

## ***Do Justly: Being Zealous for Good Works that Exalt Jesus (Titus 2:14)***

Micah 6:8 is a well-known passage that gives, in my opinion, one of the best summaries of the kingdom lifestyle in the Word of God. It says, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.” This is one of the best summaries of the kingdom lifestyle in the whole Bible. I would put that right next to the ultimate one when Jesus said the great commandment is to love God and to love people.

The Holy Spirit is calling the Church in this hour to be workers of justice and to be lovers of mercy; He is asking us to do it with a spirit of humility. We cannot operate in a spirit of triumphalism, or with a spirit of, “Hey, are we not really something? Look what we are doing.” We cannot draw attention to ourselves.

These are the issues that the Holy Spirit is prepared to bless. A people who would commit themselves to these values: to do justly, to do it with a passion for mercy, and with a humble spirit. When we stand before the Lord at the judgment seat on the last day, these are the issues He is going to talk to us about.

### **WE ARE CALLED TO DO WORKS OF JUSTICE AND TO LOVE MERCY**

It is as if Jesus is saying, “This is what I am interested in. I was not interested so much in how big your ministry was, how much money you had, or how famous you were. What I am interested in mostly is: did you do justly? Were you workers of justice? Did you truly love mercy?” Of course, that is, loving mercy on His terms. There is a humanistic mercy that is in opposition to Jesus’ mercy. We will look at that in a few moments. “Did you walk in humility?”

### **WE ARE CALLED TO BE ZEALOUS AND DO WORKS OF JUSTICE THAT EXALT JESUS**

Paragraph two. Titus 2:14, Paul the apostle speaks, and he is really touching the same theme using different language. Titus 2:14: “who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” Here Paul talked about Jesus redeeming us, so He could purify for Himself His own special people. The people would become special to His heart. Out of the revelation of how special they are to Him, they would become zealous for good works. These would be good works that would exalt Jesus because they are not just works to be helpful, just in and of themselves, although it is good to be helpful. These were works that flowed out of the revelation that we are special to God. I am talking about the whole Body of Christ, a billion people in the earth.

When that revelation touches us of how dear we are to God, it awakens in us zeal. It is zeal to bring this goodness to other people. We have freely received His passion, and the infinitely great God says, “You are dear and special to My heart.”

Of course, we look at our sinfulness, brokenness, and failure, and say, “Really? We are that dear to you? We are that special to you? You are that good? You are that kind?” It awakens in us a zeal that others would participate in this great goodness. God wants us to love Him and worship Him, and He wants others to come in as well. He wants the others to be a part of that great worship team. Others are called into the great end-time harvest as worshipers of God.

## **HIS SPECIAL PEOPLE: AN INFINITELY GREAT GOD TREASURES US**

It makes us zealous for good works. When we know that we are special, good works are not a burden, but we have a passion for them. We see good works as the way of communicating that goodness to others, and bringing them into the great goodness that is in God's heart. Being zealous for good works is more than just casually doing them a little bit here and a little bit there. It is more than being helpful to a neighbor here and there when they need help saying, "Yes, I will help you." When you leave, you wave, and say, "God bless." That is actually valid. That is real. Being zealous for good works means being intentional about them. It means being committed to people and not the occasional helpful hand.

We are talking about taking hold of the vision to have our life deeply committed to bring the good works of God to others. It is costly. It is inconvenient. This is easy to sign up for, but it is hard to do in a consistent way. Often you feel that you are not in the mood, you are running late, you feel a little late, and have pressures on you. We still do these good works. To be zealous for good works is something very specific; this means that it has a hold of our heart. Paul said that when we know we are special to God, it awakens this zeal for good works in us.

## **WE ARE CALLED TO MAKE GOD'S REPUTATION KNOWN AMONG UNBELIEVERS**

Paragraph D. Peter comes and talks about the same theme. He starts off with talking, calling the saints, those who are special to God. He said in 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." You are God's own special people. The thing God wants you to do, number one, is proclaim His praise, or praiseworthiness. You are going to tell the nations, starting with your neighbors, that He is worthy of praise. You are going to proclaim His greatness, is what that's really saying.

1 Peter 2:12: "having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." Peter is saying that when you do that, you are proclaiming the greatness of our infinitely great God. But you are going to run into opposition. The opposition will be the unbelievers who talk about God. They will roll their eyes, and then they will speak against you. They will speak against you as an evildoer. They will not buy into your testimony saying, "God is great. He is worthy of praise. He saved me. He changed my life." They will say, "Yeah. Whatever. You are a fraud; you are a fake, and you are a hypocrite." They will not just say your message is wrong; they will call you an evildoer.

