others. And not grow in passion for God.

This passage tells us otherwise. This passage tells us. That when we fast. As God has called us to fast. It will fuel repentance. From sin. It will fuel compassion for others.

And it will fuel passion. For God. And yet today. For so many Christians. Fasting is a kind of. Trump card that we play.

When prayers aren't answered. When healing doesn't come. When life is hard. We kind of play the trump card. To play the trump card. Of fasting.

[11:22] And I'm not saying. That it's wrong to fast. Under those circumstances. And for those reasons. I'm not saying that at all. I think it's perfectly fine. To do that. But what I am saying. This morning.

Is that Isaiah 58. Is the most extensive record. That we have in scripture. On fasting. And what we see. From the passage.

From the passage. Is that God. Causes people to fast. In a particular way. That fuels repentance. From sin. That fuels compassion.

For others. And that fuels passion. For God. And so. That we have left. This morning. I want to consider. The. The.

These three results. From the fast. That God calls us to. That we see in Isaiah. 58. And I encourage us. To hear.

[12:17] And heed. What God would say to us. As we prepare to fast. This week. The first result. From biblical fasting.

That we see in Isaiah 58. Is this. It fuels repentance. From sin. Isaiah 58. Begins with the Lord. Speaking to Isaiah. And saying to him. That he wanted him.

To lift his voice. Loudly. And clearly. And rebuke the people. So that they would not miss. What he is saying. And the situation.

Was clearly serious. Because God was telling Isaiah. To lift his voice. Like a trumpet. Or the literal. Word is like a shofar. The instrument that was used. To summon the nation.

To get the attention. In times of emergency. Or when there was a war. And whatever they were doing. They were to stop. And they were to pay attention. And that's essentially. The picture that we get.

[13:15] That God is saying. To Isaiah. To this nation. That was rebellious. And that was in sin. He said. They want you to. Lift up your voice. Like a time of.

National emergency. And I want you to. Bring to these people. Their sins. Their sins. God says. I want you to. With great. Great.

Urgency. And the reason. That the Lord. Was angry. Is Israel. Was sinning. In many ways. And some of them. Are recorded. Earlier.

In Isaiah 57. But more importantly. God was angry. At the hypocrisy. And the hypocrisy. Is sin. In verse 2. They were.

They were sinning. Yet they were pretending. To serve. The Lord. They were going through. All the daily rituals. That gave. The impression. They were seeking God. They were actively.

[14:10] Reading their Bibles. God says. To know his ways. But they were only pretending. To seek God. And to delight in God.

Because they were not. Obeying God. And so what we see. Is the Lord. In. In verse 3. We see him moving. From this general. Indictment of Israel.

And how they were. Living a pretentious. Life. Of seeking him. But not really seeking him. And he begins to. Direct his attention. To an aspect. Of their hypocrisy.

Which was their fasting. An aspect. That they were apparently. Pretty proud of. So proud. That they would lift it up. In prayer to God. And charge him. That when they do. That when they do that.

He doesn't. Pay attention. To them. And the Lord begins. In verse 3. By quoting. What they. Said to him. And you'll notice that.

[15:06] It's in. It's in quotation marks. In verse 3. Why have we fasted. And you see it not. Why have we humbled ourselves. And you take no knowledge of it.

It was a charge. They brought before the Lord. The Lord said. This is what you're saying to me. He said. You're saying this to me. Here. Here is. Here is why. Here's the reason.

That I don't pay attention. To your fasting. And your sackcloth. And your ashes. Behold. In the day of your fast. You seek your own pleasure.

And oppress all your workers. Behold. You fast. Only to quarrel. And to fight. And to hit with the wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day. Will not make your voice. Be heard on high.

Is such the fast. That I choose. A day for a person. To humble himself. Is it to bow down his head. Like a reed.

[16:02] And spread sackcloth. And sackcloth. Was actually. A very coarse kind of material. Made out of goats. Goats hair. And they would wear it. To feel uncomfortable. And to.

Just. Abuse their bodies. To say that they were. Humbling themselves. Before the Lord. And they would put ashes. On themselves. He says. Is that. What I.

