

# SEPTEMBER 14<sup>th</sup>

## SERMON TRANSCRIPT

I'm going to invite you to open your Bibles to the book of Matthew, chapter 4.

We're going to start in verse 1.

We're going to be starting a new series today.

It's called At the Table.

And if you know your Bible, you know chapter 4 is about Jesus' fasting, so get ready.

Okay.

But we're going to be reading the first few verses here.

But in order to set the stage and to give you some context, we need to talk about Matthew chapter 3.

In Matthew chapter 3, Jesus' cousin, John, is going out and he's baptizing.

And he's preparing the way for the Messiah.

John, in the first part of his ministry, didn't know who the Messiah was.

He wasn't quite sure exactly how this was all play out.

But God sent him to go and baptize.

Now, what's interesting about the baptism of John is that, you see, we as Christians, when we baptize, our baptism is based on Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

That's why we fully submerge a person in water.

It's symbolic of dying with Jesus and being buried with him and then being raised to new life.

We have to do it in water because we can't bury you in dirt.

That'd be illegal.

I thought that was funny.

I know it wasn't great, but all right.

That's why we use water.

It's symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

As a matter of fact, that's why we here at the church, we believe in full submersion.

We don't sprinkle because we believe Jesus really died.

He didn't just pass out.

I told that to people who sprinkled before, so it's okay.

I can tell that joke in public because I told it to them straight to their face.

It was great.

But we baptize, and the symbol of it, like I said, is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

As a matter of fact, the word baptizo is a Greek word, and it actually doesn't come from a religious word.

It comes from dyeing things, dyeing cloth.

So you would take a cloth, and you'd have whatever color you were going to dye it, and you would stick the cloth in the color, and you would baptizo it.

And when you pulled it out, what would happen?

The cloth would take on the color of whatever color you put it in.

And so for believers today, for Christians today, what we're saying is, I am a follower of Jesus.

It is a public declaration of a spiritual truth that has happened inside of us, that we have died with Christ and the life that we live, we live in him.

And so that's why we baptize.

That's why next week we're going to baptize at the lake.

We're going to get in the water and we're going to go full submersion because we are saying that we are crucified with Christ.

The old man is dead and I live a new life in him.

And that word baptizo is that you're taking on the, you're being fully submerged in him.

Just like a cloth is dyed, we become Christians.

We are dyed with Jesus, if I can say it that way.

But what's interesting is that John is baptizing.

And if Jesus hasn't started his ministry, that means Jesus hasn't died yet.

So why in the world is John baptizing?

What's he doing?

John was preaching a message of repentance, getting people ready for the Messiah.

And it's believed that John's baptism was a branch off of Jewish purity washings, purifying washes that they would do.

But it was filled with the Holy Spirit and made larger in that they were being cleansed spiritually

from their sins to prepare their hearts for the Messiah that was coming.

You know, repentant in Christ, repentance comes first.

We need to repent.

Repent means to turn 180 degrees.

You're walking in one direction and it's the wrong way.

You stop, you turn around, you go back the other way.

That's repentance.

Some people think that repentance is 360 degrees.

Oh, that's bad.

I'm going to turn and keep going back.

That's not repentance.

That only makes you dizzy.

Repentance is the 180 degree turn.

And so John was preaching a baptism of repentance to get ready for the one who was coming.

And then John's cousin Jesus showed up one day and God told him, that's the one.

And John cries out, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

And then Jesus came to him and said, John, baptize me.

And in the gospel, according to Andrew, John said, what are you talking about?

John said, no, I can't baptize you.

You need to baptize me.

Why?

John said, I baptize with water, but there's one coming after me who baptizes in the Holy Spirit and fire.

I'm not even worthy to unstrap his sandals.

Jesus says, John, baptize me.

No.

No.

Jesus says, permit it to be so.

So we do this right.

We fulfill all things.

Jesus is our ultimate example.

Sometimes people ask the question, why do we baptize?

Well, one, Jesus told us to.

But two, Jesus was baptized.

And then scripture says that the heavens were opened.