Look at verse 12: while you are giving this testimony, they will speak against you. They take a stand, and they put energy in it. They defame your character. They will not buy into your message saying, "So your life has changed. You used to be immoral. Now, you are not. We are immoral. OK, so that means that you are good. We are bad. We get it. You are a fake. You are a fraud. We do not believe anything you are about."

Just so you do not feel picked on, this has been happening to the saints for 2,000 years all around the world. When we proclaim the goodness, the praiseworthiness, the glory of God, and how He has changed us, it puts off other people who are not changed. It feels like we are putting them down. They are irritated and say, "You know God, and you are good. We do not know God. We are bad. You are going to heaven. We are going to Hell. You are the good team. We are the bad team. We do not buy into any of it."

I understand it from a human point of view. Peter clearly warns us that they will speak against you as an evildoer. Even if they persecute you, they will see your good works that glorify God. 1 Peter 2:15: “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” Peter is calling us to two things.

### **PROCLAIMING GOD’S PRAISES**

Number one. We proclaim His praise. We give the message, but we understand that in the giving the message, the message is not automatically received. A few receive it, but most do not. As a matter of fact, they resist the message. Some of them resist with lies about you. It is as if Peter consoles us, “Do not worry because there’s a back-up plan to the proclamation called doing good works. When you do these good works, it will silence the people who oppose over time.”

Let’s look at each one of these phrases. Number one: proclaiming the praises of Him. That is our first mandate, to speak of the praiseworthiness—the beauty of Jesus. We are called to make His glory known and to talk about the glory of the infinitely great God. This is our passion: to make Him known. What is amazing is that God entrusts His reputation to His people.

It is as if we cry out, “Lord, you remember that we are weak and broken people. We are flawed. Yet, You are entrusting Your reputation to us?” He does not do it entirely, but He does in part.

God says, “Yes. If you proclaim the truth about Me, back it up with good works, back it with a lifestyle of loving people in a way that those in the community can actually observe with their eyes—not just hear the story, but observe with their eyes. If you will stay steady, many will glorify God, and change their position of animosity. They will repent, and come into the kingdom.”

It is amazing that God would entrust His reputation in part to His people. When we obey and do this, it is more than just obeying in the sense of abstaining from moral scandals. Some say, “Well, I do not give into the drunkenness, immorality, and I do not slander people. I did it the abstaining thing.”

### **GOOD WORKS OBSERVED BY UNBELIEVERS**

Peter would say, “No. It is more than just avoiding bad stuff. You need to go the next step, and do the positive. You have to be involved in your community on a regular basis in good works. You have to do justly, and you have to love mercy.” Paragraph two. The unbelievers, over time, will observe the good works. They will not immediately. They might see them, but they will assume it is some scheme to win them over. The unbelievers will say, “Yes. We have heard about this. You want to do something good for us. Well, let’s wait, and we will see. When the pressure is on, the obstacles rise up, will you stay with it? Probably not.” They assume it is a scheme to promote how good we are to them. They do not buy it at all at first.

If you stay with it, it changes the way that they perceive us and think, because believers are to be known by what we do—not to just be known by what we do not do. We are not to be known simply because we avoid pornography, immorality, and drunkenness. Nobody is going to listen to us because we avoid those things. It is important that we avoid them. That is not why our neighbors say, “Wow. I want to obey God now—because you are not living in immorality and drunkenness. That is great. I must get saved.” That is not how they do the logic. They say, “So, you are probably doing it in secret anyway. I do not even believe you.” What happens is

unbelievers are accusing God. They are accusing God of being indifferent. They are accusing God of being distant and not caring for the hurting needs in the world. They say, “God is not interested or concerned with us.”

The Lord says to us, “I have entrusted part of My reputation to you. By your good works, the good works will change the way they view Me. Not just by your moral behavior in your inward life. You actually have to do things outwardly. The good works will change the way they view Me. They will glorify Me, instead of curse Me.”

### **GOD IS GLORIFIED BY GOOD WORKS BECAUSE THEY TESTIFY OF HIS POWER**

Paragraph three. To observe good works over time is the key. It is not for three months or three years. It is for ten or twenty years. It is good works with a right spirit—with a love of mercy and with a spirit of humility. Stick with it—that is what it takes. When they see this, what they conclude is that God’s transforming power is real. All of us by nature are selfish: everybody is. Just look at that little two year old: nobody taught that little guy to say, “Give me everything.” He was born with the urge to say, “Give it all to me; it is mine. Give it now, or else.”

