

Fasting Rewards

by Emanuel Esh

This sermon addresses the significance of fasting and the need to focus on others, highlighting the dangers of hypocrisy and the consequences of pretending to be something we are not. It emphasizes the importance of genuine transformation and repentance, urging individuals to seek God's grace and deliverance from pretense and sin, especially in the face of strong warnings like 'woe' pronounced in the Bible.

Scripture: Matthew 23:13, Proverbs 11:9, Isaiah 58:6, Revelation 8:13

Topics: "Fasting", "Genuine Transformation"

Description

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Transcript

Greetings and blessings to each one this morning in Jesus name. I'd like to, in the beginning here, acknowledge Mother's Day. It's a national holiday and so I thought it might be good if we'd ask all those women of faith to stand.

And so, not just mothers, but because there are some here who are not mothers that would like to be mothers, so let's just have the women of faith stand up this morning and we'll pray a blessing on you. Lord, we just ponder the value of women of faith, mothers of Israel. You created the woman, Father, for a special purpose and you clothed them with beauty and value and honor.

We pray a blessing on the women this morning here. Thank you, Father. May they know that you value them highly.

While we sometimes do not express that value correctly, forgive us, Lord, as men where we've not valued our mothers, our wives, and the women around us. We ask you, God, to bless them today. Help us, Lord, to love them just for who they are.

And may a blessing rest on them in Jesus name. Amen. You may be seated.

We as a church here have been fasting for a couple of days, three days specifically, and I'd like to have this time kind of as a culmination of those three days of fasting and see what value we can get from it. Some of you maybe were not able to fast. What the Muslims do is if they're not able to fast on those days that they're supposed to, then they do it another day, do it later on.

I'm not suggesting that you have to do that. But I do believe that there is a beautiful thing when a whole body of Christ gets together and fasts in Jesus name. And I'd like to look at some thoughts here from my heart this morning.

One of the things that fascinates me about fasting is simply the most simple explanations I say, like we could ask the question, what, why fasting? What does that do? The fasting simply is a means of denying myself. And we understand that there's a battle between the flesh and the spirit, so that we cannot do that which we ought to do or want to do. And when we weaken the flesh, the spirit gets stronger.

And so if we want to be strong in spirit, we need to be weaker in the flesh. And so that's just one of the things that I get from it. Some of the, what are some of the rewards of fasting? We could talk about that.

But I want to look at Esther as a little example here this morning. In Esther chapter 5, uh, now it came to pass that on the third day, what is it about the third day? Esther had said, we will fast for three days and then I will go into the king. What is the significance of the third day? Does anybody have any thoughts? And it came to pass on the third day.

What are your thoughts? This is going to be interaction. Resurrection. And on the morning of the third day, the women went to the tomb and they found it empty.

So there's something there about the third day that is intriguing to me. And when we do three days of fasting and prayer, there's, it's like we're aligning ourselves with a principle of resurrection. And on the third day, Esther, she put on her royal robes and she went in to the king and she obtained favor in his sight and she drew near and he, he held out his scepter and she, she touched the top of the scepter and the king said, what do you want? Maybe the king is saying to you today, what do you want? And so some of the purposes of fasting is to simply tune into what the spirit of God is saying, what God is doing.

I have so, I've been so blessed the last two evenings gathering together here. We gathered on Thursday evening, had a special time of worship, confession. And then last night, we met on Friday evening and then last night was Saturday night again.

And the service just went until, you know, it just extended. Why? Because God was working in our midst. So one of my desires is to see a continuation of what God has begun to do here in our midst.

What do you want? What is your request? It shall be given thee up to half the kingdom. Maybe you have a request. Maybe you've been crying out to God.

May it be according to his word. May this word apply to you in this situation. Now, I have thought about Esther's response here.

Listen to what she says. When I think of the Hebrews 11 hall of faith, it mentions by faith, Noah, by faith, Abraham, and by faith, Sarah conceived and so forth. And so it mentions these men of faith, the parents of Moses, and what they did.

I kind of wonder why Esther is not in there. I would like to say that by faith, Esther prepared a banquet for the king before she went into him. She had, in a sense, was facing death.

