

07 Turning Your Back on The Flesh
The Fast Which God Chooses - Isaiah 58

When one desires one ounce more or less than God's will, he is subject to the dictates of the flesh. Jesus even put God's will above going to the cross. He wanted to be real sure that the cross at that time in history, was God's will. The only thing that delivered the human race, was not the cross, but God's will. Thanks be to God that the cross was His will. Roman chapter 8 says that a person cannot please God with the flesh; Hebrews 11 says without faith it is impossible to please God, Romans 13 says that everything not from faith is sin. So it comes down to faith vs. the flesh.

So how then can we know if our desires are even proper ? I do not believe that even this is something that we can do or perform; there is not a formula even to answer this question! We have been crucified with Christ, and we need to reckon ourselves so crucified; which in itself is an important mind-set to have. However one cannot crucify one's self. This must be a work of Grace. It is different in each of our lives. But God must come and cause us to fast from whatever it is that is keeping our flesh alive so that we may in effect starve our flesh to death. This is the fast. To be starved from any possible way out of our problem, to be starved from any earthly help in any way whatsoever ; this is customized for us by God and will always cause us to suffer. But when one hears in his spirit that this is the will of God for him at this time, a joy comes. What a privilege ! I believe that joy is what keeps our sanity. Jesus for the joy set before Him endured the cross despising its shame (Hebrews).

If God is trying and desiring to work out something for our life, and He always is, and if Satan is always trying to kill steal and destroy, and he always is, then comes the battle. Now how in the world is God going to work out His purpose and deliver the "goods" to us if we are possessing the "thing". It is a fact that Satan is stronger than our flesh; and even if we are great performers in the flesh (and thanks be to God that I am not) the " goods" will always come with a "price tag", or will always be subject to being stolen or used to destroy us. At best, the goods will be used to neutralize us as effective disciples.

Romans 6 says that Christ died once unto sin; death has no more dominion over Him. When the goods come up out of the grave, when they come from resurrection power, when we have put the knife to them as Abraham did to Isaac, then and only then can God really complete the delivery.

There are times when we are going through this "fast" that God seems like an " unjust judge", but He is not. There are times when we think "even if you slay me, yet I will love you". But He does not want to slay us, He wants to bury the old man.

Romans 8 says that in order to enter into this process that we must share His suffering. But these suffering are not to be compared to the glory. This light affliction is working a greater weight of glory.

God will not return on our scene, save for one reason; i.e. to be "glorified in His saints" II Thes. To be glorified means " to make manifest the proper and rightful rank or position". Jesus, in order to be glorified in us, must have His rightful position, i.e. Lord of all, King of all.

We must fast from all that would comfort our soul. Monetary security is the biggest obstacle for many. We want to see enough in the bank account or in future paychecks to last us until we can manipulate something else; this is to make sure that we will not run out. Sometimes the most merciful thing we can experience is a duration of impending destruction with absolutely no way out. The word Lord means "bread provider". How can He be bread provider if we pretend to be? The widow's cruse of oil and jar of flour did not run out for an entire year with Ellijah during the famine; but she almost traded that miracle of resurrection power for baking the last biscuit and dying ! Thank God she had enough insight to feed it to Ellijah instead.

The nature of our flesh is to line our lives with "pillows", "just in case". Oswald Chambers and Watchman Nee both say that to look for comfort is pagan, childish and is not facing reality. We need to get where Hannah Hunnard described in her book STEPS TO THE KINGDOM; where we know that we may transform all circumstances because of the blood of Jesus. It rains on the just and the unjust; the difference is that they do not have the power to transform the rain from acid rain into fresh water.

If God is omnipotent, and He is, then all those circumstances that hit us are already reconciled We just need to believe that we may receive that benefit!

Just look at the promises for this type of fast in Isaiah 58. "Then you shall call and the Lord will answer....then shall your light break forth as the morning and your healing shall spring forth speedily; your righteousness shall go before you conducting you to peace and prosperity and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.....your light shall rise in darkness and your obscurity and gloom shall be a noonday....the Lord shall guide you continually, and satisfy you in drought and in dry places and make strong your bones, and you shall be like a watered garden and like a spring whose waters fail not..... you shall raise us the foundations of buildings that have laid waste for many generations, you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.....if you enter into His rest (Sabbath) you shall then delight yourself in the Lord and He shall make you to ride upon the high places of the earth.

There is no question that this is a fast ordained of God. It defeats the enemy. It starves ones flesh. It cuts the bonds and curses that so bind us. If we admit it honestly, we would have to look back and say that all that God has done in our lives has been on the heels of nearing disaster, at the end of a trail, at our own wits end, after we loose our own will and energy to accomplish.

The reason for this is that God cannot have us producing something with the flesh. He does not clean up the flesh. The cure for flesh is death. The only way the life inside of us can produce is to have the flesh out of the way. We cannot voluntarily, as hard as we may try, remove the flesh. I do not believe we can remove it by reckoning alone as in Romans 6, although, ultimately it is by faith that it is removed. That reckoning is part of the process, but the manifestation must come only after a fast . This is where Grace comes in. Grace delivers. Grace brings us above our enemies. The thorn in the flesh brought Grace on the scene. Grace abounds towards us if we are humble. Grace is God providing supernaturally. Grace is being paid for a full day when we only work one hour. Grace comes by faith and even that is a gift from God.