We are all born with an instinctive drive for selfishness. We must transcend, or overcome that urge for selfishness in order to actually sacrificially love other people, and do it consistently. I am not talking about giving just for a weekend, or for three months; we are called to give consistently. The unbeliever says, “Something is happening. They can stick with it for a while. How can they keep doing this? It is costing them time. It is costing them money, and we are accusing them, the whole time that they are doing it. They will not stop. We go home when we are done with our work, and we do as much comfort and pleasure as we can. They get off work, and go serve other people. What is this?”

Well, the answer is: it is people who have a connectedness to God. They know they are His special people. Christians are so moved by God’s desire to bring others into this reality that the desire to bring it to others is actually greater than their own natural drive and instinct for selfishness, comfort, and pleasure. When people do that time after time over years in the face of adversity, the unbelievers change their position. Not all of them, but many of them.

### **UNBELIEVERS ARE OFTEN CRITICAL OF BELIEVERS**

Number four: Peter said in 1 Peter 2:12, “They will speak against you as evil doers.” They are naturally suspicious. They are naturally critical and prejudice against people who say they know God, and their life is not changed. It implies that they do not know God, if their life is not changed. The message is already offensive to many people. They accuse the Church of being no different than they are. When the Church tries to act differently, they do not buy it. Peter said in verse 15 (paraphrased): “It is God’s plan to put to silence foolish men by sticking with the good works.” They will change their view about God. They will say, “God is committed to the world. He is not distant and indifferent. He is actually involved in lives, moving through people.”

### **WORKS OF JUSTICE SILENCE ACCUSATION AND ARGUMENTS**

Beloved, I assure you of this: works of justice will triumph over the arguments and the accusations of the enemy over time. The works of justice will ultimately silence the critics. Again, this will not happen in a month or a year, because you could be doing that as a prayer room strategy. John the Baptist, the first forerunner, is an inspiration to us because He was proclaiming the coming of Jesus before Jesus came. The Lord is raising up

people who proclaim the second coming of Jesus. We look at John, and we say, “John, we are inspired by your dedication, and we want to be inspired and instructed by your message. What did you tell the people?”

### **JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARED THE WAY OF THE COMING MESSIAH**

There is only one place where John’s message is laid out in the New Testament. Here in Luke 3. The other place we get John’s message is in Isaiah 40 where the prophet Isaiah was describing the message of the forerunners. Here in Luke 3, we see what it is that John told the people who were responding to Him. In a sentence, John the Baptist told the people, “The Messiah is coming, and if you want to prepare for His coming, live lives of justice and mercy.” That is what He said in essence. There are three groups in Luke 3 who ask, “What are we supposed to do?” To each of the three groups, John told them a different application of the same principle.

In essence, John said, “If you are going to prepare for the coming of the Lord, you need to do justly, love mercy, and walk in humility.” He took the message of Micah 6—the verse we started with—in verse 8. He broke it down and applied it. Luke 3:10-11: “So the people asked him, saying, “What shall we do then?” He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.” In verse 10, the general group, the multitudes basically said, “What do we do?”

John answered, “If you have two tunics, or two coats, give one away. If you have extra food, give it.”

They say, “No, we want some really heavy duty insight.”

He answered, “If you have two coats, give one away.”

They say, “Let’s be practical, Jesus.”

### **THE FOUNDATION AND RELEASE OF JUSTICE IS IN NIGHT-AND-DAY PRAYER**

John answered, “That is how you prepare.” When you have two coats and give one away, there are a whole lot of things that happen in your heart in the process of hearing the message and giving the coat away. Notice that all of us in this room probably have five or ten coats, and probably none of us have given one away. Maybe one of you has when it got old. There is a huge gap between hearing the message, and heart processes of actually doing it. There will be lots of reasoning, lots of checks, and lots of thought processes going on. Of course, Jesus knew that. The tax collectors said, “What do we do?”

Luke 3:13: “And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’” He warns them, “Do not collect more money than you are supposed to.” The tax collectors knew the system. They knew how much was owed. It was a complicated system. The common man did not know if they were paying five percent, or ten percent. They did not really know how it worked. They just know that if the tax collector said that they were wrong, they got in trouble. The tax collectors had nobody who knew all the details besides them.

It is as if Jesus said, “Tax collectors said that it’s a good job. Here is the deal: just because the others do not know the intricate details, don’t make decisions in a way that extract money from people beyond that which is right.” Not just in tax collecting, but in every area of our lives. This takes more than just hearing the message—it requires actually translating that in our lives. When you sell something, sell it for the fair price. If the guy is in a difficult position, do not take advantage of it. Do what is just. Do not do what is expedient, and what you can

get away with. In our culture, the value is this: if we can cheat people out of a little money by some wheeling and dealing, that is something that we consider skill.

