

RESCUE SUNDAY

God Requires Us to Act Justly



GOD REQUIRES US TO ACT JUSTLY

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Study 4:

God Requires Us to Act Justly

There is great joy when we generously extend our lives into the lives of others where there is a need. In fact, the Apostle Paul, in his parting words to the Elders in Ephesus, said, In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

God is generous and desires us to overflow with Godly generosity, especially toward the weak. God wants us not to miss out on the rich Kingdom joy that overflows through our heads, hearts, and hands, aligning with God's movement toward the vulnerable and oppressed.

Here is a testimony from a Destiny Rescue agent whose head, heart and hands aligned with God's movement toward the exploited;

Before I worked at Destiny Rescue, I was an assistant pastor at my local church. In 2014, God called me to be a part of the rescue team in Cambodia. I believe God chose me to be a part of this because he wants to see many girls who are in darkness come to see the light.

This is similar to what God did for me. I came from a bad life when I was younger and before I became a Christian. I was involved with many parts of the dark life, like drug business and gangs that caused trouble to other people and society.

Through God's grace, He saved me and transformed my life as his witness. Also, through God's grace, He blessed me. I see many lives that are in the darkness; especially the girls that are being exploited and forced to do what they don't want to do.

In six years with Destiny Rescue, God used me to rescue many girls from the darkness and now they can live an honourable life. I Thank God for His grace for the Cambodian people.

Thanks everybody in the world for your prayers and sharing your money and time to devote to Destiny Rescue. May God bless you all.

-Chetra – Rescue Agent*

DISCUSS:

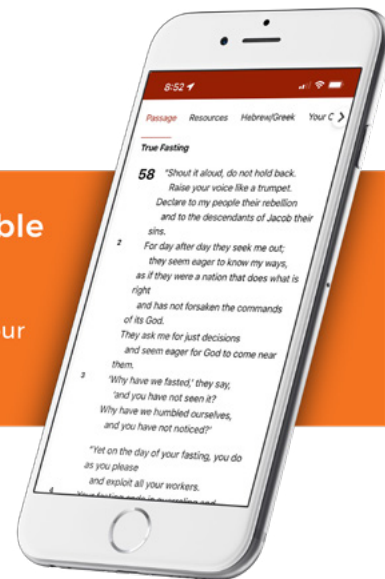
- In our Christian practice today, where do you see a disconnect between practising our faith and pursuing justice?
- When are you tempted to do the same?

Centuries have passed since the exodus, and the Israelites are now established as two nations in the promised land after a civil war. God sends prophets to call Israel to repentance for breaking their covenant with God. The conditional language that Isaiah uses in this chapter echoes the blessings and curses that come from obeying or disobeying the law (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28).

The Sabbath is a day of rest, where Israelites stop work to remember and celebrate God. The rest is intended for everyone in the community: their families, their servants, the animals, and the foreigners (Deuteronomy 5). However, there is a growing disconnect between what Israel believes and their spiritual practices, especially concerning the treatment of the poor.

READ:
Isaiah 58

**Grab your Bible
and open to
Isaiah 58**
or look it up on your
mobile device



DISCUSS:

- What is the difference between the peoples' and God's understanding of fasting?
- How do you see God's shalom breaking through in this passage, and how does it happen?

Shalom is a biblical word that represents what we long for in our broken world—when things are as they should be. It embodies a sense of wholeness, completion, and peace in a material, physical, relational, and moral sense. Striving for shalom means advocating for justice and righteousness on personal, communal, and systemic levels.

- What would it look like for shalom to break through in our world today? What would change for you personally and your community?

Additional questions;

- What contrasts do you see in the passage?
- What conditional statements do you notice? Who benefits from them?
- In verses 3-4, the people ask if their fasting and prayer counts for anything before God. What does this reveal about their understanding of the purpose of religious practices?
- What does God desire of his people? What will happen as a result?
- What inspires you in this text and why?
- What challenges you in this text and why?

SUMMARY + REFLECTION:

God sends prophet after prophet, challenging the people of God for oppressing the innocent, mistreating the poor, cheating, and having a bias in the courts and ignoring the plight of the widow, the orphan, the foreigner (the marginalised in society). The people of God are missing the point, committed to religious rituals but simultaneously living in a way that contradicts God's character. The separation of faith from justice stirs God's anger. It is tempting for us to do the same. The passage paints a picture of what could be when the two come together. It is more than just the sum of two parts. Faith is profoundly spiritual and embodied. Pursuing justice is a spiritual practice that leads to a deeper relationship with God; it leads to freedom, life, joy, and strength to continue following God. Shalom breaks through, and God's people shine like a light in the darkness.

- Take a minute to pause and listen; how might God be speaking to you?

APPLY:

Spiritual Practice: Fasting

Fasting is letting go of an appetite to make space for God. It's an opportunity to consider what might be taking up too much space in our lives, get rid of it for a period of time, and intentionally fill that space with God instead. As the passage describes, our fasting is other-focused rather than self-focused. Commit to fasting from something and actively seek shalom for one week.

Fasting	Seeking Shalom By
Food: 1 meal/day	Buying 1 meal/day for someone else
Money: Unnecessary spending	Bless a person or an organisation that works for God's justice with an act of financial generosity.
Social media	Repost a link or story from an organisation that seeks God's justice in our world.

Reflect + Share

Journal your responses to these questions, then share them with your group.

- This week, I will fast from: _____
- I will intentionally seek shalom by: _____
- How is God speaking to you? _____