

NETCAST SERMON NOTES

Series: Make Room

Date: September 13th, 2026

Title: Deprivation

Speaker: Matt Chewning

Key Scripture: Matthew 9:14–17 (with Isaiah 54:5, 62:5, Song of Solomon 4–5, Galatians 5:16–24, Romans 8:8–13)

The Big Idea: Fasting is not a religious work to earn God's love or a desperate plea to get Him to care; it is an intentional denial of our physical appetites to make room for a deeper hunger for the Holy Spirit's presence and power.

Sanctification Happens in the Daily Mundane While we often look for dramatic breakthrough moments in our faith walk, most spiritual growth happens through "long obedience in the same direction." It is the daily, ordinary faithfulness—reading Scripture, gathering weekly, and practicing spiritual disciplines like fasting—that slowly shapes our souls over time.

- **A Neglected Mega-Theme:** Fasting is referenced over 70 times across the Old and New Testaments, practiced by Moses, David, Esther, Daniel, the Apostles, and Jesus Himself. Yet many modern believers treat it as optional or confusing.

- **The Bridegroom Has Arrived:** When asked why His disciples didn't fast, Jesus revealed His identity as the long-awaited Bridegroom. Under the New Covenant, we don't fast to earn God's favor; we are already eternally loved, forgiven, and united with Him through Christ.

New Wine Requires Fresh Wineskins Trying to attach Jesus to an old system of self-righteousness ruins both. Fasting under the New Covenant is not about legalistic performance, but about relational longing for the presence of the Bridegroom who is now physically absent but spiritually present through the Holy Spirit.

- **The Danger of Religious Additions:** If our relationship with God relies on our own discipline, morality, or sacrifices to secure His approval, we have missed the grace purchased on the cross.

- **Fasting to Make Room:** Because Jesus ascended and sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, fasting becomes the intentional practice of clearing out distractions to cry out, "Holy Spirit, I want more of You filling every part of me."

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Starving the Flesh to Feed the Spirit We live in a culture that encourages us to feed every appetite immediately—entertainment, comfort, food, scrolling, approval, and pleasure. When we constantly fill ourselves with empty things, we lose our appetite for spiritual things.

- **Full on Empty Things:** Just as eating junk food ruins your appetite for nutritious food, feeding every fleshly desire leaves us spiritually full yet deeply empty, with no room left to hunger for God.
- **Denying Self to Gain Presence:** Fasting is an act of war against the flesh. It declares, "I am going to intentionally stop feeding the strongest appetite of my flesh to make room for the presence of God that I desperately need."
- **Fueling the Mission:** We fast to see marriages restored, addictions broken, prodigals returned, and believers empowered by the Spirit to carry the gospel into their daily lives with supernatural courage and love.

Call to Action / Reflection Question: What empty appetite have you been overfeeding, and what concrete step will you take this week to fast and make room for the Holy Spirit?