Jesus said, “Do the right deal. Not even the deal they are willing to take. Do the right one.”

These tax collectors say, “Oh man! That is pressure. We have to think this thing through 1,000 times.” That one commitment to live that way would require 1,000 heart processes to walk this out over the years. Jesus warns them not to use their authority to intimidate, or to do their own thing. Only use your authority to bring order and goodness. Do not accuse falsely, or do things for bribes. It is as if Jesus is warning them, “Do not use your authority, police force, business, or ministry in a way that intimidates so you can get your own agenda done. Do not do things that gain a little money on the side. Don’t change the story a little bit.” That is called false accusation. Jesus had a pretty straightforward message. Of course, it was about justice and mercy.

### **WE WILL NEVER SUBSTITUTE PRAYER FOR WORKS OF JUSTICE, OR VICE VERSA**

Paragraph E. One of our primary, foundational verses for IHOP–KC is that God will release justice in response to night-and-day prayer. Luke 18:1-8: “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ Then the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?’”

Jesus said it. It is interesting that Jesus is adding to what Micah the prophet said in 6:8: “Do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” Jesus came along and said, “OK, let’s look at this command to do justly. Cry out for justice night and day. That is part of doing justice.”

### **THE FOUNDATION OF NIGHT-AND-DAY PRAYER FUELS THE JUSTICE MOVEMENT**

Jesus brought a whole new insight on the commandment to do justly. He was not undermining the need to do works of justice. He was adding to it a foundation of prayer, so that the works of justice would have their ultimate impact. This was a new idea: that the works of justice would come forth from a lifestyle of prayer and the cry for justice. When we cry for justice in intercession, we are in position for the power of God to be released on the works of justice.

There are humanitarian movements and even some movements in the Church who are happy to do works of justice, and that is enough. What Jesus has promised us is that there can be the power of God while we are doing the works of justice. I mean, here we are ministering to the sick, meeting their needs, their economic needs, and practical, medical needs. What if you could lay hands on them, and they get healed? That is better than getting medical care for them.

It is as if Jesus said, “If you add the element of night-and-day prayer, your works of justice will have power dimension in them over time.” The power of God moves even now. I am saying there will be increasing power. You are talking to the man who is oppressed, down, and out. You are giving an ear and compassionately listening to his story, so he does not feel alone. What if you had the power to cast the devil out that is

oppressing him. You are not just standing with him in tenderness and compassion, but you are actually getting rid of the demon.

Jesus said, “Cry out for justice, for a power dimension to be released.” That is what we do with intercession, but then there is another issue. Because when we cry out to God, there is not only intercession, “God break in with power;” it is important to realize that there is also worship, “I love you.” When we have a prayer life, a worship part of our life, then our heart is connected to the Lord, so that we are not burnt out in the ministry of the works of justice. One of the big downsides of people getting really zealous for good works is that they burn out. When they do the good works, the people are not grateful more times than not. There is strife, debates, and set backs—“Oh! I do not even want to do it.” If we are connected to Jesus, we can actually sustain the works of justice from the heart level.

If we are crying out in intercession, there is a power dimension that the Lord adds to the works of justice. Jesus had it right. Jesus had it right when He said, “Cry out for justice.” That is the foundation of doing works of justice. A lot of people in the Church do not look at that part. Of course, the people in the world do not look at that part either. We want to take this thing at face value. We want to do justly—the prayer end of justice, which is critical; the good works end of justice, which must go together with the prayer. We are not to substitute one for the other.

We are not to ignore our prayer life related to justice in order to do the works. We are not to ignore the works because of our prayer life. We cannot substitute one for the other. They are both vital dimensions because we want a power dimension in our justice works. We want healings to break forth in a greater level. Of course, there are healings now, but there is a greater release and breakthrough for the people who cry out. There is a new measure. It is not an issue of healing now, or healing then. The measure increases over time. It is not just that. The heart connection with the Holy Spirit is critical to sustaining a life of justice and of good works. A lot of people can do it for three or five years, but they cannot do it for three decades because they burn out. They are doing it disconnected to Jesus. Though they love Him, they are too busy to connect with Him.

Jesus, as always, was totally right. Jesus is saying, “Trust Me. Cry out for justice. Do not think you are bigger than that. But, do not limit it to only to crying out. Do the works.” There are two parts of doing justly. Crying out for it, and then doing the good works.

