**MOURNING, FASTING, AND THAT OTHER STUFF**

Zechariah 7:2-6, 9-13

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**INTRODUCTION**

Last Sunday, we heard Zechariah speak about his vision of the high priest and Satan standing before God. We talked about a heavenly vision, a devilish vision, and a filthy vision. Today, I want us to consider some of the ritualistic practices that the Israelites had continued during the exile and were asking whether they should continue those practices since they were restored to their homeland. We can gain some special insight into the mind of God here.

1. **THE VALUE OF MOURNING AND FASTING**
2. Doing these things for **yourself** for personal benefit is **wrong** spiritually.
3. Doing these things for **God**—to restore relationship and to honor Him is **right**.

*Practices such as mourning and fasting are personal and private between God and you. They may have personal value when done for the right reason, but they are not commanded, but are actually optional for the individual.*

1. **THE VALUE OF BEING AND DOING**
2. Being what God wants you to be is much **more** **important**.
3. We are to be persons who love justice for all.
4. We are to be persons who think no evil of others.
5. Doing what God wants you to do has **real** **value**.
6. We are to be persons who show mercy and compassion to others every day.
7. We are to be persons who do NOT oppress the less fortunate: widows, fatherless, aliens (foreigners), and the poor.

*God’s expectation is that His people will be less self-centered and more others-centered—i.e., concerned about our relationships with others. First, we need to be what we are supposed to be (God’s people) and then do what we are supposed to do (live Godly lives reflecting the mind of God).*

1. **THE VALUE OF HEARING AND DOING**
2. Hearing but ignoring God’s word is **dangerous** (v. 12).
3. It hardens the heart toward God.
4. It angers God.
5. Obeying God’s word is absolutely **essential** (v. 13).
6. Obeying brings the blessing of God.
7. Not hearing & obeying will cause God to not hear us when we cry out to Him.

*As God’s people, we must always hear His voice, His Word, and obey. God will not be pleased with us if we continue to ignore Him as though we were still living in sin as unbelievers.*

**CONCLUSION**

Zechariah started out with the people asking whether to continue the practices of mourning and fasting—practices that were very important to the people while in exile. However, God moves the people from practices that benefit the person to practices that honor God through our being God-like in reflecting His mind, which will benefit not only our relationship with Him but also our relationship with others. If we refuse to hear and obey, God will refuse to participate with us in our “worship” activities. On the other hand, if we hear and obey, we can expect the blessings of God to overflow in our lives and that overflow to spill over into our relationships with others. Mourning and fasting has a little value, but being and doing have real value! Let us give ourselves to things of real value!

*“I’m coming back to the heart of worship, and it’s all about You, all about You, Jesus.*

*I’m sorry, Lord, for the thing I’ve made it, when it’s all about You, all about You, Jesus!”*