

**WEEK 9 | GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR
ISAIAH 58:1-14**



ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MINUTES)

Catch everybody up to date on what's going on with New City. You can use your bulletin as a tool to do so.

- **Super Saturdays:** On April 26 New City will be hosting a Super Saturday tutoring event at Parker School to help kids get ready for their standardized tests. The school will be providing training material, but we are providing tutors, as well as both breakfast and lunch for the kids. Please consider volunteering to tutor, or to work on providing breakfast or lunch that day (as a community group?). Details to come.
- **Flying Pig Weekend:** In lieu of our normal Sunday worship gathering, we'll meet on Saturday night May 3 at 5:30pm for worship, with a potluck dinner to follow. On Sunday morning we'll be working the Mile 10 Water Station for the Flying Pig Marathon (NOTE: you have to register with the Pig to serve; see information on The City).

ENGAGE (10 MINUTES)

Starter Questions: 1.) What would be the hardest thing for you to give up for a year: TV, Facebook, your cell phone, dessert, or meat?

2.) Have you ever fasted from anything before? What was that like?

REFLECTION AND STUDY (30-35 MINUTES)

We are nearing the end of our series in the latter chapters of Isaiah. This week we tackle Isaiah 58.

Read Isaiah 58:1-14.

- 1.) The call of God always seems to be a mixture of invitation and challenge. Isaiah 55 was a great example of invitation. Chapter 58 is an example of challenge. How do you usually respond to confrontation? guilt? initial positive response but limited follow through? defensiveness? withdrawal? excitement at the challenge? something else?
- 2.) In what ways was Israel showing their religious zeal? (focus on verses 1-5) Why does Isaiah call their commitment to God into question?
- 3.) What does true godliness look like according to verses 6-14?
- 4.) What similar picture do we get of true religion in James 1:27, Isaiah 1:11-17, Proverbs 14:31, and Proverbs 19:17? Discuss the implications of these passages together for the life God wants from us.
- 5.) What blessings does God promise his people who take these things seriously? Which of these blessings stands out to you most?
- 6.) Focus on verse 6. How can you live a life that “unburdens people”?
- 7.) Focus on verse 7. What steps can you take to keep from “hiding yourself” from needy people?
- 8.) Pass out copies of the attached handout and read it through together. What stands out to you as significant, challenging, or confusing?
- 9.) How is God calling you to take a step of faith to “pour yourself out” for the needy?
Some possible action steps:
 - Write PAY ATTENTION on your hand each day this week. And ask God to show you people he wants you to reach out to.
 - Choose to fast from a meal once a week. But don't make it only personal. Use the time you would have spent eating to pray for our church and our city. And give the money away you would have spent on that meal. You can even ask a friend to do this with you.
 - Get plugged in to serve somewhere. One easy step would be to sign up to tutor for Super Saturdays on April 26.

PRAYER (15 MINUTES)

Break up into smaller groups of men and women. For those who are comfortable, share your applications and pray for one another.

HANDOUT

#1 There are people whose interest in the gospel is [an intellectual hobby]. Their minds were much engaged in arguments and discussions... But the tragedy was that it stopped at that interest, and their hearts had never been touched. Not only was there an absence of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives but there was often an absence of the ordinary milk of human kindness. Those men would argue and fight about particular doctrines, but they were often hard men to approach. You would never go to them if you were in trouble;... they would neither understand or sympathize.
– Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression*

#2 Christian love disposes a person to be public-spirited. A man of a right spirit is not a man of narrow and private views but is greatly concerned for the good of the community to which he belongs, and particularly of the city where he resides. – Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*

#3 Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

Then they will also answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’

Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. – Jesus, in Matthew 25:41-46

#4 The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in equity, fulfillment and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call *shalom*. We translate it *peace*, but it means a lot more than that. In the Bible, *shalom* means universal flourishing, wholeness, and a delight - a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts are fruitfully employed all under the arc of God’s love. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be. – Cornelius Plantinga, *Not The Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*

#5 Here is what it means to do justice. It means you take all the threads of your life. It means you take your emotions. It means you take your time. It means you take your body, your physical presence. It means you take your stuff. It means you take your money, and you plunge it into the lives of other people through thousands of involvements. – Tim Keller, “Justice”

#6 It is more blessed to give than to receive. – Jesus, quoted by St Paul in Acts 20:35

#7 Everybody thought we needed an Oprah moment. A big hug, with everybody feeling everybody’s pain. I said, “No, what we needed was to serve our community.” We didn’t need coddling. We needed a mission. – Ray Cannata, pastor of Redeemer NOLA after Hurricane Katrina

#8 I wish every counseling book had a chapter on mission. We get better when we serve others. We were made to bless others; it’s in the fabric of how God created us. – from Sunday’s sermon