

The fast God requires

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Last week we heard those iconic words from Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord require but to do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

In case we didn't hear it then, this week the message is reinforced; this time by one of the big guns, the prophet, Isaiah.

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am."

Loose the bonds of injustice
Let the oppressed go free.
Share bread with the hungry.
Bring the homeless poor into your house.
Cover the naked.
Do not hide yourself from you own kin.

As we move our way toward Lent, and people begin to ask, "what will you give up?" Allow me to challenge you to not give up chocolate or ice cream or even smoking, but to work for justice, to love kindness and walk humbly with your God. There are plenty of chances from the Sudan to Egypt to China and back, but there are even opportunities to work for justice in your own hometown. One of the ways we do it at St. Paul's is by having a volunteer in every Kindergarten classroom where we help

the teachers offer the one-on-one support to the students who begin their education sometimes years behind. Helping to get these children up to the first rung of a quality education helps break the cycle of poverty and thereby let's the oppressed go free.

What sort of fast will you offer the Lord?

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