

# Isaiah 58

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 April 2017

Preacher: Paul Levy

[ 0 : 00 ] This is Isaiah 58, and we need to do quite a lot of work this morning on getting behind this chapter. It took me about five days to get behind this chapter to see what the real issue is in it, and I hope you'll be quicker than I am.

Dean Swift, he was an 18th century gentleman, he was a character who wrote Gulliver's Travels, and he once made this observation about the fashionable women of his day.

He said they were so busy being religious that they had no time to say their prayers. They were so busy being religious that they had no time to say their prayers.

What he was highlighting was their religious formality, that they were going through the motions, and yet there was something missing, something that needed to be addressed.

Now we know, don't we, and just from a clear reading of this chapter, there's something seriously wrong right at the start of the chapter. Can you look at verse 1? The prophet is told, cry aloud, do not hold back.

[ 1 : 04 ] Speak publicly, loudly. He's just been talking in chapter 57 that we saw last week of the false prophets. Do you remember he said the false prophets, they did not act like a watchman.

They were meant to be like guard dogs. And they did not shout out in danger. They were dogs that when enemies approached, the dogs didn't bark. When an intruder came in, they just lay in the sunshine.

They were meant to be shepherds, the people of Israel. They were caring for and nourishing and cherishing the people of God, rather than ignoring them and doing their own thing and pleasing themselves.

And so God comes at the start of chapter 58, and he says, I want you to do what they did not do. I want you to do the opposite. I want you to cry aloud to the people of Israel and not hold back.

I want you to not hold back anything that is profitable for the people of God. I want you to lift up your voice so that it's like a trumpet. So that all the people of God will hear it.

[ 2 : 11 ] I want you to sound alarm, Isaiah. I want you to summon God's people to appear before God. And I want you to speak powerfully to these people. Who are you to speak to, Isaiah?

Well, it's not to everyone in general. I'm not asking you to go and speak to the general population. I want you to speak to my church. Do you see that verse 1? Declare to my people.

The house of Jacob, the end of verse 1. So before we draw wrong conclusions about what this chapter is about, we find that this chapter, right at the very beginning, this prophecy is intended to be delivered to the church.

To the people of God. God's people then in Isaiah's day and in our day, because he is a prophet. And God is speaking to his own covenant people. He did not speak in such warm terms about the worldly church of Isaiah 57.

Where Isaiah describes, doesn't he really, that the church has become pagan there. The intrusion into the church of pagan ideas. Of pagan habits and pagan philosophy.

[ 3 : 15 ] Pagan behaviour. The rationalisation in Isaiah 57. Where the church is making paganism normal within its own bounds.

God did not speak to them in these terms. He did not say in Isaiah 57 of them, My people. And so in Isaiah 58, God is speaking to a different kind of person.

What kind of person is he speaking to? Look at the beginning of verse 2. They are spiritual people. They may even appear to be super spiritual people.

They are the kind of people that make you feel guilty. They are the kind of people in verse 2 that make you feel inadequate. The kind of people maybe that you don't want to be anywhere near. And this is why, because verse 2, they seek me daily.

They delight to know my ways. These people, they are not the worldly church of Isaiah 57. They actually believe in God. That is a good thing.

[ 4 : 15 ] Scrupulis to start, they wanted to know about God. And they sought him daily. They listened to the preaching of Isaiah 55. When it says, seek the Lord while he may be found.

So they listened to that. And in the Hebrew it says literally, He they seek. They were looking for God. They were worshipping the true God. They were out to find him.

And in the Old Testament, this view of seeking God is to take God seriously. It presupposes a view of God that only believers have.

That the God of Israel is not a static given. But a dynamic reality who must be engaged. A dynamic reality who must be engaged in order to be known.

And in order to be found. Now let me try and give you an illustration. To try and tease this out a little bit. Try and get behind what is being taught in this passage. Let's imagine a couple. A man and a wife.

[ 5 : 13 ] They are a very well known couple. They are famous. Very famous. And they are very popular. And they are often invited to parties and social gatherings of the good and the great.

The man is very clever, the husband. And very intelligent. And is wealthy. And the wife is stunningly beautiful. Absolutely stunning.

And you can watch them come in to the party. That this guy enjoys bringing his wife to the party. He enjoys showing off her beauty to his friends.

She is apparently, because I'm telling the story. She is a static given in his life. In other words, that husband sees his wife as an object.

He is married to her. But he sees her as an object. Who is taken with him into these social gatherings. In order to give him kudos.