Did she know for sure if she would live? How did she dare to go into the king? Because the king was, the order was that anyone who comes before the king and does not have a right to be there, who does not, whom he does not reach out his scepter to, that person would have to die. And Esther had faced that situation so that if I die, I die. I'm going to do it.

I'm going to go into the king. If he doesn't call for me, I'm going to go in there. But you know what she did in the time? She prepared a banquet for the king in Haman.

So when she came to the king, she says, I'm inviting you. If it seemed good to the king, let the king in Haman come this day under the banquet that I prepared for him. By faith, Esther prepared a banquet for the king.

Right? That's what she did on the third day. Maybe they understood this principle about the third day better than we do. I don't know.

Third day, it's resurrection day. It's new life. It's new power.

A new body in Christ, it's renewal, it's new light, it's new hope. There's vision bursting forth. There's life flowing out on that third day.

So that's a little bit of what I was thinking about. How should we fast and how should we even break a fast? It's just very practical. Some of you may have fasted a day.

Some of you may have fasted two days. Some of you may have fasted three days. Some of you may still be fasting.

I had a bowl of oatmeal this morning. I just enjoyed a simple bowl of oatmeal in breaking my fast. When we fast, we should be careful how we begin to eat again.

Three days is not a big deal, but if you fast seven days or more, then your body needs time to get started back up. And if you ever fast for a long time, you have to be very careful how you begin to eat again. Otherwise, you could get sick.

But the picture I get is that when we fast, then God does something. And I've been so blessed with what God has been doing here in the congregation this last couple of days here. I would like to go into Isaiah 58.

I don't know, did you read that whole chapter last Sunday, Tim? You did. The rewards of fasting. I'd like to go into that a little bit this morning.

So Isaiah 58 there is in a time when the church, may I say, God's people were in a decline and they were continuing with their religious exercises. One of them was fasting and they were continuing in that. But God was saying, I'm not pleased with your fasting.

And so he says, in the day that you fast, you do these things. And then he goes on and says, is not this the fast that I've chosen? And maybe you haven't studied this chapter as much as I have. I've been through this chapter a lot.

I've been through it step by step, especially the last from verse six on. I was in, I remember it was in 2019 when we were in Moria in Lesvos there. I would go into Moria camp and do devotions.

And every morning I would get to have devotions there with probably about a group of 50 volunteers, our team and so forth. And I began to take this chapter portion, just a step by step, just a phrase by phrase, like, is not this the fast that I've chosen was for one morning. And I would have about 10 minutes where we could do this.

And then the next, next morning I looked at to loose the bands of wickedness. And we discussed that. And there was a lot of really good interaction there.

It was one of my highlights. It was such a joy, such a blessing. And God just opened up this chapter in a beautiful way.

So I want to look at some of those things here today. And I'm going to invite you to help me out with it. One of the things that came to me this week on Thursday, which was the first day that we were fasting, my heart was open to the Lord.

And I'm seeking the Lord. And I'm asking God, I want to understand more. I want to learn more about you.

We had a funeral that day. And we went to the, I went to the funeral there. And I noticed that there was deacons there.

I'm just going to call them deacons, servants of the Lord. There was men and women there, especially I noticed the men, they were doing the ushering, they were doing all the interacting. And they gave themselves like that whole day, not only on Thursday.

Let's see, was it was a funeral Friday or Thursday? Funeral was Thursday. Wednesday evening was the viewing. And those men were there serving.

And then Thursday, during the funeral, they were there serving. And it's like they gave the whole day for that. And I looked and I'm saying, wow, that is true fasting.

What does God want this? What is God saying in Isaiah 58? He's reprovng them for their wrong way of fasting, which was, He says, behold, you fast for strife. You find pleasure in your day. You exact your labors, verse three and four.

You smite with the fist of wickedness. You should not fast like that. So what was happening was, what I saw for a fresh new was that in the time, what God really wants us to do in the time of fasting is not necessarily continue our work, doesn't mean we can't work.

But He wants us to take our focus away from what we normally do on that day and focus it on others. And so I looked at that on Thursday and I just saw those men serving. And I gave myself to just do, to not work on Thursday.

