

Compass Church
Home Group Outline
May 16, 2010
Isaiah 58:10

Introduction

The following is taken from a sermon by John Piper on October 6, 2002.

The point of Isaiah 58 is this: Piety that does not produce a passion for God-exalting social justice and practical mercy is worthless. Or to put it positively: God promises that we will break forth like the dawn if our piety produces a passion for social justice and practical mercy.

There is a well-known sermon that many of you have heard about the pain of Good Friday turning into the joy of Easter, called "Sunday's comin'!" The refrain occurs over and over, "It's Friday, but Sunday's comin'!" Well, we need another sermon to become well-known, namely, "It's Sunday, but Monday's comin'!" We're here with our voices lifted and our heads bowed and our prayers rising! What does God think of it? You'll find out tomorrow: "It's Sunday, but Monday's comin'!" Will the piety of Sunday produce a passion for justice on Monday? That's the question of Isaiah 58.

Isaiah preaches justice to the people of God, and Jesus displays justice to the people of God and suffers to cleanse and empower the people of God, so our piety will produce a passion for social justice and practical mercy. If it doesn't, our piety is empty. And if it does – if our faith and love and devotion to Christ do produce a passion freeing the oppressed, and feeding the hungry, and housing the homeless, and clothing the naked, and putting away belittling talk and demeaning gestures – then, O Bethlehem, you will break forth like the dawn.

Question

Briefly discuss Piper's point that it's possible for our piety to be empty. What does empty piety look like? What have you seen in your own life or in the lives of others that shows a passion for social justice and practical mercy?

Closer Look

1. Read *Isaiah 58:1-14*. In what ways did the people of God seem to do the right thing in verses 1-3? How did they spoil it in verses 3-5?
2. How is personal spiritual renewal related to seeking justice for the poor? See verses 8-14. Which do you think comes first?
3. What are the five kinds of human need addressed in this passage?
4. What could your Home Group or Compass Church do today to address these needs around us?
5. Note the juxtaposition of the "yoke of oppression" and the "pointing finger" in verse 9. Where should God's people be looking to discover and remove oppression?

6. If we direct an attitude of self-denial toward social action, where will our “pointing finger” be likely to point first personally? For Compass?
7. What good things happen when we follow God’s direction regarding extending justice and mercy to the needy around us?
8. What other points from the sermon need to be discussed at this point?

Application

1. What aspect of this study helps you grow in your knowledge and worship of God?
2. Which “religious activities” do you find yourself just going through the motions?
3. What one thing can you do this week to fulfill God’s call to help the poor?

A thought to take home (or for additional discussion in your group)

The following is taken from a sermon by John Piper on October 6, 2002.

When we read Isaiah’s prophetic indictment of God’s people 2,700 years ago and his call for justice, we hear not just as Jews would have heard it then, but as Christians hear it now on this side of Jesus Christ the promised Messiah. He came to bring it with his power, and he came to buy with his blood. And therefore, when we hear Isaiah call us to do justice and to love mercy and keep this in mind: Christ has come and shown this justice with his life so we could see it, and bought this justice by his death so that we can do it.