

Isaiah 58: A Choral Reading for Three Voices

This choral reading and hymn text are based on Isaiah 58:1-12, one of the Old Testament readings for Ash Wednesday.

A: Shout out, do not hold back!
B: Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
C: Tell my people the wrong they have done.

A: Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
B: as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
C: they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

**ALL: “Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”**

A: Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.
B: Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
C: Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.
A: Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to your God?
B: 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?
C: 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?
A: Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will spring up quickly;
B: your liberator will go before you,
and the glory of God will be all around you.
C: Then you will call, and the Holy One will answer;
you will cry for help, and God will say,

ALL: Here I am.

A: If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
B: if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
C: then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

- A: The Holy One will guide you continually,
satisfying your needs in parched places,
and making your bones strong;
you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.
- B: Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.
- C: If you refrain from trampling the sabbath;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;
then you shall take delight in the Holy One,
and I will make you stand in honor on the earth.

ALL: for the mouth of God has spoken.

Let Us Worship God with Justice

Text: © David Gambrell, 2007 (Isaiah 58)

Possible Tunes: BEACH SPRING, HYFRYDOL, HYMN TO JOY, IN BABILONE, NETTLETON

- (1) Let us worship God with justice, even as we sing and pray.
Let us keep the fast God chooses on this day and every day.
Lift your voice for liberation; speak the truth and never fear,
for the God of our salvation even now is drawing near.
- (2) Share your table with the hungry, share your plenty with the poor;
when you see the tired and homeless offer them an open door.
Comfort those who are afflicted, work to set the captives free.
Live with kindness, never hiding from your human family.
- (3) Then your light will shine like morning and your Savior will appear.
You will call and God will answer: “faithful servant, I am here.”
Then the Holy One will guide you; you will be like living streams.
God will lift the fallen cities and restore the people’s dreams.
- (4) Lift your voice for liberation; speak the truth and never fear,
for the God of our salvation even now is drawing near.
Keep the fast of faith in action on this day and every day.
Worship God with peace and justice, even as we sing and pray.