

Isaiah 58:3-12 Dwelling in the Word

Missional Practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.

Isaiah 58:3-12 the Message

But they also complain, 'Why do we fast and you don't look our way? Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?' "Well, here's why: "The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit. You drive your employees much too hard. **4** You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight. You fast, but you swing a mean fist. The kind of fasting you do won't get your prayers off the ground. **5** Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after: a day to show off humility? To put on a pious long face and parade around solemnly in black? Do you call that fasting, a fast day that I, God, would like? **6** "This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. **7** What I'm interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families.

8 Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once. Your righteousness will pave your way. The God of glory will secure your passage. **9** Then when you pray, God will answer. You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.' A Full Life in the Emptiest of Places "If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people's sins, **10** If you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. **11** I will always show you where to go. I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places - firm muscles, strong bones. You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. **12** You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.

Question:

What are the central prophetic questions from Isaiah 58 for your congregation to explore, as the people of God, to make your community livable again for everyone?