And we hear that and we think, oh, you know, the heavens were open and it was this nice...

I don't know why there's always just that kind of choir.

It opens and it's just beautiful.

Do you know that the word there in Greek, the word that is used for open, it's a violent opening.

It's a breaking forth.

It's the same word that is used when it says that the curtain in the temple was torn asunder.

God tore asunder the heavens.

Why?



Because the kingdom of God was invading the earth.

And then the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus like a dove.

And you know what the most amazing thing about this statement is?

It's not that the Holy Spirit descended, and it's not even that he descended like a dove.

It's that he descended, and the Bible says that it remained on Jesus.

Because you see, in the Old Covenant, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would come upon a person for a time to complete a task, for a season.

The kings were anointed.

As a matter of fact, this was so important that David wrote in one of the Psalms, Lord, don't take your Holy Spirit from me.

Why?

Because the Holy Spirit had been on Saul and because of Saul's sin, the Holy Spirit was taken from him.

And David was praying, Lord, don't do that to me.

And yet in Jesus, the Holy Spirit didn't just come on him for a time.

the Holy Spirit came and remained on him because he was ushering in a new covenant.

And then God spoke and he said, this is my son.

First of all, just an aside to fathers, it is very important the words that you speak over your children.

Here is the father speaking to Jesus about his identity.

You're my son.

In him I am well pleased.

Fathers, what you tell your kids, their identity is derived from you.

What you say matters.

But it's not just that God is confirming Jesus' identity.

There's more to this.

There's actually a reference here to the Psalms, to Psalms 2.

This was spoken over the kings of Israel.

That the sons of David would be adopted by God and they would be God's sons.

This had immediate implication for Solomon, but this is also a testimony to the people about who Jesus is.

He's the son of David.

He's the son of God.

He is the Messiah.

You need to listen to him.

He speaks with God's authority.

This is my son.

Man, you would think like that.

The first day in your ministry and that happens, that's exciting.

Turn around, start preaching to the crowd.

All right, God's with us.

All right, let's read with me.

Chapter 4, verse 1.

Jesus didn't jump up and preach a sermon.

Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, his identity confirmed by God the Father,

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit.

First of all, this led up, it's not like a gentle leading.

It's the Holy Spirit is moving power.

I can say it like this.

He's pushing Jesus.

Here's the thing.

When we give our lives to Christ, Jesus is the captain of the ship.

You're not.

I'm going to say that again.

When you give your life to Jesus, Jesus is the captain of the ship.

you are no longer the captain of your own ship.

But I want to go do this.

No, no, no.

Jesus comes first and he's the one that, he's the one driving this thing.

And if you go and try to take, wrestle control away from him, you're going to crash the ship.

And Jesus is our ultimate example.

He humbled himself before the Father and the Holy Spirit led him.

He moved him powerfully.

And where did he lead him?

To the temple, to the palace.

To the wilderness.

Now, if this would have been about Andrew, Andrew would have been talking the whole time.

Are you sure, Lord?

Do you know what's in the wilderness?

I don't, but I don't want to find out.

He led him to the wilderness.

The wilderness is scary.

You're by yourself in the wilderness.

It's you and whatever scary sounds are out there.

Wilderness.

God had a son in the Old Testament.

It was Israel.

And Israel went into the wilderness.

And that wasn't a good time for them.

In the wilderness, they faced temptation.

In the wilderness, they compromised with other gods.

In the wilderness, they grumbled against God.

In the wilderness, God made a covenant with them and they immediately broke that covenant.

The wilderness is not a good place.

The wilderness is where Satan likes to hang out.

Where demons like to hang out.

Pagan gods are there.

Hostile forces are there.

And where is the Spirit of God leading Jesus?

To the wilderness.

Why?

To be tempted by the devil.

This does not sound fun, Father.

But you know what?

God tore the heavens open.

The kingdom of God was coming.

Satan's going to come and he's going to show up.

But he's about to have his butt handed to him.

Jesus is the victorious warrior.

He's the victorious king.

Satan's going to think that he's going to show up and he's going to do some damage and he's going to, you don't know, he's about to lose.