And I went to the funeral and I enjoyed that. What if when we fast, we would focus on others? That's really what He's saying in Isaiah 58. He's reprovng them for fasting in a way where they continue the work they're doing.

They're fasting in honor to God, but they continue, their heart and their spirit is not there. The heart and spirit is still for their selfish reasons. What if we would really understand that these are days that we actually set aside and do something for other people? What if we would continue, what if we would set aside all of these three days, every one of us, and we would specifically purpose to minister to people on that day? What do you think would happen? That's what I see.

That's, I believe, what God wants us to see here in this chapter. So what does God really want? So He said it is not this the fast that I've chosen. To loose the bands of wickedness.

Would someone help me out here? What might bands of wickedness be? Bands of wickedness. I'm going to have a mic up front here for you. If there's anyone up front here and there'll be maybe one in the back, but if you have anything to say, help me out here.

What might it look like? And I want you to think in pictures. As we look at the picture of Isaiah 58 in general, we see that God wants us to not fast in a way that we're selfishly continuing in our own way, but rather we lay aside and focus on ministry to others. That's really the picture that I see here in Isaiah 58.

But He gives us some specifics and He says that we loose the bands of wickedness. What might someone, does anyone have a picture of what bands of wickedness might be? The bondage of sin. Okay.

Cords of selfishness. Okay. Holding grudges.

Oppressing others because of greed. Okay. Good.

Strongholds of the devil. Okay. Continually thinking that I'm better, that I'm, I deserve more, that I am better than other people.

Okay. Bands of wickedness. Any picture? Any other pictures you get here? Unforgiveness.

Holding them captive. Yep. I would, and it could be many things, but when it talks about the bands of wickedness or loosing the bands of wickedness, I think of a person.

What if we had someone up here and we took bands and we just wrapped this person in the bands continuing around him? Isn't that kind of what the devil does? As we walk in sin, it's like every time we do it, he like wraps us with another band, a little bit tighter, a little bit tighter, and if that is like a rubber band, I'm thinking of a rubber band that's just wrapping around him and getting tighter. This person is wrapped up, he's wrapped up with bands of wickedness and he's not free. Yes, Elmer? I believe it's also seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Bands of wickedness. It could, it's just anything unholy, unclean, or wicked.

Now what are we supposed to do? We're to loose the bands of wickedness. Does that mean if I have bands, I should loose them? Yes, it means that. Or maybe it also means to help others who we recognize are bound in wickedness.

In fact, most times the people who are bound, say it again, they don't see it and they cannot help themselves. It is only when we can see that we have bands of wickedness that we can even begin to, that we see the need to be loose from that. That, I also think of like a rubber band, you know, if you take a rubber band and tie it to this post here, I can work against that.

I can go so far, but as soon as I stop, it wants to suck me back in. Bands of wickedness. It just takes me back to that sin again and again and I need help to get those bands loosed.

He wants us to loose the bands of wickedness. These are spiritual things. To undo the heavy burdens.

Does someone have a picture of a person who might be carrying a heavy burden? Depressed? Yes. What picture comes to your mind? Unbelief? Yes, that's very good. That's the picture we get.

An oversized load, stooped and bending down, a heavy burden. And we can walk into church on Sunday morning and put a smile on our face and pretend that heavy burden is not there. Right? Undo the heavy burdens.

He says, let the oppressed go free. Let the oppressed go free. What is oppression? What does oppression look like? Not depression, although depression can come from oppression.

What is oppression? That you let the oppressed go free. Anything that keeps us from living in the fullness of Jesus Christ. Very good.

Oppression. Slavery. Okay? Yes, taking advantage of others.

It's oppression. If I'm oppressing someone, I am pushing them down. Putting a limit on them.

Good. A cloud, like a dark cloud over one's life. A dark cloud over someone's life.

Blackmail. Explain that one. Say that again.

That's pretty good. So blackmail to me is if I do something wrong and then somebody says, okay, now I know your secret. If you don't do what I tell you to do, I'm going to tell somebody what you did.

Ah, okay. That's a means of being oppressed. And so there's, yeah, the fear of being found out.

