

Fasting for the Poor
May 20, 2007
Isaiah 58:1-14
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Synopsis:

We usually think of worship as what we do in here; and good worship as what we do in here done well, you know, an inspirational sermon, well-sung special music, and finely crafted prayer. This is not, however, the way the Bible thinks of worship. The old Anglo-Saxon word *worth-ship* from which we get our word *worship* steers us in the right direction. Worship is about what we hold worthy. We can hold ourselves worthy or we can hold God worthy. Let's take a look at our worship and see what we hold worthy.

I.

Context: A Little too Much Comfort

Isaiah 40:1 "Comfort, O comfort my people"

READ 58:1

Israel in 6th century: Iraq post 2002

- Disaster 587
- Deliverance 538 (45:1 Cyrus)
- Delight 515 (Haggai 1:2-4)
- *comfort above all (Isaiah 40:1)

Pastor Jeff:

- Difficult year
- Difficult *Refocusing*
- Difficult *Breakthrough* Training this next week
- *I'm wanting some delight and comfort

*They came to this message and resisted (READ 58:1)

*I came to the text this week and resisted

II.

Problem: Fake Worship

Isaiah 58:3 "Why do we fast, but you do not see?"

Focus on comfort leads to fake worship

Worship = READ 2

- Seek God
- Delight in God
- Know ways of God
- Ask God for righteous judgments
- Draw near to God

Fake Worship (READ 2a and notice “as if”)

- READ 3-5, 13
- *Fake = self-focused worship (worth-ship of self)

What does self-focused worship look like?

READ 3

- type of music
- elements and time of service
- evaluation based upon “what I get”
- Result of self-focused worship?

READ v 4

- quarrelling, fighting, fist raised

*Very comfort I seek, I lose when I am self-focused.

III.

Solution: True Worship

Isaiah 58:6 “Is this not the fast that I choose?”

True Worship is Worth-ship of God

- READ Jer 9:23 = identity of God
- READ 2a “practiced righteousness”
- Practice righteousness= doing right relations among people
- For Israel, here’s how it looked (READ 6-7)
 - slavery
 - hungry

- poor
- ignoring kin-folk

What does it look like for you and Geneva?

- Kim and Matthew Stark: sent to Ladera, Presbytery
- Kenya sending out this summer
- Simpson remodel to bring new people home
- 4 major initiatives: senior and family
- Jeff/Geneva:
 - from maintenance to mission
 - from attraction to engagement
 - Refocus, Breakthrough*

Worship: Whom are we holding worthy?