But the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the place where Israel failed because Jesus was not going to fail.

Have you ever noticed that some of us struggle with the same problem over and over and over again?



We have patterns.

We have the same struggles over and over and over again.

We keep having to take the same test.

That's because so many of us keep trying to do it by ourselves instead of letting Jesus do it.

Israel kept 40 years in the desert.

If they had just surrendered, it would have been a week.

But it's going to take us 40 years to learn this lesson.

I pray it doesn't take us 40 years to learn the lesson that we just need to give it to Jesus.

That the anger and the bitterness and the unforgiveness and the addiction and whatever it is, it's not worth trying to do it by yourself.

Give it to Jesus.

Because where we fail, he doesn't.

Verse 2.

And after fasting 40 days and 40 nights,

He was hungry.

Matthew has got a gift for understatement right here.

40 days and 40 nights.

First of all, we're talking about Israel in the desert.

That number 40 has got an important significance there.

Jesus is the true son.

Jesus is the victorious son.

40 has got an important number there.

40 days and nights, no food.

No food.

Listen, I go a couple of hours and no food.

I don't just get hungry.

Maybe you can, you know, maybe I'm not the only one this happens to.

Sometimes I get hangry.

I wonder how many fights happen between husband and wife because somebody's hangry.

I wonder how many kids get in trouble because somebody's hangry.

Just calm down.

Here's a Snickers.

It'll be fine.

40 days and 40 nights.

To say Jesus was hungry is an understatement.

You know, you wrestle against, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers of this dark world.

And the way that they attack is through our sin nature, through our flesh.

And so often we just give in to the flesh all the time.

And just staying on the topic of food here, some of us, our stomach is our God.

I'm not going to look at it.

Gluttony is a sin.

Some of us need to know that.

See, because the root of some of that is a lack of self-control.

Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit.

And see, we here in the United States, we're the richest nation in the world.

And we struggle with trusting God for our daily bread because we're so accustomed to going to Costco and getting our bread for the whole month.

But our flesh, see, it lusts after the things of the world and it's fighting with God.

It's fighting with the Spirit of God.

And so if you ever want to know where you stand spiritually, you should deny your flesh and see what happens.

Tell your desires no.

Go without food for the sake of fasting and prayer and see what happens.

Your body's going to start telling you all the reasons why you need to eat and you need to eat now.

See, we can understand it with food, but some of us go into temptation and we think we need it and we need it now.

Some of us have gone so long.

Some of us have gone 40 years without actually giving the thing over to Jesus.

And every time we fall for the same lie that we need it and we need it now.

Pastor, you don't understand.

I need that drink.

I need it.

See, because, listen, both my grandfathers are pastors.

My dad is a pastor.

I'm a pastor.

One day, I counted up how collectively, how much time in ministry, how many years in ministry we had collectively.

Obviously, they have more than me, but I counted it up.

It's over 100 years of ministry.

Not once in that 100 years of ministry, in four generations, has a couple ever come up to one of us and said, Pastor, we were having marriage problems, but then we started drinking and everything got better.

We laugh at that.

But some of us think that we'll solve our problems by going back to that bottle.

Some of us think that we'll solve our problems by going back to that drug.

Some of us think that we'll solve our problems by going back to that screen.

Some of us think that we'll solve our problems by going back.

We end up in the same cycle and for 40 years we're wandering around the desert.

Because we are seeking food that isn't from God and it does not satisfy.

We're not eating from the Lord's table, we're eating from somebody else's table and that food will never satisfy you.

Trying to fill your life up and self-medicating in whatever way you choose to do that won't work.

Some of us self-medicate by gossiping and getting angry

holding on to grudge, oh, pastor, I don't drink and I don't do those things.

Well, some of us are just dealing with anger and bitterness.

And some of us overeat too.

And all of them are of the flesh.

And here's Jesus for 40 days denying his flesh.

Why?

To spend time with the Father.

Why?

Holy Spirit is resting on him.

Jesus regularly got away from the crowds and went to go pray.