#### **IHOP–KC: 24/7 PRAYERS FOR JUSTICE AND 24/7 WORKS OF JUSTICE**

Paragraph I. I am just kind of signaling a little bit ahead of time. We are coming up next month to our ten-year anniversary on September 19, 2009. We are going to have a four-day celebration. On the night of the actual tenth anniversary, I am going to share a vision. Our leadership team has been working on it for some months. The Lord has given us a lot of understanding of what He is willing to do with us in the realm of works for justice. We are going to increase our justice ministry and outreach ministry in a very dramatic and significant way—ten-fold. Here is our commitment that we are going to make together: I am just kind of getting you ready for a month. So you can think about it, and pray about it. We are going to cast the vision for a lot of areas of justice that we are going to be involved in within the city and nations: stopping abortion, adoption, children, orphans, widows, the poor, and evangelism.

## **PRAYER FOR JUSTICE AND WORKS OF JUSTICE BELONG TOGETHER**

Our commitment is this: we want to combine the twenty-four hour cry for justice with a twenty-four hour works of justice until the Lord returns. That is going to be our commitment as we say, “Lord, by your grace, we want to commit to continue the twenty-four hour cry, but we want to combine twenty-four hour works of justice. Not for a year, not for a decade, but until You return by the grace of God.”

Having said that, that is exciting to say. However, that is a really challenging lifestyle for people. We have a lot of things that we are going to share. For the people who commit to this, it is going to cut into their play time. A lot of folks have more play time than they need; we are not going to take it out of our prayer time. We are going to take it out of our play time, not our prayer time.

There are some of the folks in the room now, and I want them to feel honored in reality. We have been doing works of justice for the whole ten years. There has been evangelism, healings, and visiting the poor and needy. There have been some hundreds who have been steady for years and years. In the last five years, there have been evangelism teams, healing teams, prophecy teams, and feeding the poor nearly daily. It has been going on. To those couple hundred of people, I want to say, “Thank you.” Meaning, I don’t want to say, “IHOP–KC is now going forward,” and then they think, “What? What we did does not matter in the history of IHOP–KC.”

No, it really does. We are going to, by the grace of God, make it a ten-fold effort and get the entire community involved in this together. It will be exciting, but it will be challenging because the Lord is saying, “I want you to do justly. I want there to be a twenty-four hour cry for justice, and I want you to combine it with twenty-four hour works of justice. I will be with you.”

## **ISAIAH 58: WORKS OF JUSTICE WITH LOVE FOR MERCY**

Roman numeral II. Isaiah 58. This is the premier chapter in the whole Bible on the subject of justice with prayer and fasting. If you are a prayer-and-fasting-justice guy, Isaiah 58 is absolutely crucial for you to understand. It is the main chapter in the Bible about the prayer movement—how fasting and prayer relate to justice.

Paragraph A. Isaiah 58 gives us practical ways to do works of justice with mercy. Isaiah points out the errors that the nation of Israel had at a time when they were putting a lot of time and energy into seeking God.

Paragraph B. Isaiah 58:3, “‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’ ‘In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exploit all your laborers.’” They are troubled because they are praying and fasting, but they do not think God hears their prayers. It starts off in Isaiah 58:1: “Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah starts off a little bit negatively. God says, “Isaiah, tell My people their sin and their transgression.” These were people Isaiah lived with. This is a problem. This is not as if he just sent an email to the White House. He lived with these guys. Isaiah said, “I have heard from God.”

They ask, “Good, what did He say?”

Here is what God said: “They seek Me daily”—that is prayer meetings. “They delight to know my ways”—this is Bible study, as they are searching the ways of God in the Scripture. “They take delight in approaching God”—they love the presence of God. They delight to search out His ways. They delight to approach Him. This is really quite good, but they stopped short, and they did not do it with a right attitude.

If you read Isaiah 58:2 and left it there, it is a good lifestyle in terms of a foundational relationship with God. Seek Him daily, delight in studying the Bible, and delight in the presence of God. Sounds good to me. Isaiah is going to point out in a few moments where their attitude was wrong, and they did not follow through with works of justice in their seeking of God.

Isaiah 58:3: “‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’ ‘In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers.’”

Paragraph C. In Isaiah 58:3-4, God answers. He says, “I will tell you. In the day of your fast, what is really on in your mind is exploiting the laborers.” He is talking to the business leaders. The leaders of Israel that had businesses, but they were going to the prayer meetings. They were the business guys. He says, “You are fasting, and praying that God would put more favor on you.”

They say, “Yes, is that not what the Bible says?”