[ 6 : 16 ] Among his friends. As he sees them looking at her. He feels better about himself. And it is possible.

In a relationship. It's possible, isn't it? Because we know that they make films about this sort of thing. It is possible to have such a relationship. Whereby a man treats his wife as a static given. She is there. She is just there. And she is there for those moments when he can show her off. The God of Israel.

Is sometimes regarded by his people in those terms. As a static given. But the Bible increasingly and repeatedly tells us.

That the God who is there. Needs to be sought. And he needs to be looked for. And God is a dynamic reality.

[ 7 : 15 ] Who must be engaged in order to be known. And found. In other words. In our relationship with God. We are to seek the Lord while he may be found. We are to find out about him.

We want to know his character. We want to know his nature. We want to know his likes and his dislikes. We want to know the things he loves. The things that give him pleasure. It's a relationship between persons.

The relationship between God's people and God. Is therefore intended to be a love relationship. And that relationship involves personal knowledge.

Now on the surface. As you read Isaiah 58. It looks like that's what they're doing. But read on in verse 2. It says at the start. They treat me daily. They delight to know my ways.

But read on. As if they were a nation that did righteousness. And did not forsake the judgment of their God. The devil's in the detail.

[ 8 : 16 ] It's in those words. In the middle of verse 2 isn't it? As if. That's what it looks like. It looks like as you're looking on at these people.

And their relationship with God. It looks as if they're righteous people. It looks as if they're truly seeking after God. And they want to know him. It looks like they have a relationship. Which they are engaged with God in.

It looks like they're actually pursuing something more. Than a superficial knowledge of God. That he's not simply a static given to them. But he's a dynamic reality to them.

But you'd be wrong. Because God says as if. They appear to do this. They do it daily. They delight. They appear to delight in my ways.

But there's something wrong with their relationship. There's a formalism. A formality in the relationship. There's something that's not quite real. And vibrant. The emotions of these people.

[ 9 : 14 ] They're not really engaged. With the God that they worship. Look at the way they talk. This usually is a hint about where people really are. Surturally speaking. They have questions don't they?

They have complaints. And their questions and their complaints. Are directed against God. Verse 3. Here's why God raises this question.

As if. Here's the reason. For this. Why have we fasted. And you see it not. Why have we humbled ourselves. And you take no advantage. Take no knowledge of it.

Go back to my analogy. Go back to that illustration for a moment. The man with a trophy wife. And we overhear them having an argument.

They're having words. Somehow the worm has turned. And she's not cooperating anymore. And he is asking her. Why are you not cooperating? The husband says.

[ 10 : 10 ] I work hard. I slave myself at the office all the time. I give you everything you need. I give you that sports car. I give you the designer clothes.

I let you go and get yourself done in the spa. I've done all of that for you. You've got your own credit card. You can spend as much as you want.

And as we hear him saying these things. We think to ourselves. What an idiot. What an idiot. He's got absolutely no idea. Has he.

How to treat a woman. It's not what she wants to hear. She is looking for. Isn't she. Something deeper. Something deeper. In this superficial clown.

Something deeper. Than the kind of way. That he's talking to her. And the way that he talks to her. Indicates. Doesn't it. The shallowness. Of his relationship with her.

[ 11 : 09 ] So listen to how these people. Are talking to God. They say. We did this for you. Lord. We put ourselves out for you.

God. We put on a fast. Because we wanted you to notice. And yet. Yet God. We're not feeling the love.

You know. We're not feeling the kind of response. That we deserve. We thought we'd get.

Something from you. But it feels like. We've got nothing from you. Lord. You know.

We sing your praise. But we're not feeling. Anything back from you. We go to church. We go to church.

Sunday morning. And Sunday night. But we leave it cold. And indifferent. We're not getting a result. From our religion. You are not paying attention. You see it not.

[ 12 : 04 ] You haven't even acknowledged our devotion. Can you see how hard we're working? You've taken no notice. Now I want you to look for a moment with me.

At the heart of this relationship. This relationship with God. Their religion. I'm using religion in the very best sense. Of the way that we worship God. And serve Him. Their religion.

Was a quid pro quo relationship. Wasn't it? It was cause and effect. We do this for you Lord. And you do stuff for us.

We engage in religious activities. And we are looking for some payback. We want to feel better about ourselves. We want to see our prayers being answered.

In this or that or other way. We even want spiritual revival in our church. We want more people coming. We want to see our budget rise. We want to see a building project finish.