And before going public with the ministry, Jesus went in private and spent 40 days praying and fasting.

Denying himself.

Food.

Verse 3.

And then...

the tempter came.

Now this is after the fast.

This wasn't during the fast.

This was after.



The tempter, the accuser, the liar, came and said to him, if, oh man.

Satan is about to ask a question, but he's not really asking a question.

You know, that's a spiritual truth.

If God asks you a question, he's not looking for information from you.

He knows the answer already.

And if Satan is asking you a question, you need to watch out because he's going to try and get you to do something that is not good.

If you are the son of God, I'm sorry, like four verses before,

God split the heavens and said, this is my son.

And what's the first thing out of Satan's mouth?

If.

If you are the son of God.

What's the first thing Satan attacks?

It's Jesus' identity.

Underneath it, it's whether or not you can trust God.

Because who's the one that said Jesus was the son of God?

It was God.

The father said that.

And so by coming and asking if, he's questioning God's goodness, God's authority.

Did God really speak to you?

And he's challenging Jesus' identity.

Mind you, this is Jesus, God in the flesh.

This is Jesus at whose birth angels sang.

And Satan came and did that to him.

He questioned Jesus' identity.

And if he questioned Jesus' identity, don't you think he's going to come and question yours?

Are you really saved?

Really?

Does God really love you?

God loves the whole world, but he's ashamed of you.

Look at you.

Oh, and Satan knows all the sins, both the old ones and the new.

Did God really say?

It's the same type of question that he asked Eve.

Did God really say you couldn't eat of any fruit?

If you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

If you are the son of God, we're questioning God, we're questioning your identity, and now we're going to question your power and God's power.

Could Jesus turn the stones into bread?

No.

Yes, he could.

He could.

Nothing is impossible for Jesus.

If Jesus wanted to, he could have turned the stones to bread.

That would have been easy.

I had this conversation with my sons one time.

We were talking about it and sort of joking.

And we were talking about, could Jesus turn rocks into bread?

Yeah, he could.

And then my sons went with it.

He goes, wait, Daddy, could Jesus have told trees to walk?

Yep.

Yep.

Okay, okay, what about... And then they just started coming up with all kinds of things.

What if he told our house to jump?

Then it would jump.

Could Jesus have told these stones to turn into bread?

Absolutely he could have.

Did he lack power?

No.

But look at the question.

If Jesus would have done this, Jesus would have used power...

to satisfy his own desires.

How many times in human history have we as humans used power to satisfy our own desires?

Whether great power or small power.

The problem with wielding power like that is that when you do it to satisfy your own desires, it's not an appropriate use of power.

It's an illegitimate use of power to satisfy yourself.

And so Satan is challenging Jesus' commitment to the Father's will.

Because Jesus is fasting right now.

Jesus also, later in the Gospels, tells the Pharisees, I only do what I see my Father doing.

And in this moment, me and the Father, we're fasting.

We're spending time praying and talking.

We're talking.

We're not eating right now.

There will come a time

When the father is going to multiply bread and fish.

And so the son is going to multiply bread and fish.

There's going to come a time when he's going to feed thousands of people from nothing.

From a kid's lunch.

There's going to come a time when the father is going to say, go ahead Jesus, turn the water into wine.

And there's going to be more than enough.

But right now is not that time.

Right now is the time for prayer and fasting.

And Jesus understood what time he was in.

He had discernment.

He understood what was going on with the will of the Father.

And so for Satan to come and challenge Jesus' identity, challenge the goodness of God, tempt him to use power for his own selfish desires, and to satisfy his flesh...

But Jesus has been fasting for 40 days.

Jesus is hungry.

This is a potent temptation.

Why?

Because if Jesus wasn't hungry, trying to tempt him to turn rocks into bread was not gonna be that big of a deal.

But Satan only shows up when you're, I'm gonna steal my grandpa's word, when you're discombobulated.

That's when Satan shows up.

That's also why Satan wants to keep you in that state.

Satan wants to keep you so wound up and so stressed out and so emotional and all of that because then when he comes and asks you a question, you'll be more likely to follow his leading because you're all mixed up.