Oppression. Anyone else? What pictures do you see of oppression? Controlling. Good word.

Do I as a husband oppress my wife? Someone had something? Slander. Slander. Okay.

Oppression. Do I as a husband oppress my wife? What does it look like to oppress? Or maybe, maybe degrading, yes. Putting, holding them down, holding them back.

Maybe you as a wife oppress your husband. What might that look like? Would I dare to ask my wife? Honestly. Do you feel oppressed? By me.

Do I oppress you? Is there, is the way that I relate to you, does that bring you under? Does that make you feel like going into a cave? Does that make you feel like being quiet? Does that make you feel like you can't speak anymore? I think I've done that to my wife at times. She's vigorously shaking her head up and down. No, she's not.

She's just smiling at me. Do we recognize that as oppression? Someone trying to control, manipulate, press down, so forth. Break every yoke.

That you break every yoke. What picture comes to your mind when you think of a yoke? Two horses pulling the harrow, okay. They're yoked to that, okay.

Oxen. Yokes are pulling oxen. A stronghold, okay.

What else? What about, okay, so we looked at the animal side. What about yokes on us? What does it look like if someone is yoked? Bound to something. Good, that's really good.

Addiction. Addiction. A godly marriage.

That's a good yoke. Okay, we don't want to break that one. That's, but we, we agree.

Unhealthy connections. Yes, Jesus says my yoke is easy, my burden is light. Okay, unhealthy relationships.

One of the things that, go ahead Mel. Brother Lucas mentioned the scripture about his yoke being easy and his burden light, and I see that scripture in Isaiah as bringing out heavy, like heavy yokes, you know, that are hard to carry. Yeah, burdensome.

Okay, yep. Thank you. What about, someone said unhealthy relationships.

One of the things that I've worked through in times past, and this is years ago this happened, I've kind of learned that as children, school boys, school girls do this. Begins when we're young. We kind of connect the relationship with that girl over there, and the girls kind of connect the relationship with that guy over there.

It's like a, you know, and then soon that, you know, it goes to another girl, and then after it goes to another girl, and you grow up that way without some guidance and some really good, and some good teaching, youth can grow up and they become teenagers, and then soon they make, you know, deeper connections, and they start dating, and you know, they, they, they, you know, put a crush, have a crush on this person, and it might change. That person might not even know it's there, and we can end up with soul ties that are unhealthy. Soul ties is like a band that is between you and that person, and it just like, you know, it kind of, it can suck you in.

When you want to, when you come to the marriage altar, and you've got all these little soul ties linked up out there, all these little rubber bands, how can you give your whole heart to your spouse? And I've worked through those things numerous times with youth, and the hardest one to really renounce was the one they presently had, because if you don't have a place to put your heart, it feels very, very vulnerable, and so some people go, some people go through their youth, and maybe even through some of their life, always, you know, somewhere out there in an illegal way, bands of wickedness, oppression, yokes that you're bound with, but you can break those bands, you can break those relations, you can break those unhealthy soul ties simply by acknowledging that they're there, and taking them to the cross, and repenting, taking back your heart from that place. I was working with someone one time, and they were, they were tied, they were, had a soul tie with a person that was in California, and I've learned that when you break those soul ties, the other person sometimes experiences something, doesn't realize what's going on. They tell me that about the same time we were breaking that soul tie, that person in California fell down the stairs.

Another time we were working through one, and, and I warned them as we're getting down the needle to pray, I said, sometimes that person that you're bound to will actually interfere with what we're doing here, and just as we're praying, just as they were working through this, breaking this soul tie, that very person called on the phone at that very moment. Do you think these soul ties are not, don't have any, you think,

oh, there's nothing to it. No, no, no.

This is reality. These are real things, and it's bondage, it's oppression. These are yokes that we're bound, we're bound to that thing, that, that oxen cannot take the yoke off himself.

We need some help sometimes. When we enter into times of fasting and prayer, our hearts are open to the Lord. We, we become more sensitive to what the Spirit of God is saying and doing.

