

Text: Zech 8:18-23

Title: Grace that turns fasting into joyful, contagious worship.

Thesis: In Zechariah 8:18-23 we are taught that the Lord's grace turns fasting into joyful, contagious worship for those who repent.

Intro: From sorrow to joy.

- I. Examination of Zechariah 8:18-23
  - A. The Lord's grace not the people's efforts will turn fasting into feasting.
  - B. Only the truly repentant will see their sorrow turned to joy.
  - C. The recipients of God's grace within the covenant community feel compelled to worship the God of grace.
  - D. The recipients of God's grace outside of the covenant community feel compelled to join the church and to worship the God of grace.
  - E. Because God in His grace has come to His people, the nations desire to come to the people of God in order to worship Him.
  - F. The point: In Zechariah 8:18-23 we are taught that the Lord's grace turns fasting into joyful, contagious worship for those who repent.
  
- II. The fulfillment of Zechariah 8:18-23.
  - A. Begins with the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in the accomplishing of the redemption of the people of God.
  - B. Continues with the ministry of the Holy Spirit during the gospel age in the application of redemption to all of the elect of God and their uniting with the visible church in worship and witness.
  - C. Is completed at the return of Christ at the last day.
  
- III. Applications:
  - A. It is ultimately the gracious salvation of God in Christ that turns sorrow into joy for those who repent.
    1. Salvation from the penalty of sin. The joy of forgiveness.
    2. Salvation from the power of sin. The joy of liberation.
    3. Salvation from the presence of sin. The joy of peace.
  - B. If you have experienced the saving grace of God you will desire to join with the people of God in joyful worship and witness. (Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. [42] And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. [43] And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. [44] And all that believed were together, and had all things common; [45] And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. [46] And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, [47] Praising God,

and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.)

- C. The joyful worship of the people of God is contagious and is a public testimony of both the presence of God with His people and the goodness of God to His people.
- D. Those who do not repent nor desire to attend corporate worship probably are not Christians. (Heb.10: [23] Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) [24] And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: [25] Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. [26] For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, [27] But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. [28] He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: [29] Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? [30] For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. [31] It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.)

Conclusion: In Zechariah 8:18-23 we are taught that the Lord's grace turns fasting into joyful, contagious worship for those who repent. Repent of your sins, know the grace of God that turns sorrow into joy, and join with the people of God in worshipping the God of grace.