After The Fast

Certainly at the beginning of this God-imposed-fast of Isaiah 58 there is tremendous discomfort. However when one finds peace in the midst of this tremendous famine, he has certainly found God's will and God's will only. He is at rest. This rest comes without human choice. How can one not find peace and rest when one cannot help himself, and he sees God caring for him as He did Ellijah when the ravens fed him; when the widow gave him her last morsel? This rest and peace is so real. I can guarantee you that it is not simply a "state of mind" entered into in order to escape reality. No it brings you into Reality!

There comes a day when God says " It is finished, it is enough". I noticed however that the day always overtakes you as a blessing by surprise. It comes when you are not coveting for it, but you are indeed expecting it. It is in allegory The day of the Lord's coming. He comes on the scene with His coming for deliverance; to be glorified in His saints..

All of the sudden the blessings of Isaiah 58 click in. The bands of wickedness are broken, the heavy burdens are gone, the oppressed go free and the yoke is broken. One finds an insatiable desire to deal one's last morsel to the hungry and minister to the poor. Its real, it really happens this way!

Isaiah says that thy light then breaks forth as the morning and thine health springs forth speedily and thy righteousness shall go before thee and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. One definition of glory is "The Lord's devotion to superimpose Himself on you" as in John 11 with Lazarus. Isaiah 58:9 becomes real; then shall you call and the Lord shall answer; you shall cry and he shall say "here I am". And The Lord shall guide you continually and satisfy thy soul in drought and make fat thy bones. What the Lord has accomplished here is to get you to turn your back on the flesh and walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5 says that the only way not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh is to ignore it and walk in the Spirit.

I believe that verse 13 is a warning to continue in the Spirit and stretch out the benefits of the fast. If you observe the Sabbath, cease from doing your own pleasure.. The Sabbath is that of Hebrews 3, rest in God's Word, fasting from the flesh. verse 14 Then shall thou delight thyself in the Lord..... Job 22:23 says If you will return to the Almighty and put away iniquity, consider the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brook and as of little value as the dust, that The Almighty shall be your gold and you shall have plenty of silver and He shall answer your prayer and you shall have your delight in the Almighty. There it is again, delight yourself in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Another way of saying that is; if you abide in Me and My Words abide you, then you shall ask what you will and it shall be done for you. In Job 22:28 it says that Thou shall decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

Continuing To Walk In The Spirit -Romans 8 Galatians 5

We need to understand the difference between the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the Sprit. So often they both seem "good". So often they can even have the same object as their end. Abraham produced Ishmael not out of turning his back on God, but out of his flesh attempting to fulfill what he knew to be God's will. Colosians says to mortify the evils deeds in your body. That literally means to destroy by neglect. If the flesh was put down by God's fast then it is our job to keep it starved. We cannot war against our own

flesh. I had a dream years ago showing **me** chasing **me** around trying to bind me with cords. The fleeing me kept laughing at the chasing me in slippery escape. I am convinced that this was me trying to tie down my flesh; it was impossible.

What is the answer? Galatians 5 says, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. It means to use your newly found discernment to recognize when your flesh is rising up. A warning at this point however is that the heart is deceitful above all things. We must trust in Hebrews 4:12 that The Word of God is alive and alone can He be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Alone can He divide asunder the soul and the spirit; the flesh and the spirit.

When the flesh rises up for something that is God's will, you will recognize it by the hard labor it imposes on your mind (FRUSTRATION IS A SURE SIGN). You lose your peace, you get out of rest. One definition of the word IDOL is something that brings hard labor; the opposite of rest. The idol has sneaked in your life and you can tell by the horrible "feeling" you feel in your soul.

So what do you do? Go to war? You will lose. Keep on building "air castles" and giving in to the anxious thoughts of your mind? No! No! The result for sure will be another round of the involuntary fast of Isaiah 58. There is no knob available to turn off the flesh. You must mortify this by turning your back on it. Repent, confess it and begin to pursue the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Soon your mind will be transformed, the peace will return, the matter you were pursuing will lose its importance in relation to the Glory you have seen in the face of Jesus, and you will also begin to know (with the faith of God given by grace for deliverance) that the matter will indeed be brought to fruition by Jesus. You also know that it will only work if you stay in the Spirit.

What you have done is to lay up the potential Gold, whether it be your healing, your financial deliverance, your ministry goals, your family healing or whatever, you have laid it up as the gold of Ophir in the dust.

It seems like the end of the process is Revelation 7: 14-17. I replied Sir, you know. And he said to me, these are they who have come out of the great tribulation (persecution), and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. FOR THIS REASON they are now before the very throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple and sanctuary; and He Who is sitting upon the Throne will protect and spread His tabernacle over and shelter them with His presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun smite them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb Who is in the midst of the throne will be their Shepherd, and He will guide them to the springs of the waters of Life; and God will wipe every tear away from their eyes.

**Amazing Grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.
Was Grace that brought us safe thus far, and Grace will lead us home.
Was blind but now I see.**