[ 13 : 03 ] We want to feel the love. And we're not feeling the love. And this was the issue. That for them it wasn't working out the way.

That they wanted it to. And so they had this sense. That God was distant. And disinterested. And so in verse 3. You have this amazing picture. Of a people who are devoted to God.

On the one hand. And mad at God. On the other hand. Devoted to God. On the one hand. And mad at God.

On the other hand. Can you imagine that? There are a couple of issues raised by this text. Aren't there? Some people do religious stuff. Because it pleases them. They see their service.

Not just fasting. One of the problems when you come to Romans 58. Is that when you read the commentaries. Is they want to tell you. It's all about fasting. Or more modern commentaries.

[ 14 : 06 ] Want to tell you. It's all about social justice. But actually. It's not about either of those two things. Because fasting.

Even though it's talked about. Isn't the big deal in the passage. It's illustrative. If you go to the end of the passage. He speaks about the Sabbath. Fasting is only an illustration. Of the principle.

Here is the principle. The principle behind Isaiah 58. Is that we do our religious stuff. Because we want to do it. And we may spend our time in service.

We may do lots of stuff. Tiring ourselves out. Wearing ourselves thin. In order to serve sacrificially. Whether it's in the church. Or outside the church. We are really giving ourselves.

Sacrificially to these things. And these people in this text. They either do it. Because it pleases them. As an act of self-indulgence. Because they get satisfaction. From doing it.

[15:03] Or because they feel significant. By doing it. To prove themselves. And to other people. That they really are spiritual people. Or they do it as a source of magic.

Or a device to get God. To do what they want God to do. To twist his arm. They think that by doing things. That they have leverage with God.

They deprive themselves of food. These people. To get some gain from God. Now think about it. Think hard about this for a moment. How can he say the same thing to you and I today?

You can say it couldn't be. About us having our quiet time. Or about our tithing. Or about our church attendance. Or about our sacrificial Christian service.

Or about spiritual disciplines. Or our acts of self-denial. Or our acts of self-denial. In helping others. Whatever it may be. It's the way that you view those things. When the chips are down.

[16:09] And when there's no return. When there's no sense or feeling. That God is with you. In a special way. Or that God is blessing you.

In a spiritual way. Usually in the way that you define yourself. So let's look at how God responds to this. In verse 3. God evaluates firstly.

God evaluates. And God begins to evaluate what they do. Here is God's evaluation of them. And you see the principle. He says. In the second half of verse 3. Behold.

Behold. In the day of your fast. You seek your own pleasure. And oppress all your workers. We'll come to that in a moment. Let's think just about fasting.

For a moment. I believe in fasting. I think actually fasting is quite helpful. I found it helpful. But in the law of God. In the Bible. The Torah only requires fasting. Once a year.

[17:05] On the day of atonement. It was a corporate recognition. Of human repentance. Before God. And it required that. The atonement of the sacrificed animal.

Once a year. In the law. In the day of atonement. As an indication. That you were genuinely repentant. Now it is true that. At other times. In the times of national crisis.

When the church was under threat. There would be a call. For Israel. To pray. And to fast. And to seek God's mercy. Because they sinned. But fasting was always a sign of repentance.

But nowhere. In the Bible. Was fasting in joints. Nowhere was it commanded. As a regular feature. Of the life of God's people. But do you remember.

By Jesus time. What were the Pharisees doing. The Pharisees were fasting. Several times a week. But not only were they fasting. Several times a week. But they let everybody know.

[18:03] That they were fasting. Several times a week. They had special makeup. Didn't they. That they wore. To make them look pale. And gaunt. They were makeup experts. In order to communicate.

The idea that they were really. Suffering for the kingdom of God. This is not a new thing. The interesting thing is. If you do a study of Matthew's gospel.

And you notice how it is. In Matthew's gospel. That Jesus is really using Isaiah. As the script for his life. It's not surprising. That in the Sermon on the Mount. That Jesus should pick up.

This very self-same theme of fasting. It seems like it comes out of nowhere. In the Sermon on the Mount. But actually it comes out of Isaiah. And so he addresses the people.

And so he says. Behold on the day you fast. You seek your own pleasure. That's what you're doing. It's your own choosing.

[19:00] You're choosing to do it. It's not my command. It's your choice. So around about this time. Lots of people celebrate Lent. Don't they? Protestants don't normally do that.

You can choose to do it if you want. But there's no law against it. There's no law for it. And so at times. Like these. People tell you. Don't they? They nearly always tell you.