Have called you to do. Will you call this fast. And. A day acceptable. To the Lord. Look more closely.

What God is saying to them. What he's. What he's saying to them. He is. Rebuking them. For the fast. That they are so proud of. He says. When you fast. Nothing changes.

When you fast. You seek your own pleasure. In the case of the business people. When you fast. You abuse your employees. You oppress them.

[16:58] You take advantage of them. When you fast. You're still fighting. And quarreling. And striking one another. And involved in contentious. In contentious.

Engagements. And all you do. Outward show. Where you put ashes on. Put sackcloth on. And spread it on the ground. And pretend to be seeking me. But nothing changes.

In your life. Your actions. And your attitudes. Don't change. God is saying. That's why I don't pay attention to it. Because your fasting doesn't change you.

Your fasting doesn't move you. And you want it to move me. Your fasting doesn't change you. Your fasting doesn't move you. And you want it to move me. Your fasting doesn't bring you near to me.

And you want me to draw near to you. And so God condemns ritualistic. Fasting.

[17:57] He condemns religious show. He condemns this trying to manipulate God. God to do something. Notice the Israelites, I mean, they were convinced that if I do this, you must do that.

And brothers and sisters, that's not the purpose of fasting. We fast to draw near to God, not to see what God can do for us. But Israel felt that if they fasted, God was obligated to respond to them.

And when he didn't, they complained to him in prayer. But look at the fast that God has called his people to, which is in verse 6.

He says, is not this the fast that I choose? To loose the bonds of wickedness. To undo the straps of the yoke.

To let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke. Notice that the fast that God calls his people to is a fast that will address ingrained wickedness, injustice, bondage, and oppression.

[19:15] God was referring to how they were treating their brothers and sisters. The fast that God calls his people to breaks every form of bondage.

And we mustn't miss the fact that it includes the bond of wickedness, which at its root is a hard issue. Because scripture makes it very clear that wicked deeds come from wicked hearts.

And so in short, God calls us to a fast that deals with our hearts. It's a fast that will afflict our souls with conviction.

And not assault our bodies with pain. But the Israelites felt that if it could be seen more physical, if they could just torture their bodies, and if they could just go around with their heads hung down, and their bodies emaciated, that that made a difference, and that really mattered.

God says, no. He says, I want what is happening on the outside to be going on on the inside of you. I want your flesh on the inside to be starved. I want the way things look on the outside to be the way things look on the inside.

[20:31] I want you to afflict your soul with conviction. And not assault your body with pain. And here I just want to pause to say something to us practically as we fast.

One of the rules of thumb that you should follow whenever you're fasting is if you find that your fasting is just bringing pain to your body.

I'm not talking about hunger pain. That's a part of fasting. But physical pain, where your body is literally in physical pain. I encourage you to cease your fast.

Do it gradually. Don't just do it abruptly. Do it gradually, because that's not the purpose of the fast. The purpose of the fast is not to afflict our bodies with pain.

And so, if that happens to you this week, stop, modify, do something, but do not continue, because that is not the purpose that God has given us to fast.

[ 21 : 34 ] And maybe we can take that as an opportunity to say, God, do with my flesh what's happening with my body. Let the pain that's in my body be in my soul.

Brothers and sisters, Isaiah 58 could not be clearer. Fasting that does not fuel sorrow for sin and repentance from sin is not the fast that God calls us to.

That's merely abstaining from food. And if we're fortunate, we may lose some pounds, but we won't change. Now, why does this fast that God calls us to fuel repentance?

Again, it's not just merely not eating food. The reason is that true fasting or biblical fasting is mingled with prayer.

Actually, it's a contradiction from a biblical point of view to say that you fast without prayer. Because it's to say the same thing.

[ 22 : 50 ] The time of starving our bodies from physical food is the time that we feast our souls on communion with God through prayer, through reading his word.

And that is where the repentance is really fueled. And see, in a very strict sense, when we deny our bodies physical food, you know, to some degree, we shouldn't have the strength to sin.

But we are strengthening our souls to say no to sin and yes to righteousness. And that is what fuels the repentance, not the fasting itself or the abstinence from food itself, but this commingling it with prayer, commingling it with seeking the face of God and doing our best to do that.