Isn't that what you've experienced this last couple days? Especially those of us who were together in the last two evenings. God was doing beautiful things in our hearts. We opened our hearts to the Lord, and He, He's responded.

He worked grace in our hearts. He brought conviction of sin. Breaking every yoke, it may also speak of expectations.

Someone has an expectation of me, and it becomes a yoke. It just becomes a weight to me. Um, performance.

One of the things that God brought to us the last couple days here was performance. And that can become a yoke, where you're yoked to that thing to always perform in a certain way. Maybe more on that later.

And so we have here, is it not the deal you're bred to the hungry? Focus on others. Purpose that these, the day of fasting, I'm going to focus on others. You bring the poor that are cast out to your house.

When you see the naked, you clothe him, you cover him. And you hide not yourself from your own flesh. I would really like if someone would explain that one.

Hide not yourself from your own flesh. What might that one mean? I've, I've thought about that thing a long time, but I feel like God gave me a little window today. Hide not yourself from your own flesh.

Well, some say it might mean this, and others say this. Does anyone have any thoughts about that verse? Or that phrase? Your fellow human being? Okay. Okay.

Anyone else? He said the same thing. Okay. Is there anyone else that would agree with that? No? Go ahead.

Family relations? Okay. I like what Timothy said there. That's what came to me.

Do not hide yourself. Do not hide. Do not hide yourself from your own flesh.

What happens when someone continually is in hypocrisy? They continually have to cover up, even from themselves. In a sense, they deceive themselves to the extent that they don't really even know who they are, or they can't see who they are. Hide not from your own flesh.

Like, this means, this talks about hiding. It talks about keeping things under, keeping, secret. Any other thoughts? In denial? Okay.

Yeah. It means not being honest with yourself. Any more? Yeah.

Basically, you're not honest with yourself because, like you said, you're living in that hypocrisy, and so you don't know who you really are. So, you begin to push everything away from yourself, and blame everybody else for your problems, because you're so convinced that it's not really your problem. It's somebody else, or somebody has an expectation, or somebody's holding something over your head, and they're not really.

It's you putting on your own expectations on yourself, and so you're not real, I guess. You're not willing to be real. You're not willing to be real.

Actually, God has been, God brought that up, or the Lord brought that, or say, the Spirit of God revealed some of that here last night, that there is hypocrisy here. Several things the Lord had revealed, brought to us last night was the sin of gluttony, and there was people repenting of that here. I just want to say about the struggle with overeating is especially vulnerable when you start eating after a fast, and so may God give us grace to watch over that.

But the other thing was, there was confessions of anger last night, and there was a word from the Lord that there's hypocrisy. People in the church here who are in hypocrisy, and the thing about the anger, as I talked a little bit there last night with a brother and sister about that, I thought about the anger, so I'm wondering how many people here struggle with anger? Are we family enough to raise our hands? Are we ashamed? Are we afraid to acknowledge that? I'm just wondering, how many people here, you know that you have an anger problem? Is there anyone? Put your hands up. Okay.

Have you repented of anger, and has it gone away? Why are you still an angry person if you've repented of that? What's wrong? I want to give you a few thoughts here. What triggers that anger? Control? Okay, maybe. You don't get your own way? Unmet expectations triggers strong emotions in an angry person.

Unmet expectations. Anyone else? Unclear vision or expectation of what you want. Okay.

Fear of failure. Give us some more on that one. Do you have any more on that one? Being afraid that what I expect of myself isn't going to be fulfilled because of this obstacle.

Therefore, I'm angry that I'm meeting with this hindrance to my... I'm afraid of failing. It's been a hindrance. Afraid of failure.

Okay. There was a few others. If you want a mic, let's raise your hands here.

If you have something to share. I saw a hand back here. There was a couple others here.

Any others? What triggers that response in your heart? Pain? Maybe. I would like to suggest... Go ahead, Paul. I was going to say if we see the same thing that we struggle with in another person.

You know, David got really angry when he heard the story about the guy who took the one lamb. So, sometimes if we have a deep failure in our life and we see somebody else, we get angry. Oh, okay.

That's good. I was an angry man before I got saved. But when I got saved, the power of that thing was broken.