What they're giving up for Lent. Chocolate. Caffeine. Cakes. Coke. If you want to do that.

Caffeine. But all those things. You can do that anyway. Can't you? God challenges. Challenges them here. He says. Behold the day of your fasting. You seek your own pleasure.

You are choosing to do this. It's your choice. It's not mine. And when you do it. What do you do at the end of verse 3? You oppress your workers. Do you remember he's talking about Israel? He's talking to the church here.

[ 20 : 01 ] He's talking about the people who worked in their own extended household. He's not thinking of a factory. They didn't have factories in those days. He's thinking of a household. And the people who worked in that household were fellow Jews.

They were fellow believers. And many of them were contracted. If I can put it like that. To work as slaves. Because this slavery was nothing like the African slave trade. Of the 19th century. The slavery you find in the Bible was an economic device. If you were low on funds. If you were in dire straits. You could engage yourself to serve. In someone's extended household as a slave. For a period of time. You would be remunerated for that. You would be kept. You would be normally well kept by a person. And then after three years. You would be free to leave. You would be liberated from your slavery.

So it would be a different ballgame altogether. These people were the people who were working in the home. Behold. Let's read on. You fast.

[ 21 : 00 ] You fast only to quarrel and to fight. Verse 4. And to hit with a wicked fist. Isaiah knows what he's doing here. He's describing these people and what they're doing.

Why are they quarrelsome? Why are they argumentative? Why do they want to hit someone? Well what are they doing? They're on a fast. Aren't they? It was a great surprise.

Actually the first of my fast. It's such an issue. You so easily lose your rag. There are people out there. If they don't get their lunch. They want to hit someone. And the people he's describing here.

They're on a fast. And they are fighting. They are really quarrelling with their workers at home.

They're fighting. The collateral damage all around them basically.

And all this is happening because they're on a spiritual trip that they've chosen for themselves.

Doing their own pleasure. Doing their own thing. Doing it for their own ends.

[ 22 : 00 ] And as a result the rest of the house suffers. Because of what they've decided to do. And I want to say. As we think hard on this.

In so many incipient ways. Subtle ways. In Christian ministry. And in Christian churches. There are so many of us that come up with our own idea.

For our own pleasure. And then expect the rest to fund it. It's the same principle here. Not only.

Were they doing that. And creating havoc. Because they were so bad tempered. But they were also making sure that everyone else saw it. That they were on a fast. Look at verse 5.

Is such the fast that I choose. A day for a person to humble himself. Is it to bow down his head like a reed. And spread sackcloth and ashes under him.

[ 23 : 06 ] They were making themselves look as miserable as they could. They were making sure that everyone knew what they were doing. They were advertising their piety. And they weren't doing this out of a heart for people or for God.

Do you remember Jesus in his own critique? Jesus does not say fasting is wrong. But he does point the finger at those who are multiplying. In these things. They were multiplying the number of fasts. And advertising their piety. Listen to what God has to say about this kind of thing. In verse 4. He says fasting like yours this day. Will not make your voice to be heard on high.

It will not have the effect of getting through to God. Because you're doing it for your own sake. Not for my sake. You call this a fast. A day acceptable to God. No of course it's not.

And so secondly then you have the Lord's challenge. Verse 6. And his challenge in verse 6 is very simply. If you would only obey the verses of the Bible. You know.

[ 24 : 09 ] Instead of finding alternative ways to demonstrate your piety. If you would just obey the verses of the Bible that you know. That would be a good place to start. Is not that the fast I choose?

To loose the bonds of wickedness. He's talking about the people that they've taken into their home. Fellow believers. Fellow Israelites. People of God. Brought them.

Into the family. Into the household. And then kept them there indefinitely. That had not let them go free. After the three years that the Lord prescribed. But kept them on and was keeping them down.

Keeping them in their place. And not taking care of them properly. And God says to them. Look.

Verse 6. It's not this. The fast I choose. To loose the bonds of wickedness. To undo the straps.

To the yoke. Let them go. Let them go. I told you in my law. What you should do. You're inventing.

A reason for fasting. But actually. I didn't ordain that.

[ 25 : 08 ] But I did ordain this. You get on with obeying me. In your practical areas of life. And frankly. They will cost you more than deciding.

Not to eat chocolate for a while. Or to skip lunch. Let those people go. Then I'll be impressed. God says. Then I'll listen to you. Then I'll take notice of you.