And I know for us this week is not going to be a cakewalk because we have jobs to attend to and families to care for. We have duties to do and all. And God understands all those things.

We do our best to focus as much as we can on seeking the Lord even as we attend to these other duties.

[ 24 : 06 ] And so, brothers and sisters, for those of us who have, in particular, participated in this corporate fast, something we have been doing for more than 20 years now as a church as we begin the new year, if God were to assess us as a congregation, if God were to give us feedback on how we've been doing, approaching this week and going through this week, I wonder if he would have a similar rebuke for us.

As he has for the nation of Israel. I wonder if he would say to us, your fasting doesn't change you. Your fasting does not fuel repentance. Would he say that to us? Would he say to us, your fast, when you fast, there's business as usual.

You're still harsh with your wife. You're still rebellious to your husband. You're still screaming at your children. You're still burning with lust and greed. You still resent your co-workers.

You still deal sinfully with your employees. You still badmouth your boss.

[ 25 : 26 ] All the while, you're more concerned about how many meals you can miss and how many days you can go more than being concerned to truly humble your heart and break your heart before the Lord.

And I pray that you don't hear any condemnation in this because I sit under this word even as I bring it this morning.

It's intended to encourage us to consider where we need to repent and where we need to grow, where we need to change.

And so I want to suggest something to us as we approach this week. What encourage us? The only person who knows ourselves better than we do is the Lord himself.

And so when we sang this morning, we are not what we should be. We haven't sought what we should seek.

[ 26 : 35 ] I trust we were not saying that in a vacuum. I trust those were not words. I trust we were mindful of some of the ways that we are not what we should be. That what we haven't sought, I trust we were mindful of those things.

Let's bring those before the Lord this week. Let's ask the Lord to help us. Let's confess sin. Let's acknowledge it before the Lord and ask him to grant us repentance that we may grow, that we may change.

And I want us to, let's invite others this week. Husbands, I want to encourage you. Have a conversation with your wife. Wives, talk to your husband. Talk with them about areas in which you can see you need to grow, you desire to grow, you want to change, you want to repent.

That you would say to them, I don't want this fast to come and go and meet me in the same way. That when the fast is over, I'm really no different. I don't want to. And then I want us to invite input from our spouses.

And we can do this broadly in our families. Children can be involved as well. Children can share with parents how they want to grow. Parents can share with children how they would encourage them to seek to grow this week.

[ 27 : 50 ] And then let's come before the Lord and let's ask him to help us to truly repent as we fast.

In Isaiah 58, not only do we see that the fast that God calls us to fuels repentance from sin, but we also see that it fuels compassion for others.

Look at verse 7. Still talking about the fast that he calls us to. The Lord says, is it not, is the fast I called you to not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor in your house? When you see the naked, to cover him and not to hide yourself from your own flesh. And then also in verse 10, the Lord calls us to pour ourselves out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted.

In a general way, fasting should help us to repent from selfishness. But in a very specific and practical way, shouldn't our own hunger when we choose to fast also cause us to think about those who are hungry because they have no choice but to fast?

[ 29 : 18 ] Shouldn't we be able to connect the dots? When we fast, shouldn't the uneaten food in our refrigerators and freezers and our cabinets and pantries remind us of those who have no food?

And when our fasting is sufficiently long and our clothes are no longer snug on our bodies should it not remind us of the poor who can use clothes that we have outgrown, clothes we no longer wear and out of compassion seek to give clothing away.

And this is not to say that this isn't done. I know that some of you do this and you're to be commended for doing it away from fasting. You do it. And that's commendable.

And what about our interpersonal relationships? How do we relate to people in our world in our relationships in our sphere of relationships?

Shouldn't fasting make us more considerate? Shouldn't fasting make us more compassionate towards them? And as I was thinking about this I'm aware that we oftentimes talk about the burdens we carry and the truth is burdens are not visible.

[ 30 : 42 ] We can't see them. But you know what? I think if we could see the burdens that some people carry that break our hearts.

If burdens were visible if we could see the burdens that some people carry that would break our hearts. I believe that when we fast God sensitizes us to those invisible burdens.