It really was broken. But I'd like to contribute it to at least one specific thing. And that was, that is that they led me in a prayer before I got saved to give everything I had to the Lord.

You know, except you forsake your houses, and wife, and land, and children, and you know, all those things, you cannot be my disciple. And they led me in a prayer to give all of those things that meant a lot to me. Everything I had, my wife and children, my reputation.

And I gave everything to God. A day or two later when I got saved, it's like something kicked in and that anger was totally gone. I believe it has to do with those things that I'm holding on to.

My expectation of you, if you don't meet my expectation, I get angry. If my children do not perform or behave, I get angry. I might not want to call it anger.

It might just be frustration. Did I ever get angry since I'm saved? Well, I got frustrated at the billy goat one day or something like that. Children still remind me of that.

But really the power of that thing was broken. So when you get angry, it should be a sign to you that something, there's still something there that I'm holding on to. This is something that I still have holding too close to myself.

It's something I need to give to the Lord. If you get angry, I would recommend you think about what was it that triggered that thing, and then release that back to God. That's my thoughts on that one.

Any comments or thoughts on that one? Feel free. Maybe a testimony. Get the mic to him.

Anyone else? I can testify to the same thing as far as releasing everything, letting go of everything. And at that moment, the anger is broken. The power of it is gone.

That's what happened for me four years ago. Hallelujah. So I want to encourage you.

Yes, in the back. I can testify to the what you said about unmet expectations. When I was younger, I was a very angry individual.

And it was very controlled. Probably most people that knew me wouldn't have known it that I was angry most of the time. But I exploded twice that I can remember.

It was not very nice. So when I came to the Lord, I didn't have anybody to walk me through like you did. I wished for years I would have.

I would have gotten rid of a lot of garbage at one spot. But one thing that I did, I released my expectations. When I came to God, I just gave up.

I gave everything up. I had nothing left. And from that day on, whenever I can live my life with an open expectancy of what is God going to do today, what am I going to receive today, what is my life going to be like, instead of trying to live like I used to, expecting everybody to do things a certain way and expecting my life to be a certain way, as long as I can live with that openness and just living every life with open hands, there's no frustration.

There's no anger. There's nothing but a joy in what God is doing. But unfortunately, I'm human too.

So I tend to drift back into my old ways and put expectations on myself, first of all, and on other people. And that's when it becomes frustrating. And then that's where anger comes from.

So I think you're right. I think that's where it stems from. But Jesus Christ has the power to set us free.

Yes. Maybe there's someone here that that touched a chord. Your expectations of yourself and you're continually frustrated with yourself, especially in sales.

If you don't think you can sell that client or customer, believe me, I prove it to myself daily. Thank you, Robert. I feel like God dealt with me a good bit on expectations that I set for myself during this fasting time and just recognizing that in a deeper way that.

Yeah, I'm I'm I'm putting pressure on myself that God is not putting on me and that is not right. So the thing that God gave to me to to combat those expectations and pressures was the attitude of thanksgiving and worship. Those were cut right across that.

And as we're identifying some of these things, I want you to remember that it's on the third day that the resurrection power flows. When you're when you have fasted, if you fast, then in Isaiah 58, it's if you do these things, then I, God says, I will do this. This is such a powerful picture of if we do.

And the simple things we can do is clothe the the naked and feed the hungry and turn our focus away from ourselves and begin to focus on others and bless and do for others. And then we are eligible for the blessings. And what are the blessings? There's many of them.

There's 21 blessings from verse 6 to the end of the chapter that if you will do these things, there's 21 blessings pronounced on you. And you have the right to go and claim those blessings. You can claim it all, but you can claim each one.

You can claim the one that means something to you. There's basically 21 things in this chapter from verse 6 on that we are, that you are to do. And this is not a list of to-dos that you can't do.

No, this is simple. These are things that God is wanting us to turn our attention to. When we do these things, when we stop doing these things, then this blessing comes.

And if you fast, he's saying, then I'm gonna bless you this way. So as we walk through these things, remember, if you're struggling with anger, it's like we're at the end of the third day. It's like the blessings will flow.