You get on with believing the Bible. And obeying the Bible. The verses that you know. Without inventing other stuff. Or making up other ways.

To demonstrate your godliness. The whole idea of freedom. And liberty. Is one of the big ideas. In Isaiah's prophecy.

As he talks about. The suffering servant. Who brings freedom. And here of course. I think he's talking about. Literal freedom. But I think there's a spiritual principle. Behind it.

[ 26 : 03 ] Don't put burdens of guilt. On other people. Don't put burdens. On other believers.

That they ought not to have. Don't let them have to pay. For your decisions. Care for them. Care for them. Verse 7. Share your bread. Be generous.

In the fellowship. With those who are hungry. Unneeded. And so on. And don't forget. That you shouldn't kill yourself off. From members of your own family. Your own house. The homeless poor.

In your own home. Verse 7. Your own flesh. Your own flesh. And blood. So it's a challenge. Isn't it? To biblical behaviour. The kind of things.

That God requires. From his people. Don't hold up. One thing. That is. That quite frankly. You can choose. To do that. Or not do that. But do the stuff.

[ 27 : 03 ] That we've been called upon. And challenged about. In God's word to do. That is. This is long term implications. For the people of God. The Lord's promise. Verse 8. Do you see the Lord's promise.

In verse 8. The Lord's challenge. The Lord's evaluation. The Lord's promise. On the basis of religion. That is. Pure and undefiled. Before God the Father. As James defines it.

To visit orphans. And widows. In their affliction. To keep oneself. And stained by the world. That kind of genuine religion. That serves others. That loves our brothers and sisters.

That loves our neighbours. That kind of religion. Which demonstrates. That it's from the heart. Gets the attention of God. And so there's all kinds of applications.

For that today. But here is God's promise. For those who take it seriously. And it's in a series of thens. Verse 8. Then. Your light shall break forth like the dawn.

[ 27 : 59 ] There'll be a new day. Then all those things that are. Burdening you down. And you're wondering. Why are you doing this?

And there's no evidence of God prospering you more. Or no evidence of God hearing your prayer more. Instinctively. You know that God is not. That he's answering your prayer.

That sense that God is not near. This idea that you're not feeling the love of God in your heart. He says. You know this is what you should be doing. If you're doing these things. If you're growing in your relationship with God.

You won't have to ask me for these things. Now let's try and go back to the illustration. Stick with me. It's been hard work this morning. Of the man and the woman. You get to know her.

The way we're meant to get to know God. You get to know her heart. That's what he needs to do isn't it? The husband needs to get to know her character. He needs to get to know her mind and her wisdom.

[ 29 : 02 ] You get to know what she loves. You get to know what brings her pleasure. You get to know the things that she values. You get to know the things that are precious to her.

You get to know those kind of things. And then you be the kind of man that she would love. But you don't have to ask for anything. That's the picture that's being painted to you.

You know God. And you know what's on his mind. And you know what brings him pleasure. And you know what he loves. And you seek to treat him in that way. Then says God.

It'll be like a new day in our relationship. The light will dawn. You will feel that the relationship is healthy. And that you are healed. And your righteousness shall go before you.

And the glory of God shall be. At the end of verse 8. Your rear guard. It's a great description isn't it? You'll be under his protection. He'll be on your side.

[ 29 : 56 ] And you will know it. He'll be beside you. And you will know it. He'll be with you. And you'll know it. You will know it. And you will call. And the Lord will answer.

And you will cry out. And he will say. I am here. I am here. Because you will know him. These are believers by the way.

They are people who know God. And they are being encouraged. In Isaiah 58. To know God better. More than formally. More than simply having him as necessity.

But as a reality. And so do you remember that? That you can either know God. As a static given. Or as a dynamic reality.

Remember that picture of the man and the woman. The wife. She was a static given. He's not bothered about her most of the time.

[ 30 : 56 ] Apart from when he needs her on his arm. At some function. But she is a dynamic reality. That he needs to get to know. And God is not a static given.

Who is just there when you need him. Or want him. God is someone to be pursued. He is someone to be engaged with. He is someone to be sought.

With all your heart. And with all your mind. And with all your strength. And that God will guide you continually. Verse 11. You won't need to ask for guidance. And he will satisfy your desire.

In scorched places. And make your bones strong. And you will be like a watered garden. Refreshed with spiritual refreshment. And you will be established for all eternity.

Verse 12. And your ancient ruins will be rebuilt. And you shall raise up the foundations of many generations. And you shall be called the repairer of the breach. The restorer of streets that dwell in.

