

TITLE AND NUMBER: 94. Acts of true worship



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Isaiah 58:9-12

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings."

What does this Bible passage tell us?

In the previous verses of this chapter, God tells His people that He will not tolerate hypocrisy - people saying one thing but doing the total opposite. God was accusing them of using their fast days - which were part of their worship - as opportunities to do as they pleased, for ongoing exploitation of their workers, and an excuse to fight and brawl. They then expected God to be pleased with their activities and to bless them (Isaiah 58:2-3a). God made it very clear (v2) that fasting and worship were times to bless others, to give rather than take, to be considerate and meet the needs of the hungry, the less fortunate and the destitute (v6-7).

It is very apparent today that people are quick to accuse, to point the finger at individuals and even wound them with unkind words and deeds. God knows our hearts too and sees exactly what we think and do in private!

Acts of compassion are part of our worship of God just as much as our chapel and church services and groups are. Worship is not all about rules or rituals but rather praising God and blessing those around us. The positive side to all of this is that when we do away with the accusations and criticisms, God responds; not only are other people blessed but we are, too. Look at verses 8 and 9: we can call and God will answer us. Our circumstances change and instead of having a negative attitude to others, we can have a positive one as we seek to bless them. The results will be far-reaching and there will be benefit for us all.

Who does not want to be fresh as a well-watered garden? Read verses 9-12 again.

Reflections:

- What do you understand worship to be?
- Are you asking God for opportunities to bless others?
- Consider what you can do to bless those around you today.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