That's how I see it. So on the third day or after you break your fast, oftentimes as we break the fast, during the fast, it's difficult. It's like, I can't, it's like I can't even connect very well.

Did anyone else have that sense this past couple days? You had a hard time connecting. You feel disconnected. Well, Tim had asked me to preach today, and I'm like, what am I supposed to preach? And I'm like, for until last night, I was like, I just, I felt disconnected in that sense, like God's not giving me anything, Tim.

Till last night. Then shall you call. Then your light will break forth at the morning.

Your health will spring forth speedily. Verse 8. Your righteousness go before you. The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call. The Lord shall answer. Wouldn't you like that? Then you will cry, and he will say, here I am.

If you take away, here's some things to do. You stop doing these things. Take away from amidst you the yoke, the putting forth of the fingers.

Stop pointing at other people. That's what that means. That's what I get out of it.

And speaking vanity, pride. If you draw out your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, you minister to those who are needy. Then your light will rise in obscurity.

Your darkness be the noon day. The Lord shall guide you continually. I love that.

That's one that I've held on to for years. The Lord shall guide you continually. Lord, we are doing these things, and I have the right to come to you and say, Lord, you promised to guide me continually, and I thank you for it.

And he continues to do that. Satisfy your soul in drought. Make fat your bones.

There's a sermon in each one of these, but I'm going to keep going. We could look at verse 13 about the Sabbath. Turn your foot away from the Sabbath.

What does that mean? Well, we've learned in the work with the refugees, the Middle Eastern people, now they sit on cushions on the floor or at low tables, and so we Americans, we sit down there, and we just, you know, stretch out kind of. We put our feet out towards those people, and they are just really offended. If I show the bottom of my foot towards them, that means I value them as much as they do something under my foot.

That means I'm telling you that you're trash. If you would take away, if you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, the Lord's day, the holy day, from doing your, so there's numerous things. You turn your foot away from the Sabbath.

You stop thinking that the Sabbath is the day of trash, or you disregard it. You stop doing your own pleasure on my holy day. I know that we're not Sabbath keepers per se, but we really are Sabbath keepers.

Christ Jesus is our Sabbath. But we have a day of the Lord. You stop doing, looking, so the weekend.

Oh, what are we going to do the weekend? Yes, we'll go to church for an hour or two Sunday morning, but I'm going to do what I want to do. The weekend is for me, for myself and I. My pleasure. Is that what God really wants? And you, what if you change from that, and you begin to call the Sabbath a delight? I'm going to look at this day as a day of delight to serve God.

The holy of the Lord, honorable, honor Him. Not doing your own ways, not finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord. This is one of the promise, this is a promise.

If you were to do this, if you were to take this one verse and hold the Sabbath like he says here, then God says, I, I believe God has seen, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord. You're going to be excited about the Lord. You will delight yourself in Him.

I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth. I mean each one of these could be a, is a message. And feed you the heritage of Jacob your father.

What might the heritage of Jacob your father be? Any thoughts? I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. Yes, Mel. Multiplication.

Okay, that's good. Your seed shall possess this land and it just spreads out and grows innumerable. That's what I see.

For the Lord, the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. I'd like to address the issue of hypocrisy here yet, if I could do that. We have in Matthew Jesus addressing the Pharisees.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. What kind of picture comes to your mind when you think of a Pharisee, a hypocrite, whitewashed tombed, arrogance and self.

Let's keep going. Teaching something and not doing it. Okay, does this happen at your business? Is this what happens at business or just specifically happen in your home? Where did it, what's the setting? In the religious setting, the church.

Yeah, Jesus is coming close to the end of his ministry. He's been tangling with these guys for two and a half, three years. Before he goes to cross, he warns about them.

He begins in Matthew 23, he begins by warning his disciples. Then spake Jesus to the multitude and to the disciples and said, Be the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.

But do not ye after their works, for they say and do not. They bind heavy burdens, grievously born, and this all and on. And so he's addressing the disciples.

He's telling them, I want you to beware. And the multitude and evidently the Pharisees were there. And he's saying, beware of these kind of people.

And down to verse 13 says, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in. As an unconverted man, I remember that verse.

