



## LC STUDY GUIDE

### “True Belonging: Home Edition”

The Passage: Isaiah 58:1-12

January 21 – February 3

#### How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

---

#### January 21, 2019

**This is a special week, so please read these notes:**

This sermon series, “True Belonging: Home Edition” was designed to include all the various aspects of home, family, and belonging for all of us regardless of age, marital status, or season of life, and we wanted to pay special attention to the perspective Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend would give us.

We are grateful that Dr. Virginia Ward accepted the invitation to preach at Grace and that she chose to speak into the series on the theme of reconciliation.

Because a value of our ministry is to create study guides where the Scripture passage preached is studied and discussed, we do hope that we can include the context of this sermon as we discuss how to apply these words to our lives.

Spend a few moments in intentional prayer that your group would use this opportunity to be people of reconciliation, to love our neighbors, and to pray for and seek the good of our rivals. Pray that the tone of this discussion be respectful and that your time be Christ-centered. If you get off-track, do take the opportunity to reset and reorient yourselves. Our continued hope in Christian community is to care for one another, grow in Christ together, and make an impact in the world around us.

### **Context of the passage**

Today we will be looking at the first section of Isaiah 58. In short, it is a prophetic word against the religious who observe festivals and fasts but ignore the pain and suffering of their neighbor. God sends Isaiah to call out this type of hypocrisy and calls God's people to something greater.

May we allow these words of Scripture to work in us, bring wisdom, and inspire transformation empowered by the Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion  
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup> For day after day they seek me out;  
they seem eager to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that does what is right  
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions  
and seem eager for God to come near them.

<sup>3</sup> 'Why have we fasted,' they say,  
'and you have not seen it?  
Why have we humbled ourselves,  
and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please  
and exploit all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,  
and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today  
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,  
only a day for people to humble themselves?  
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed

and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?  
Is that what you call a fast,  
a day acceptable to the Lord?

<sup>6</sup> “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness will go before you,  
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,  
<sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup> Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

### **Isaiah 58:1-12**

---

**O** – There is a lot of powerful and convicting imagery in these 12 verses and while we cannot unpack it all, take a few moments and read these verses for yourself, either in a print Bible or on a device. What is the most piercing line to you?

**I** – What do the first 7 verses tell us about the heart of God?

*(You might summarize it by re-reading verse 2.*

*God's heart is grieved by observing religious practice while not serving and showing compassion to those in need. God sees this as a form of pretention and a false expression of worship to Him. It also might tell us that the heart of God rejoices when we serve the needs around us and that serving in such ways is an act of worship.)*

**A** – When it comes to grieving the heart of God, where do you see similarities in our lives and throughout society, particularly as we reflect on the meaning of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day?

**I** – So important is this teaching that Jesus quotes verse 7 at a critical point during the last scenes of his earthly ministry in the teaching of “The Sheep and the Goats”:

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Matthew 25:34-40

For discussion, how does Jesus highlight what is truly essential in the Kingdom of God? What is the result of not practicing this teaching?

*(Jesus seems to use how we care for the marginalized as the true mark of being in His flock. The result of not caring for the outsider is to be sent away; the good in taking care of the oppressed and poor is to be part of his flock.)*

**O** – There is a turning point in verse 8. What does Isaiah say will happen “if” God’s people perform these actions?

*(The conditions or the “ifs” are in verses 9-10 and the blessings of reconciliation and restoration are in verses 11-12.)*

**A** – Verses 8-12 gives us much to consider. In our present-day context, how can we serve the needs of the marginalized on a personal level and as a collective group? It might be best to start with what small ways we can begin to be effective instead of going for the homerun.

For example, we can take the time to personally listen to the marginalized or oppressed voice of one whose path has crossed with ours. Another might be to support coat drives and various other collections of basic necessities.

**But let us not miss that this text and our context goes beyond serving the needs of the poor; it also looks at the oppressed.** What can we as faithful Christ-followers do to serve the needs and hurt of those who have been marginalized?

\*\* There is only so much ground a group can cover in a 1-hour discussion time. So be sure to spend appropriate time praying that God would be near those who have been treated unjustly and to the poor and that God would use us to serve His will.

- 
- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
  - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
  - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
  - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
  - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.