That we become more compassionate with people. We begin to bear more with people. We begin to be less judgmental towards people. We're more mindful of trying to put ourselves in that other person's shoes before standing out of them and casting judgment.

The fast of God calls us to fuels repentance from sin. It fuels compassion for others.

And third and finally and most importantly the fast of God calls us to fuels passion for God. If he was passion for God.

[ 32 : 04 ] In this passage the Lord is challenging the people of Israel and telling them that the breakthroughs that they want that the answers to prayer that they desire will not come when they fast as they do.

Notice that after describing the fast that he has chosen in verse 6 and 7 verses 6 and 7 the Lord goes on to promise many blessings that will flow to his people when they fast as he has called them to.

In verse 8 he promises guidance and healing and righteous living and the glory of God being with them. In verse 9 he promises that when they call that he would answer them when they cry out to him he was going to hear them.

And verses 11 and 12 using highly prophetic language the Lord promises that he will care for them and he will sustain them and he will restore them in indescribable ways.

Now if you follow the argument in the passage you will see that up to this point up to verse 13 up to verse 12 I should say the Lord is rebuking the people on two levels on a personal level that their fasting doesn't change them they don't repent and then on this horizontal level that their fasting doesn't change how they relate to others how they see others their compassion towards others.

[ 33 : 48 ] and I believe that it's by divine design that he leaves the relationship with himself for the last part.

Starting verse 13 he basically says to them and it doesn't change how you relate to me. the Lord is saying to them the fast that you engage in doesn't fuel passion for me but the one that I have called you to that will fuel passion for me.

Now you have to follow the argument to be able to see how the Lord is building his case against his people. First your fast doesn't change you second doesn't change how you relate to other people and now you're saying it doesn't change how you relate to me.

The first thing he says to them these are people who are charging God that he doesn't listen to them. These are people who are charging God that he doesn't pay attention to their fast and notice what the Lord says to them he says if you turn your foot if you turn back your foot from the Sabbath the picture here is that the Sabbath the day that was to mark in a very formal and ongoing way their worship of God when they gathered the picture is that they had their foot on the Sabbath the Lord is saying that that is the way even when you fast you complain to me about how I don't hear you he says that's what you're doing you're doing all that your foot is on the Sabbath the day that I've given to you that you would show worship to me you would turn away from all your activities and focus in worship to me he says that day is under your foot you go about pursuing your own pleasure on my holy day and they were saying the

Sabbath was a burden and the Lord says you need to call it and see it as a delight as a holy and an honorable day unto the Lord now I have in numerous sermons over the years addressed the issue of the seventh day Sabbath I've said it time and time again that under the new covenant keeping the seventh day Sabbath is not a command and for those of you who may not have heard that I want to just take a brief moment to share two particular things with you listen seventh Adventists are free to worship on the seventh day if they want to do that they're not obligated to do it and they don't have license to say that other people have the mark of the beast or anything else because they don't worship on the seventh day the two two two quick things one under the old covenant the Sabbath was given to the nation of Israel exclusively to show that they were special to God one reference for that that you can look at there others but I give one this morning is Exodus 31 16 through 17 the Lord says it's a covenant between me and you it's a sign between me and you when they were at the mount of

[ 37 : 34 ] Sinai they were the only people there they left the Egyptians back in Egypt they didn't know what God was telling them they were going into Canaan the Canaanites didn't know this was between God and the Israelites and so when the Sabbath day came the Israelites stopped working everybody around them continued to work God didn't kill them God didn't stone them but if the Israelites did it they would have been killed they would have been stoned because the covenant was binding on them not on the other people that's the first thing second of the ten commandments nine of them are reaffirmed as binding in the New Testament and one of them allows us to follow our conscience the one that allows us to follow our conscience is the fourth one the Sabbath and two scripture passages that you can take a look at in your own time are Romans 14 1-6 and Colossians 2 16-19 look at those in your spare time and you will see that you will not find in the

New Testament where it says well if you want to worship idols you can worship idols it doesn't say that nine of them are reaffirmed and we sin when we break them the fourth commandment Paul says you be fully persuaded in your own mind don't judge another person and don't let another person judge you now I think it should be clear to us from Israel's example but even having a mandated day of worship doesn't automatically result in true worship in honor to God even having a command to say worship on this day it doesn't automatically result in true worship to God and this is where I believe we who do not like Sabbath Adventists believe that the

