

Spiritual Exercises:

Stopping

April 28 & 29, 2007
Matt Hannan

Isaiah 57

20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea,
which cannot rest,
whose waves cast up mire and mud.

21 "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

Isaiah 58

1 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Declare to My people their rebellion
and to the house 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 quarreling 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 a man to humble himself?
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
and for lying on sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?"

(continued)

- 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 him,
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 in 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."