“Yes, it is, but look what you are doing with the favor that God has given you. You are exploiting the people who work under you.”

God says, “You want me to give you more blessing and more resource? You will just exploit more people.”

They say, “No. We will not.”

#### **FAST FOR INCREASE WITHOUT SACRIFICIAL LOVE AND GOOD WORKS EXALTING JESUS**

Isaiah 58:4: it is as if the Lord says (paraphrased), “Here’s what you do: you fast for strife, debate, and to strike people. You want the favor of God; you want an increase of your money and influence.” You can do this in the ministry position just as well as in the business world. People fast and pray. Why? They want increase. They want more influence, resource, power, and the Lord says, “That is fine. Fasting is related to that.”

He says, “What you’re really after is getting the upper hand over people. You want a big ministry so you can enjoy the grandeur of your influence. What I would rather you do is fast and pray for a bigger influence so you can mobilize more people to do works of justice.”

The guy says, “I will.”

God says, “You’re not doing the works of justice now.”

The guy says, “Yes, but I will when you give me a famous ministry.”

The Lord says, “No.”

The guy says, “I don’t have the big business, but bless me. I am fasting and praying.”

The Lord says, “With the business you have you are not blessing the people under you. You are not using it in the way I want you to. You are milking them for everything you can get out of them.” Of course, what they were thinking is that when the Lord visits, their ministry gets bigger or their businesses gets bigger, whichever

way you want to look at it. Of course, we understand that marketplace is ministry in the kingdom context. What they imagined is that when the Lord finally blessed them, they would do differently than they are doing now.

They are not involved with the poor now, but they want a big ministry, so they can help the poor later. They are doing nothing for the poor now. The Lord says, “No. You are really fasting to get the upper hand, to kind of enjoy the grandeur of new influence and power. You will do the same thing with power that you are doing without power. You are just thinking of yourself. Of course, this is really focused on where the Church is at as well.” Even the prayer movement, a lot of folks are in the prayer movement. They just want more power, which is good. More power to do what? Just to get a crowd so that people know that you have power? You know it is more than that—I want people to glorify God.

The Lord says, “Then, glorify God now. Do not wait for power to do it. Do it now. Do what you do without the increase—do the same thing you are going to do when you get the increase.” Now He says, “Here is the kind of fast I am interested in you doing.”

### **THE FAST THAT PLEASES GOD IS JOINED WITH WORKS OF JUSTICE AND MERCY**

Paragraph one under paragraph E. Systemic injustice in society. You might refer to it as institutional wickedness, meaning it is the wickedness, the injustice in the systems that entrap people. What the Lord promises in Isaiah 58:6—He says, “Here is the fast I am interested in. Here is the one I have chosen. Here is the fasting and prayer approach that excites me. I want you to loosen the bonds of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free and break every yoke.” The bonds of wickedness—He is not talking about wickedness meaning that the guy is a drug addict, and the addiction is the wickedness. The bonds of wickedness are the systemic processes of injustice in a society. Let’s think for just a moment of our inner cities of our nation. There are situations all over the earth that have a different dynamic in it.

### **SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE OR INSTITUTIONAL WICKEDNESS**

Let’s look at that for a moment: the bonds of wickedness, the educational opportunities, the economic opportunities, and the mindsets. There are so many layers of complicated things that have operated for decades that create the situation for bondage and wickedness for people. Those people can still choose God. Even if they chose God, their hardship is immense because of the social barriers, the mindsets, and the limitations. That is what the Lord is talking about in Isaiah 58:6: “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?” He says, “I want you to help relief. In the face of the fruit of some of the oppressive laws and the social barriers, I want you to help in the economic, educational opportunities, so their life could be better. I want you to lift the burden from them.”

You say, “We cannot change all the laws, and everything for the whole world. It is too big.”

The Lord says, “You can do a little bit.” It is not our responsibility to know how much we will get done. Our responsibility is to do it with all our heart. We cannot change everything, but we can change a few. We are going to take a number of areas. Of course, we are going to increase it and give ourselves in a far more focused way to these areas.

## **PRACTICAL NEEDS: WE ARE TO HELP WITH FOOD, HOUSING, AND CLOTHING**

Number two. Isaiah says, “Do not just look at the institutional problems in society, and all that is a part of that. Meet practical needs too.” Some people need food, housing, and clothing. Practically, they need food, housing, and clothing—it’s important. We could give food and housing, but in addition, we want to train them, and we want to create an environment where they do not just need hand outs for the rest of their lives.