Sabbath or the keeping of a day is required of us I believe this is where we are more likely to put our foot on the Lord's day because we recognize that it's not binding as the Sabbath was for the nation of Israel and therefore we believe we have more latitude and we can do more as we wish brothers and sisters I believe that we can draw the same principles that we can recognize that we can approach the day that has been designated the Lord's day that we come together to worship and our attitude towards it can be the same way as it was for the children of Israel and it is possible that we can fast and come out of our fast and have the very same attitude towards the Lord's day and so I want to encourage us this week as we come before the Lord let us bring before the

Lord our attitudes towards the Lord's day let us consider whether we are like the nation of Israel putting the Lord's day under our foot doing whatever we please seeing it as a burden instead of a delight and recognizing that at the end of the day what is most important in our lives is not what we say but what we actually do as I prepared the sermon I reflected back over many many years and what I'm saying this morning is not something new it is not to single anybody out I've said this I believe for the entirety of the time I've been pastoring just encouraging us to approach the Lord's day differently to have a different attitude towards it to see it as an expression of our corporate worship to

God and to consider what our actions communicate about the Lord's day and brothers and sisters if we fast this week and at the end of our fast our worship of God doesn't change for the better I want to submit to us that's not the fast that God has called us to the fast that God has called us to will result in change and so if you this morning are indifferent about making a concerted effort to come to church gatherings period to come to church gatherings on time fasting as God has called us to will convict us and we will change if you're not being faithful in honoring the Lord and giving as you understand scripture calls you to fasting as God has called us to will convict you of that and we'll change and if we gather and we sing it's only from our lips and not our hearts and amazing grace is boring grace and listening to preaching is like being force fed food fasting as God calls us to will convict us and we will change and I'm not naive to think the changes overnight people don't change that way we are slow creatures but if there's true conviction if there's true repentance there will be true change at some point the life of the repentance will be manifested in our lives and by the grace of God in the increasing and ongoing way notice the promise that we have in verse 14 the first part of verse 14 when we fast as

[ 44 : 23 ] God calls us to honoring the Lord's day and worshiping him as we ought we're told then you shall take delight in the Lord then you shall take delight in the Lord then you will have passion for God fasting as God calls us to fuels passion for God it fuels the affection of our hearts it enables us to live the first commandment to love the Lord with all of our heart and all of our mind and all of our strength verse 14 he says then you shall take delight in the Lord look back at the beginning of the chapter in verse 2 the Lord says about the nation of Israel yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their

God they ask of me righteous judgments and delight to draw near to me I trust we see the pun I trust we see that clearly the delight of the Lord is saying will be our portion in verse 14 was not the delight that the Israelites had at the beginning it was a true delight of the heart and brothers and sisters we waste our affections when we put them on anything or anyone other than the Lord God himself and the things of God and when we fast the way God has called us to fast our affections our passions for God cannot help but change once again as I close this morning I want to say to us that biblical fasting assumes prayer it assumes joy near to God through prayer and through his word and so let's do that this week let's fast the way God has called us to fast and as we do it will fuel repentance it will fuel compassion for others and it will indeed fuel passion for God and rather than allowing for questions this morning

I want us to just take a few moments to reflect reflect on what we've heard and ask the Lord to use it to set our hearts to seek him this week so let's do that right now let's just pause right where we are let's take a moment to reflect on what we've heard father we do not for one moment believe that the results of fasting as you have called us to fast are all on our shoulders and all in our hands Lord it is only when you through the power of the Holy Spirit would work in our lives that these changes can come that the results that you called your people to fast for would be our portion and so Lord would you help us this morning but you know where we all are but not singing this morning we ask you to drive our dark away and Lord that is true for all of us there's darkness in our lives in different ways and different degrees we ask that as we seek your face you drive it away by producing us the fruit of the fast that you have called us to!

I pray in this moment for us Lord as we set our hearts to seek you this week help us to be honest before you and to do business with you but do your work we pray in Jesus name know