I'm thinking, that must be an awful thing. Why would anyone try to stop others from going into the kingdom? And I came to realize, that's what happens in religious settings. We don't want you going outside of our religious setting, because you might leave us.

And so we try the best to keep you in that system. And in a sense we're doing. And he addresses that specific subject of closing, holding people from entering the kingdom.

I'm like, what sin could be worse than that? Woe unto you, he says. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees. You devour widows' houses for pretense, make long prayers.

You shall receive the greater damnation. What is the hypocrite's place in eternity? There's a verse in Proverbs, who can quote it? Something about, maybe it's not Proverbs. You will find your place with the hypocrites.

In hell. Something like that. It is very clear, hypocrites go to hell.

Hypocrites, those who pretend to be something they're not. Those who try to save faith. Those who try to show that there's something good.

This is what they were doing. Woe unto you blind guides. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees.

You tithe minute details. But you, and you make a big deal out of that. But you forget the weightier things.

You're focused on the little details of tithing your seeds. And while there's weightier matters that you are not taking care of. These all you have done, not leave the other undone.

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. You may clean the outside of the cup and of the platter. But within they are full of extortion, excess.

And I want to say this morning that if you are here, and you are pretending to be something. And you're pretending to be clean on the outside. You come to church with a smile.

And you can sing the songs. You can even say hallelujah. But inside you are full of excess and wickedness.

Woe unto you. Woe unto you. You blind Pharisee.

Cleanse first that is within. And then the outside. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

You are like whited sepulchres. Which indeed appear beautiful outward. But are within full of dead man's bones and full of uncleanness.

Full of dead man's bones and uncleanness. That's what's inside a sepulchre. That's what's inside the grave.

And you can make that outside of that sepulchre such a beautiful garnished tomb. Smooth and beautiful shining. But inside there's dead man's bones and uncleanness.

Is that the picture of my heart? Is that what's happening in here? Is that who I am? Woe unto you. Oh may God have mercy. What does the word woe mean? Could someone give me a picture? A description.

Woe. Forgive. No.

Warning. Curse. Stop.

Okay. Pronunciation of judgment. One of my thoughts was you're in a little boat and the waves are getting higher and higher and higher and you know you are going to die.

You're going to drown. There is no escape. There's no way to save yourself.

It's almost to that point. Woe. Woe unto you.

Job said if I be wicked. Woe unto me. The end is not good.

The end is destruction. The end is eternal damnation. Woe unto you hypocrites.

If you're here this morning and you're a pretender, I encourage you. Recognize that God has made a way for you to escape before you die. Woe unto the wicked Isaiah says.

Woe unto them that draw iniquitous cords of vanity. Woe unto them that call good evil and evil good. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes.

Woe unto rebellious children. Woe unto you rebellious children. There's not much hope at all for a rebel and we know they can repent but the Bible says woe unto you.

Woe unto him that says to his father what have you begotten or to the woman what have you brought forth. Woe to us if we don't honor our parents. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.

And Paul said woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. And revelations we have. I beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voice of the trumpet which is yet to sound.

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea for the devil is come down to you having great wrath because he knows he has but a short time. There's not much hope to those people. It's almost like destruction is upon you.

Woe unto them. When I think of Jesus' strong words to the Pharisees and hypocrites, the Pharisees and the scribes there, there's no other group of people anywhere in the Bible that such strong language is pronounced against them. And I would encourage anyone here, deliver yourself from these things.

Some of those things, if you're a pretender, if you are putting on a front, if you're putting on a show, there's probably some root issues there, but the grace of God is available to deal with those things. And we're in the third day. We're after the third day.

We're at a place of receiving resurrection power. We're at a place where the grace of God is available to deal with those things. Wouldn't you like to be different? Wouldn't you like to be changed? That means you have to become vulnerable.

That means you have to, in the face of shame, face it and deal with it. Father, we come in the name of Jesus. We're so grateful the way you've been working in our hearts the last few days.

Thank you, Lord for your ministry of grace. Thank you, Father, for the Word of the Lord, the hope that while we yet live, there is hope. Thank you, Father.

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