[ 31 : 57 ] And so God gives a prescription. To these people.

He gives a prescription to his people. Can you see it? And his prescription is this. You don't have to make up special days. You don't have to make up special days.

Because I have given you a special day. And that's the point of the Sabbath reference in verse 13. I have given you.

As your rear guard. A special day. The day that I have given you. God says. Is not a fast day. But a feast day.

And what God is saying. If we can run back to verse 8. There is a day. In which you can have a brand new day. And you can feel healed and restored. And you can know the glory of God.

[ 32 : 55 ] And you can call. And know that God is answering you. You can cry. And you will hear God say to you. Here I am.

And the Lord will guide continually. And on that day. You will know that he will satisfy your desires.

And he will make you refreshed. Like a watered garden. And he will do that by. Verse 14.

His word. For the mouth of the Lord. Has spoken. And he will feed you. With the heritage of your father Jacob.

Do you see how the beginning and the end. Of this chapter. Are tied together. By a reference to Jacob. A reference to the people of God. These people who were superficial. In their relationships. Who were formal. In their relationships. But if they take advantage. Of what God offers. On the Sabbath day. And the blessings. That he pours out to his people. On the Sabbath day.

[ 33 : 50 ] When the mouth of the Lord. Speaks to them. But these promises of God. Ring out in our years. We discover that the Sabbath day.

Is not a fast day. But a feast day. And it counters. All the negativism. Of the start of the chapter. With all the positive words.

From verses 6 to 12. That he sets the feast. Against the fast. And he says to his people. I am more interested. In you enjoying. Many many blessings.

And joys. Through obedience. Than I am. In imposing. On yourself. Self imposed. Deprivations. That are unnecessary. Unnecessary.

They are of your divisor. Why don't you just stick with. My very very simple program. The Lord says. Of the means of grace. The Lord's day.

[ 34 : 50 ] And the Lord's word. And the Lord's sacrament. And the Lord's people. It's very very simple.

The Lord's blessings. Come to his people. As they gather together. On the Lord's day. And guess what.

The Sabbath. Is in the commandments. Fasting is not. It is prescribed. By God.

So that you know. That if you keep the Sabbath. You are keeping. God's word. That you are in the will of God. You won't need to ask.

Am I in the will of God. You will be in the will of God. Because it's one of the ten commandments. It's part and parcel. Of God's world. In the way that he created the world. It's part and parcel. Of God's provision.

[ 35 : 49 ] And so from our new covenant. From our new testament perspective. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. Isn't he? He reigns over it. It's all about him. And in him.

Guess what. Every spiritual blessing. Is to be found in Christ. And it flows into our lives. Through him. And it refreshes us.

And it renews us. And it quickens us. And it makes us alive. And so all of us. Are tempted. In one form or another. To religious formalism.

And every single one of us. Is tempted to find other ways. There's a period of time. Where there were lots of books. Written about spiritual disciplines.

There were quite good. Disciplines of a godly man. Disciplines of a godly woman. Spiritual discipline. All sorts of disciplines. The pursuit of discipline. And there's lots of good things.

[ 36 : 44 ] In those books. But I think. From my studying this passage. In Isaiah 50. What it teaches us. Is that we have a tendency. To make the Christian life. Far more complicated.

Than God did. The Christian life. Is not complicated. It is all of grace.

And God has ordained. One day. In the middle of our. Very very busy lives. Where the grace of God. Is available to his people. And on a Monday morning.

We go out into a world. That is in rebellion. Against him. And we go to an unbelieving world. To love them for Jesus sake. But I want you to look around. This morning. Look around you this morning.

That was the rhetorical question. The people that are around you. This morning. Are real people.

You are worshipping. With people. You are not here.

[ 37 : 42 ] As a static. Given yourself. I am not. An internet creature. That you are here. In kind of. As you run around. You are part. This morning.

Of the dynamic. Energy. Of the people of God. And that is a glorious thing. Notice how he talks.

On the Sabbath. At the end. Of verses 13 and 14. He says. Call it a delight. It's a holy day.

Honorable to the Lord. Taking delight.

In the Lord. And so on. Not seeking your own pleasure. But the pleasure of others. And so here is something. That you can do. On any and every.

Sabbath day. Welcome someone. Who's lonely. Encourage someone. Who's down. Befriend someone.

[ 38 : 36 ] Who's friendless. Love the church of God. Thank you.