

**Sermon Series:** The Great Emergence

**Sermon Title:** Rebuild

**Sermon Text:** Isaiah 58:1-12

**Small Group Reminders:** Be sure to review other events @ NWC.FYI

## Pre-Discussion Questions:

When you met last week, you should have shared with your group at least one action step you would take. **How did you do?**

## Icebreaker Questions:

As best you can remember, what were the most important things you were taught to do when you became a believer? Or if you were raised in a Christian home, what were the practices that defined your understanding of what it meant to be a Christian? (Church attendance, prayer, staying out of trouble, conservative politics, acts of service, etc.)

Read this week's **Sermon in a Sentence:** "God's nature is to give himself away to those who can never repay him. There is no clearer evidence of the presence of God in a person's life than a replication of that same behavior." John N. Oswalt

## Discussion Questions:

- REVIEW:** If needed, briefly run through the bullet points of Sunday's message. (See other side.)
  - What did God teach you through the message this weekend? Any personal insights coming out of Sunday's message.
- DISCUSS**
  - What do you think the reputation of Northway is in our community? Do we have one? Should we?
  - Rodney said, "The authenticity of your worship on Sunday is proven in your life on Monday." Discuss what you think he meant.
  - Read James 2:14-18. How does it relate to Isaiah 58:1-5?
  - What are the physical benefits of living out your faith God's way? Go phrase by phrase through Isaiah 58:8-10.
- PRACTICE:**
  - Continue preparing for your Great Emergence - even as a Small Group.
  - It's not enough to be stirred by a message like this. Action is required! What steps will you and your Small Group take to get engaged in being a Restorer of Life? Think through the categories of people listed in today's message. Consider the groups Northway already partners with. Make a plan for engagement!
    - People groups mentioned: Oppressed. Orphans - foster kids. Hungry, homeless, naked. Disrespected. Broken homes. The sick. Prisoners. De-churched.
    - Northway Partners: Interfaith of The Woodlands; Compassion United; PACN; Acres of Hope - Uganda

## Application/Reflection

- Write down the sermon in a sentence.
- Write down and share with the group at least one action step you'll take this week.
- Write down one person's name from your group (Make sure each person has at least one person, not in the same household), and one thing you could pray for and be intentional throughout the week to pray for them.

## This Week: Rebuild (Isaiah 58)

This study is not just about what God wants to do “for” us and “to” us, it’s also about what God wants to do “through” us. This is where our reputation will be found.

### • The people of God were upset with Him for not noticing all of their religious acts.

- “Why have we fasted, but you have not seen? We have denied ourselves, but you haven’t noticed!” Isaiah 58:3 CSB
- But **God was not impressed with their religiosity because their hearts were still not where he wanted them to be.** Though they seemed to get all the steps of their religious practice right, they were still not doing the works of God’s hands and heart.
- [3b] “It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. [4] What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. Isaiah 58:3-4 NLT
- **The authenticity of your worship on Sunday is proven in your life on Monday.** The attitudes and behaviors of God’s people out in the “real world” didn’t line up with their religious fasting. Bosses oppressing their workers, treating them unfairly. People arguing and fighting.
- You can dress up a sinner to look like a saint, but at the end of the day, God will always judge the heart. And it is out of the abundance of the heart that our mouth speaks and our hands and feet work.
- Will the piety of Sunday produce a passion for justice on Monday? This is the real question of Isaiah 58.

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### • So what did God expect of His people?

- Verses 6-10 outline for us the social justice that Isaiah - and Jesus - are passionately concerned about. [6] *Isn't this the fast I choose: To break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke? [7] Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to ignore your own flesh and blood? [9b] If you get rid of the yoke among you, the finger-pointing and malicious speaking, [10] and if you offer yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted one...* Isaiah 58:6-7, 9b-10 CSB
- **1. Free the oppressed.** This parallels the Isaiah 61 passage that Jesus quoted from in Luke 4 in one of his earliest teachings in the synagogue: *The Spirit of the Lord is on me... He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives...to set free the oppressed, Luke 4:18 CSB*
  - This is about standing in and standing up for those whom society has diminished their value, perhaps forgotten or pushed them aside, taken away their liberties or silenced their voice. From unborn children, to orphans and foster kids, from racial prejudice and oppression to the homeless living under the bridges, from those with special needs mentally and physically to the forgotten widow tucked away in a dilapidated nursing home, this is where God’s people are called to step in, step up, and speak out.
- **2. Feed the hungry. 3. House the homeless. 4. Clothe the naked.**
  - In this challenge of feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, and clothing the naked, God is saying that helping the poor and outcast is more important than helping oneself. After all, *what good is fasting if we wouldn't give what we would eat to others?*
  - There’s just no getting around it: **God expects his people to be involved in acts of practical mercy.**
- **5. Treat all people with respect.** ...quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people's sins... Isaiah 58:9 MSG
  - Instead of pointing our fingers, getting worked up into fits of anger and judgmentalism, let your heart be reshaped so you can be a part of the solution for those who genuinely need compassion and help.
  - Help the ones you can, whenever you can, from a heart of compassion and love. Ultimately, it’s a matter of respect. Valuing people not based on social status or skin color or worldly success and failures, but valuing them as God sees them.
- “If they want to deprive themselves, let them do it for the sake of the oppressed, the needy, and the helpless, not for the sake of their own religiosity. God’s nature is to give himself away to those who can never repay him. There is no clearer evidence of the presence of God in a person’s life than a replication of that same behavior.” [John N. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah]

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### • The positive consequences of living this kind of life in partnership with his Right-setting - Beginning in Isaiah 58:8-10

- **Our theme verse for today - This is where our reputation is found:** *And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. Isaiah 58:12 ESV*
- **Our reputation is to be Restorers of Life.** Restoration to the helpless and hopeless. Restoration to the oppressed and voiceless. Restoration to the Prodigal sons of our own day.
- *Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Rescue the poor and needy; save them from the power of the wicked.” Psalm 82:3-4 CSB*
- 34% of Americans are classified as de-churched: people who were once active in the church but have not attended a church service in the last 6 months.
- Who will be the ones to partner with Christ to (Luke 4) preach good news to the poor, To set free the oppressed. Who will reach out to the least of these (Matt. 25) and feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, invite strangers into your home, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the prisoner?
- **Some of you...** will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes. Isaiah 58:12 NLT
- Will it be some of us? Who will it be? Who will tell people that God can take their brokenness, the shambles of their life, and shape it into something beautiful; that God is the God of restoration and he loves them deeply and can give them new life? That he can put their marriages back together - that he can rebuild their homes? And who will leave the 99 and go after the one? Who will lovingly restore our brothers and sisters who have fallen away?
- *I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” Isaiah 6:8 NKJV*