Out Of Bondage

Opening remarks.

➢ Today marks the beginning of the season of Lent.
   ▪ Lent is a time of introspection.
   ▪ It is a time when we recognize that we cannot do anything on our own to bring about our salvation.
   ▪ We are reminded that we fall short of the mark that God has set for perfection.
   ▪ But we also get reminded that we are not left to our destruction, because God has provided a way of escape.
   ▪ As we do this introspection, we also begin to see those places where we have been faithful to God’s call and those where we have not.

Doing it the wrong way.

➢ The passage begins with a call to the prophet to proclaim at the top of his lungs that Israel is a rebellious and hypocritical nation.
   ▪ They proclaim they want to know God’s ways.
   ▪ They proclaim they are a righteous nation.

➢ The Israelites complain that they have fasted and humbled themselves, but God has not noticed.
   ▪ God always notices, He just does not respond when it is offensive to Him.

➢ God’s response was that their fasting was not about humbling themselves and seeking after God, but about another day and their own pleasure.
   ▪ While they were to be humbling themselves, they were exploiting those who worked for them, quarrelling, and hitting each other over the head with clenched fists.
   ▪ This was not what God had intended the fast to be.
   ▪ This was the outward appearance of doing something for the Lord, but not an inward reality.

Doing it the right way.

➢ God said that acceptable fasting would be that which looked after others rather than quarrelling.
   ▪ Loose the chains of injustice.
   ▪ Set the oppressed free.
   ▪ Share food.
   ▪ Give shelter.
   ▪ Provide clothing.
   ▪ BE HUMANE

➢ It was then that righteousness would actually break upon His people like light at dawn.
   ▪ Healing would appear.
   ▪ God would surround them.
   ▪ Their prayers would be heard and answered.
Out Of Bondage

❖ Haiti

➢ We have come to the end of our unified focus on prayer for Haiti.
   ▪ Already things have been changing.
     • Food is being distributed.
     • School is in session.
     • Clinical work is taking place.
     • The church building project has resumed.
     • The technical school project has also resumed.
     • More children have been sponsored.
     • Gifts for higher education have been donated.
   ▪ God has been at work in Haiti because of the prayers of His people.
   ▪ Thank you.
   ▪ Thank you for coming before God on behalf of the people of Haiti with right motives.
   ▪ Righteousness has broken forth like the light of dawn and God has heard the cries of His people to see the yoke of oppression broken and needs met.

❖ Conclusion

➢ As we continue to press forward toward Easter this Lent, let our introspection be looking at our motives.
   ▪ Are our motives reflecting what the Lord wants of us in everything we do?
   ▪ God loves to hear from His people when we come before Him in humility.

➢ God did not ask Israel to be perfect.
   ▪ He does not ask us to be perfect either.
   ▪ He asks us to come to Him with the right heart attitude.
   ▪ Let us come to God with the right heart attitude everyday as we seek the righteousness of our Savior to be imparted upon us this Easter.

❖ Closing Prayer.

➢ Amen.