

Wednesday, February 22

Isaiah 58:1-12

REPAIRERS AND RESTORERS

“Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall rise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.”

For many followers of Jesus over time, Ash Wednesday has been a day set aside to fast and receive charred bits of burned wood that remind us of our mortality. We humble ourselves before God together and repent of the ways in which we have not followed Jesus’ example.

In recent years, many people have experienced spiritual renewal in Lent through fasts of various kinds, from giving up chocolate to avoiding social media. All our creative efforts to keep turning our attention toward our loving God make a difference in our growth and maturity.

Yet they do not lead us to genuine connection with God if they end only in the self—in our own personal sense of well-being. In Isaiah 58:1-12, the poet-prophet speaks to the essential truth that God hears and responds when our spiritual practices lead to actions for the healing of community. As we draw near to the heart of God, we notice God’s heartbeat for the world: for broken relationships, for those lacking basic human needs, and for those suffering from injustice and oppression.

As we enter this season with the hope of Easter, I invite you to prayerfully consider a few important questions with me. Is there an invitation from God for me in Isaiah 58? Could my spiritual practices during Lent involve restoring a relationship? Who do I know that needs help right now? Can I offer care or support to someone who has been treated unjustly? Even more, what might God be calling us together to be and to do as a community? In this season, it is my prayer that God will look at each one of us and see a “repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in (Isaiah 58:12).”

Lord, I confess my sins to you. Please bring to mind some ways that I might love others well and be a “repairer of the breach” during this season of Lent.