



Church is a movement

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EPISODE FOUR.

A movement calling for justice. Isaiah 58

This episode will help you **engage, reflect and respond** to Church is. We encourage you to explore each episode with friends - if you do, let us know! We'd love to hear about it and your thoughts and ideas.

Each episode has a companion video and each episode title mirrors one of its key themes. Thanks for downloading.

Companion video: churchis.co.uk/jillrowe

Episode: FOUR of FOUR



W W W . C H U R C H . C O . U K



A movement calling for justice

Luke 5 (NIV)

Jesus calls his first disciples



'Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.
² For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.
They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.
³ "Why have we fasted," they say,
"and you have not seen it?
Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?"

'Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.

⁴ Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.
You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

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?

⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry



and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter –
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
⁹ Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: here am I.

‘If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
¹⁰ and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.

¹² Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

¹³ ‘If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the Lord’s holy day honourable,
and if you honour it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the Lord,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.’

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Church can be very loud about some things. Like sexuality, and gender, and leadership, and people messing up.

But church can be very quiet on issues of justice. Like poverty, and homelessness, and austerity, and human trafficking, and consumerism, and greed.

Very quiet indeed.

It's as if we pick the things to fight over which suit our preferences. And the things that aren't, the things that don't suit us or our preferred lifestyle choices - we say almost nothing.

The writer in Isaiah makes some stuff pretty clear. The people who were followers of God figured that if they sang the right songs, if they gathered enough times then that was what it was really all about. Except it wasn't and it isn't and it never will be.

The whole point is justice.

And seeing those in need.

And speaking out for them.

And acting to make a tangible and real difference.

And committing to the transformation of communities through the rebuilding of the broken places.

And there is a cost associated with all of this. It isn't an easy ride.

But there is a bit of a quid pro quo - when we do this stuff it actually has the effect of bringing about our own transformation. It is in this activity that we encounter God. Not seeking some kind of holy fix through singing and being caught up in some ecstasy experience. That might be nice, but that's not it. Really. And Isaiah 58 makes it clear.

And that is because it can distract us. We get caught up and we check out.

So Church is a movement of people who refuse to check out; who choose to roll up their sleeves and get plugged in and connected and not count the cost.

That's what church is.



Questions:

Fight

- Who or what are you fighting for currently?
- Have you been fighting for the wrong thing?

Story

- What story does your life tell right now about what matters most to you?

Broken

- Where are the broken places for you to connect with and help to rebuild?
- Have you been too silent? What could you do differently?