

EPISODE NO. 193

Isaiah 58:1-14

True Fasting

1 The One Who Is Always Present says: “Yell! Don’t hold back! Raise your voice, like a trumpet! Declare to My people the things they’ve done against Me! Tell the household of Jacob their sins! 2 Then, every day, they might come looking for Me. And, they might want to learn My ways. They might become a nation that does what is right. They might not abandon the justice of their God anymore. They might even ask Me to act decisively on their behalf. They might want God to be near them.

3 They say: ‘We observed special days of not eating. But You didn’t see it! We humbled ourselves to honor You, O God. But You didn’t even notice it!’ ”

But Yahweh says: “Listen, you do whatever pleases you on those so-called ‘special’ days! But you are unfair to all of your workers. 4 Look, on those ‘special’ days when you do not eat, you argue and fight. You even have fist fights! You cannot do such things as you’re doing now and expect Me to listen to your prayers. 5 This kind of so-called ‘special fasting day’ is not what I want. This is not the way that I want people to be truly sorry for what they’ve done. I don’t want people just to bow their heads — like a plant! I don’t want them merely to wear rough cloth and lie down in ashes to show their sadness. This is what you do on your so-called ‘special’ days when you do not eat. But do you think that is what Yahweh wants!?”

6 “No, I will tell you the kind of special day of fasting that I want. I want you to set free the people whom you’ve put in prison unfairly. Undo their chains! Free the ones you cheated! Free them from their hard labor! 7 I want you to share your food with hungry people! I want you to bring poor, homeless people into your own homes! When you see someone who has no clothes, clothe him! And don’t refuse to help your own relatives.”

8 If you do these things, then your light will shine like the dawn. Then your wounds will quickly heal. Your righteousness will walk ahead of you, and the splendor of Yahweh will protect you from behind. 9 Then you will call to Yahweh, and the Always-Present One will answer you. You will cry out to Yahweh, and He will say: “Here I am!” You should stop making trouble for others. You should stop using such cruel words and pointing your finger at others. 10 You should feed those who are hungry. You should take care of the needs of those who are troubled. Then your light will shine in the darkness. And, the darkness around you will become bright like the sunshine at

noon. 11 Yahweh will always lead you. He will satisfy your needs in dry lands. He will give strength to your whole body. You will be like a garden that has much water. You will be like a spring that never runs dry. 12 Your people will rebuild the old cities that are now in ruins. You will rebuild the foundations of those ancient cities. You will be known for repairing the broken places. You will be known for rebuilding the roads and the houses.”

Yahweh says: 13 “You must obey My laws about the sabbath. You must not do what pleases you on My holy day. You should call the sabbath day ‘a joyful day.’ You should honor Yahweh’s holy day. You should honor it by not doing whatever you please on that day. You should not say just anything you please on that day. 14 Then you will find joy in the One Who Is Always Present. And I, Yahweh, will carry you to the high places above the earth. I will let you eat the crops of the land that your ancestor Jacob had.” Yahweh has spoken these things.