

Isaiah 58:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Analysis

The fast God chooses continues with practical expressions: "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?" Sharing food with the famished is basic covenant obligation (Deuteronomy 15:7-11, Leviticus 25:35-37). "That thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?" means providing shelter for the homeless—the Hebrew *merudim* (cast out/wandering) describes those displaced and destitute. "When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him?" addresses clothing the exposed. The climactic phrase strikes at selfish isolation: "and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" The Hebrew *basar* (flesh) means blood relatives, but the prophetic tradition extends this to all humanity (Genesis 9:6, Acts 17:26). This verse requires breaking through self-centered existence to genuine other-centered love. From a Reformed perspective, this reflects the second table of the law—love of neighbor flowing from love of God (Matthew 22:37-40). These aren't additions to faith but evidence of faith. Those justified by grace demonstrate transformation through works of mercy. This anticipates Jesus' sheep and goats judgment, where serving the hungry, homeless, and naked reveals true discipleship (Matthew 25:31-46).

Historical Context

The returned exiles faced economic hardship, and rather than sharing resources, many exploited their fellow Jews (Nehemiah 5:1-5). The wealthy pursued personal comfort while their brothers struggled—exactly what this verse condemns. The prophetic tradition consistently demanded economic justice and generosity toward the vulnerable (Ezekiel 18:7, Amos 2:6-8, Micah 2:1-2). The early church took this seriously, sharing possessions to ensure no one lacked (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-35).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does our treatment of the physically needy reveal the genuineness of our faith?
2. In what ways might we 'hide ourselves from our own flesh' through selective concern or willful blindness?
3. What practical steps can we take to share bread, shelter, and clothing with those in need?

Interlinear Text

הֵל וְאֵ	פֶּרֶס	לִרְעֹב	לֶחֶם בְּ	וְעֲנִיִּים	מְרוּדֵי יָם
H3808	Is it not to deal	to the hungry	thy bread	the poor	that are cast out
	H6536	H7457	H3899	H6041	H4788
וְתָבִיא	בֵּיתְךָ	כִּי	תִרְאֶה	עָרֹם	וְכָסִיתוֹ
and that thou bring	to thy house	H3588	when thou seest	the naked	that thou cover
H935	H1004		H7200	H6174	H3680
וּמִבְּשָׁרְךָ	לֹא	תִתְעַלֵּם:			
not thyself from thine own flesh	H3808	him and that thou hide			
H1320		H5956			

Additional Cross-References

Luke 3:11 (Parallel theme): He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Ezekiel 18:7 (Parallel theme): And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

Proverbs 25:21 (Parallel theme): If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

Proverbs 28:27 (Parallel theme): He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Ezekiel 18:16 (Parallel theme): Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

Isaiah 58:10 (Parallel theme): And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

Proverbs 22:9 (Parallel theme): He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Luke 11:41 (Parallel theme): But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

1 Timothy 5:10 (Parallel theme): Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Daniel 4:27 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

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