## **GENUINE RESPECT WITH DIGNITY**

Paragraph three. Isaiah 58:9: Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I *am*.’ ‘If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness.’” What He is saying about this: He is not talking about criticism within the Church. You know, one home group criticizing the other home group. I have heard guys say, “We need to get the critical spirit out of the Church, and then revival comes.”

That’s a good thing, but that is not what this verse is talking about. It is talking about the people who are doing the works of justice and the deeds of mercy. They do not do it with a demeaning, critical spirit in a condescending way. Do not point the finger and say, “Well, you know, we are going to help. We are going to write a check, come down and help a bit, but you people, if you would quit your drunkenness, immorality, get off drugs, get a job, we could solve this whole problem.”

Isaiah says, “Do not.” That attitude is called speaking wickedness. You do not understand the complexities of the decades of what is involved in their situation, and the truth is, neither do they. They understand it better than you do, but nobody understands it. The greatest minds cannot figure it all out. When you go do these works of mercy, do not point the finger. Do not generalize complicated problems in their mind and in their life. Well, the prostitute, she is twenty-five years old. She grew up with her mother who was a prostitute on drugs. She grew up in a neighborhood with prostitutes who were abused by their brothers. They were all on drugs. Two generations of sin. This girl has no education. She cannot get a job. She did not go to school. She had three kids. Part of it was the abuse that came to her. “Why doesn’t she just get a job, get off drugs, and quit prostitution?”

The Lord says, “Just be quiet. Just be quiet. You do not know anything about the layers of complications in that woman’s life. Go serve her.”

## **JAMES 2:20: “FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD”**

Paragraph F. Now, seeking God must include approaching these systemic problems in society. We need to create solutions and work together. Not that we have to have all the solutions. We don’t just give them fish. We teach them to fish. Even for a few people, we do not need to do it for a million. We can do it for ten, for 100, then 1,000, and then 10,000. It just keeps increasing, as we are faithful. The Lord gives more and more opportunity.

Then, we meet practical needs while we are correcting bigger problems. We do it in an attitude of respect and dignity. No matter how many years they have been sleeping on the street as a drug addict, or a drunkard with no job. We see the dignity of who they are. They are the one to whom the Lord says, “I want him as one of my special people. He is one of my guys. Go show him that I am involved in the world by your good works.”

**WHAT HAPPENS OUTSIDE THE PRAYER ROOM IS AS ESSENTIAL AS WHAT HAPPENS IN IT**

Paragraph G. What happens outside of the prayer room, the works of justice is essential to what happens inside the prayer room. There is no dichotomy. We cannot separate what happens outside and inside. God sees it as one reality. We cannot quit the prayer part; we cannot overreact, and get so zealous that we do not do it God's way. We have to approach justice God's way. Night and day, He said, "Cry for justice." You release power and keep your heart connected. You will be far more effective if you do it God's way. We worship night and day here in IHOP-KC. We are going to connect our love songs to Jesus with acts of love to the needy. It is one reality. Worship is love and action. The worship that moves God's heart comes from believers who are moved by the needs of others. That is the kind of worship that moves God. It comes from people who are moved by others even in our weakness and in our brokenness.

**CHURCH CANNOT BE MEASURED BY ATTENDANCE BUT BY HOW MANY ARE ZEALOUS**

Paragraph H. You talk to different guys and gals in ministry. Not everyone is like this, but some are. They measure the strength of their ministry by how many people show up in the church building on Sunday. The guy says, "I have 10,000 in my church." Well, the real way is not to evaluate the numerical strength of the ministry. You cannot really evaluate it by how many people come to the building on Sunday. You evaluate it by how many people are mobilized in the community to do good works. That is how a ministry is valued numerically, if you want to talk about numerical strength.

When the Lord talks to the guy, "10,000 showed up on Sunday; how many were involved in the community with good works? I mean how many are zealously involved and not just off the cuff."

We answer, "A couple hundred."

God answers, "Then your Church is a couple hundred functionally." In terms of functioning as the Church, we want to think about people being engaged in intercession and intimacy with God, and then engaged with works of justice. Then engaged back in intercession and intimacy with God, then engaged and mobilized in works of justice.

**GOD PROMISES TO BREAK IN WITH POWER TO THOSE WHO EMBRACE THIS FAST**

Paragraph I. We are not going to go through much more here. We are going to bring this to an end. Isaiah 58:8-11: "Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' 'If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail."

Here is what God says, "The areas of bondage in your life, there will be freedom. Righteousness will break out."

