

PEARCE CHURCH

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LOVE-DRIVEN JUSTICE

Dear Pearce Family,

Have you ever had a communication issue with someone when you just weren't connecting or making sense to each other? We recently were making a barbecue sauce that called for apple cider vinegar and apple juice. We did not have apple juice but did have apple cider. I kept saying, "we've got cider" and Jeanne kept saying, "we need juice, not vinegar." She thought I was speaking about the apple cider vinegar. I finally opened the refrigerator and pulled out the jug of apple cider and said, "will this work instead of juice?" When she saw it, she said, "Oh, yeah, that will work," and we laughed out loud.

The Israelites were having a much more difficult "communication problem" with the Lord in Isaiah 58. In verses 1-3, the Israelites ask why God isn't answering them.

We are worshiping but you're not responding

We are praying but you're not listening

We are fasting but you're not noticing

But God clears up the communication problem when he shows them that they are missing the point. They were:

Fasting without compassion (do as you please)

Worshiping without unity (quarreling and strife)

Praying without kindness (exploiting all your workers)

The Israelites' "blind spots" kept them from seeing the reality of their situation. God was ready to listen when they were willing to act in ways that valued others in their community, especially those on the margins. God responds in verse 6: "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?"

Once the Israelites (and we today) act in such ways, Isaiah says, "Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I" (v9). I do not want to be blind to those who have suffered injustice. When people are crying for help, or suffering injustice, are we willing to listen, learn, and respond to their need?

With Faith,

Pastor Todd