



Key References:

Isaiah 58:3–4 (NLT)

³‘We have fasted before you!’ they say. ‘Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!’ ‘I will tell you why!’ I respond. ‘It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. ⁴What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me.’

James 1:22–27 (ESV)

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [...] ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. [...] ²⁷ Religion 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.

Isaiah 58:6–8 (NLT)

⁶ ‘No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. ⁷ Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. ⁸ ‘Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind.’

Hebrews 10:24 (ESV)

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [...]

1 – God doing big things through the little

In Exodus 4 God points to the staff in Moses’ hand; in 1 Samuel 17 He used a stone in David’s sling; and in 2 Chronicles 20 he used a worship team instead of an army. **What do you know about these three references and what do they show about how God can use each of us?**

2 – A warning against empty religion

Read Isaiah 58:1-5. **Why was Isaiah rebuking God’s people? What warning can we pick up for ourselves from this?**

How is this echoed in James 1:22-27?

3 – True fasting, and God’s promise

Read on to Isaiah 58:6-8. **How would you describe what type of person God is looking for here?**

Is God saying we shouldn’t fast, or that fasting without an outpouring of actionable faith is useless?

What do you find challenging for yourself in this chapter? Is there anything that God is highlighting to you in it?

Read Isaiah 58:9-12. **What good things does God promise to those who do what is commanded in verse 6 & 7?**

How does knowing how God looks after those who do His will spur you on to do good? Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What part can we play, along with the wider church, to encourage what God is speaking in Isaiah 58?

4 – A new season, building and The Canada Equip

It’s roughly 6 weeks until Oceanside will start meeting in the new gymnasium built by NCS. **What are your hopes and prayers for our community as we enter this new season?**

What do you see as your part to play in this new season? When we feel like we don’t have much to offer for God’s mission, how can we instead step forward in faith? [think back to the first question]

We’re also hosting The Canada Equip during the transition, which is also a time of missional equipping and encouragement. **What are you hoping to get out of the equip?**