The guy says, "I am so in bondage in this one area." We need righteousness to break out in that area of his life is what he is crying for. The glory of God will be present. You will call on the Lord; He will answer. Your

prayer life has a whole different anointing when connected to justice. The Lord will guide you—that is the prophetic ministry. He will satisfy your soul—that is intimacy. He will strengthen your bones—that is healing. There is a power dimension when the fasting and prayer is joined to the works of justice and mercy on God’s terms. There is a power dimension. It is not enough to mobilize everybody in works of justice. That is good, but there is more. There is justice with power. As I said earlier, it is not just enough to produce medical resources for the person who is sick. Let’s pray for the guy to get healed. There are supernatural dimensions that God wants to release.

### **DOING ZEALOUS GOOD WORKS ON JESUS’ TERMS, FOR HIS REASONS**

Paragraph J. I want to say this, as it is very important. We have to do works of justice on God’s terms. We have to do it on God’s terms, in God’s way, with a right spirit. Works of justice are rooted in night and day prayer for justice. Works of justice are rooted with the attitudes of Isaiah 58, but it is with allegiance to Jesus and on Jesus’ terms.

There is a false justice movement that is emerging in the earth today. It is a humanitarian movement. It has not come together as it is going to. There are all kinds of early stirrings of it in different pockets of the earth. It will come together before the Lord returns. It is called the harlot Babylon, and it is a humanitarian movement. It is a justice movement, but it is a false one. It has no absolutes; it is humanistic, and they do not care about the Word of God. They do not care about loyalty to Jesus. Millions of believers are being swept into it because of the humanitarian focus.

Beloved, there is more than meeting needs. We want to meet needs that exalt Jesus. We want to meet needs that are loyal to Him on His terms and in His way. His way is the deeds of justice connected to the cry for justice. I want to say this: the Jesus justice movement is coming out of night-and-day prayer. Everyone is not supposed to start a twenty-four-hour-a-day worship prayer ministry. That is not what I am saying at all. There will be a few across the earth, who knows the number? The majority of the people will not have a twenty-four-hour prayer ministry. There are 10,000 plus; I do not really know the number. I know it is over 10,000. There are 10,000 plus twenty-four-hour prayer ministries, or prayer chains. It involves one person in a room handing the baton off to another person. There are over 10,000 in the earth right now in different churches all over the world.

Some guy says, “My church does not have the twenty-four-hour chain or prayer stuff. What do I do? Give up?” God looks at the prayer in the city. There may be 1,000 congregations in that city. Prayer is ascending in all kinds of way that no man can organize or count up. We need more prayer. I do not want people to take a false comfort in that and say, “Someone on the other side of town is praying, so I am not going to bother with it.” We all are engaged. All the ministries do a little bit of prayer. They do not have to do the house of prayer twenty-four seven. Collectively in cities, 24/7 prayer goes forth. God pours out His Spirit on cities, not just on ministries.

### **SETTING OUR HEARTS TO BE ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS**

Roman numeral IV. Paragraph A. Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Why did He create us? It is not the only reason—for good works—but that is one of the reasons that you are saved. He wants to use you as part of His big symphony of love in the earth.

**OUR PRIMARY DREAM IS TO CONNECT WITH HIS HEART AND EXALT HIS NAME**

God prepared the good works beforehand for you. God was thinking of you beforehand. God has a plan for you to be involved. Do not look at the ministry org chart, whether you are visiting, or you are here for a while, or long term. Do not look at the org. chart and say, “Where do I fit on the ministry org. chart? My outreach fits over in that department.” Do not worry about that. Do not wait for the org. chart. Do not wait for permission for a leader to say, “Hey, will you do this?”

You answer, “Yes. I will do this.” You have a big city right here in Kansas City, two million people, a big Holy Spirit, a big Bible, and a big need. There are two million people. You do not need to wait for a leader to tell you to do something. You have the Bible, Holy Spirit, and two million people in need.

You say, “Holy Spirit, there are thousands of categories of need, from real extreme ones to not so extreme ones. Give me creative ideas. I want to start.” Do not wait for a month until we bring a whole new increase. Start asking Him now. He may have you, two, or three people go touch two or three people. Not just an evangelistic outreach one time on a Tuesday night, though those are good. I mean more than a one-time deal. Think, “Holy Spirit, show me a way where I can do a work of justice, a work of service to someone in need.” It might be someone in the neighborhood right here, maybe someone on the other side of town, or maybe it is not the inner city.

Start asking Him by saying, “You prepared this for me beforehand. So, I fit.” Do not look for ministries inside the building. Look for ministries outside the building. There are ministries inside too. We still need you to help there. Do not wait for something on the org. chart. Do whatever the Holy Spirit tugs your heart to do. Amen.