

**THE BIG IDEA: When we fight from victory, we're free to fight for souls.**The Take-Off

For almost 2 months, we have repeated a phrase over and over again, and I bet that if I start it, you can finish it.

We don't fight FOR victory ...

Exactly. We fight FROM victory.

We've seen what that means in scripture. That there is a fight, and that there is a Redeemer and Rescuer who has saved us by fighting FOR us.

We've seen that there is an enemy - a loser - and that he is focused on stealing, killing and destroying people.

We learned that when God looks at us, He sees an army that He has clothed in armor for the battle.

We've talked about the weapons of worship and community, and this morning we'll talk about another weapon.

But what I really want to leave you with today is the why?

Why did God rescue and redeem us? Why has He given us armor and weapons? Why has God made us battle ready?

Because even though we don't fight FOR victory, we do still fight, and when we fight from victory, we're free to fight for souls.

That's the Big Idea this week, and it's critical: **When we fight from victory, we're free to fight for souls.**

We fight for those souls using the armor and weapons we've been given - in fact, we've been made Battle Ready specifically so that we will step into the battle and, well, battle!

This morning, I believe that God will show us what that can look like when we use one final weapon.

The weapon is fasting, and there's a wrong and a right way to use it. Both are found in **Isaiah 58**, and we'll stay in that chapter the whole time.

While you're finding it, let's talk for a minute about what fasting is, because we can't practice it if we don't know what it is.

Most people think of fasting as going without food, and that's true. But it's more than that.

Fasting is abstaining from something physical in order to obtain something spiritual.

The physical and spiritual connection is what is so critical in a fast, and I think that we'll be able to see that even more clearly in **Isaiah 58**.

I'm sure you're there by now, so let's start by looking at a wrong way to fast, and then we'll end with the right way.

**1. Never fast for your agenda**

- a. We know from **verse 3** that something is wrong - God's people have called on him but don't feel heard
- b. Let's clarify that praying and not feeling heard isn't proof of a problem, but in this instance we know that it is because God continued speaking through Isaiah and revealed the problem.
- c. **Verse 3b** - "yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please"
- d. In other words, fasting is about you getting what you please, not about doing what pleases God
- e. We learn as we continue reading that as they fasted, they would exploit workers, fight and bully each other - all apparently so that they would get more production out of their laborers.
- f. It was all about their agenda, and that is ALWAYS the wrong reason to fast.
- g. Never fast for your agenda.
- h. The result of this type of fast, this "trying to twist God's arm by appearing holy" fast?
- i. **Verse 4** - don't expect your voice to be heard on high
- j. #boom #micdrop

**2. Always fast for God's agenda**

- a. If we aren't supposed to be fasting for our agenda, then what's the point of fasting? Why should we fast?
- b. God answers that question in the next 2 verses: He is looking for fasting that does something!
- c. Now, an important clarification: works don't save us, no matter how good they may be.
- d. This isn't a call to social activism; remember that fasting abstains from something physical in order to obtain something spiritual.
- e. What is the one thing spiritually that we could gain that would lead to the kind of action we read here?
- f. God's heart for people.

- g. We should never fast for our agenda, but we should always fast for God's agenda, and His agenda is always people.
- h. We know from **Romans 3:10-11** that none of us, apart from God's grace, are seeking God's ways.
- i. Fasting allows God to open our eyes to see the world the way He does; to pour His heart into us so that we love others the way He loves them.
- j. **Verses 8-12** shows that God's heart is for the faster, too: He heals us, redeems us, protects us, hears us, answers us, guides us, satisfies us, strengthens us, refreshes us, and then He uses us.
- k. And that is where what we've learned over the last 2 months becomes so important.
- l. What happens when believers like you and I step into the battle, fully confident in the victory, fully clothed in the armor, and fully competent in our weapons and begin to fight?
- m. What happens when we embrace the truth that **when we fight FROM victory, we're free to fight FOR souls?**
- n. **Verses 11 and 12** happen!
- o. We'll **BE saturated** (well-watered garden) and we'll **DO the supernatural** (Ruins rebuilt! Foundations raised! Walls repaired! Homes restored!)
- p. Then Isaiah closes out chapter 58 with 2 verses that could not be more clear about what happens when we replace our agendas with God's heart.
- q. **Verse 13:**
  - we have God's heart, and so we honor what He calls holy
  - we have God's heart, and so pleasing Him matters more to us than pleasing ourselves
- r. **Verse 14:**
  - we have joy
  - we have victory
  - we have an inheritance of plenty
- s. So many of us have spent so much of our time, energy and money trying to find the rewards of **verse 14**, but God says that they come when we take up the weapon of fasting and allow it to work in us a desire for God's heart more than for our way.
- t. You have an opportunity **THIS WEEK** to put this message into practice immediately by taking part in First Tuesday. Many in the church fast every month on the First Tuesday of the month, and that will be in 2 days.
- u. Join us, and let's fast for God's heart for our city.

### The Landing

I need to land this Battle Ready 747. After 8 incredible weeks of devotions, messages and community groups focused on getting us Battle Ready, I need you to see that we have everything we need to fight.

The only variable left unknown is, will we?

Will we step into the battlefield to fight? There are souls that are perishing, and you and I have everything we need to rescue them.

Will you act?

[Titanic clip]

There is no room for fear when we have the Father's loving heart for people.

**When we fight FOR victory, we fear what we could lose.**

**When we fight FROM victory, we hold dear what we could gain.**

Here is your first assignment: stand and step to the front, and then speak the names of those you are fighting for.

Let's end this series standing shoulder to shoulder, shields raised, swords ready, fighting for the souls of men.

**When we fight FROM victory, we're free to fight FOR souls.**

Let's pray.