There's a storm and it's loud and there's winds and there's waves and I'm being tossed to and fro.

And it's in those moments where we're tempted the most to give in to fear.

It's in those moments that we're tempted the most to give in to the thing that's held us captive for years.



But in those moments, it's so important for us to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Because when we keep our eyes on Jesus, we can walk on the water and it's not going to touch us.

So what does Jesus answer Satan?

Verse 4.

And Jesus answered...

It is written.

Jesus didn't answer him and say, you're stupid, get out of here.

Jesus didn't answer him in any other way except with the word of God.

It is written.

Listen, it's very important for you, Christian, to read that word because it is written.

It is written.

So many of us lose battles against the enemy and give in to temptation because we don't know what is written.

Not only do we need to know what's written, we need to live out and do what's written.

This is vitally important to your Christian walk.

This is vitally important.

In a culture that is turned upside down.

Where Satan is attacking every which way.

Satan is gone after our youth for generations.

Satan has got people convinced that a boy is a girl and a girl is a boy.

People are killing each other.

Because we can't have a peaceable conversation anymore.

Satan is trying so hard to rip our culture and our people and our youth apart.

And the answer to the chaos in our culture and in our country, it's not a political answer because the problem is a spiritual problem.

So the answer can't be political.

The answer has to be spiritual.

The answer is Jesus.

But we won't win against the enemy.

If we don't know what is written.

Because Jesus answered, it is written.

When Satan tries to come to you and say, does God really love you?

You can say, Satan, you can be quiet because it is written.

For God so loved me.

I'm part of the world.

For I have good plans for you, says the Lord.

The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want.

That's old English.

What does that mean?

I want the Lord?

Yes, you want the Lord.

It means you lack no good thing.

He is my refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble.

You're alone.

You're by yourself.

God has abandoned you.

Nope, he will never leave me nor forsake me.

It is written.

The answer whenever Satan shows up is, it is written.

It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

See, Jesus was spending 40 days in the desert not eating physical food.

But Jesus was full.

Because the Holy Spirit was with him.

Jesus was full because he was sustained by every word that was spoken by the mouth of the Father.

So I was saying a moment ago, so many of us are trying to fill ourselves with bread that does not satisfy.

Because listen, you could eat physical bread and have food in your stomach and not be satisfied.

You can be eating steak and lobster every night and not be satisfied.

Your belly could be full and your family's falling apart.

You could eat your favorite food and your marriage is being destroyed.

You can be having gourmet cooking and your kids are lost because true food comes from the Father.

Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

That is true food.

That will satisfy and sustain you.

That will change your marriage.

That will change your family.

That will break the addiction.

That, the word of God, the living word of God,

The thing that is able to pierce to the very core of who we are.

It is written.

It is written.

Satan thought he was going to get Jesus.

Satan thought he was going to win.

I'm going to attack his identity.

Oh, this is going to be a good one.

This will be a good one.

I did this to Adam and Eve.

I did this to Israel.

I did this to David.

I got David to use power to satisfy his flesh.

I had him kill Bathsheba's husband.

I did this to all of them.

I'm going to do this to Jesus.

And he ran headlong into a brick wall.

Uh-oh.

There's something different about Jesus.

Uh-oh.

We're in trouble.

And the same Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is in you.

You don't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

You need to know what is written.

Jesus is our example.

We follow Jesus.

Jesus went and fasted for 40 days and 40 nights.

You know, the first day that Jesus went out to fast where Jesus humbled himself before the Father, he won the victory.

Satan showed up.

Jesus just informed him, you lost already.

And you're going to keep losing.

Oh, that's a wonderful statement.

Some of us need that in our lives.

Satan keeps showing up and we think, oh, we're going to lose.



That's it.

We're going to be destroyed.

No, no, no, no, no, no.

Jesus doesn't lose.

Somebody over here heard this.

I'm not sure about this side, Lorena.

I'm a little bit worried about this side.

I'm going to say this one again.

Jesus doesn't lose.

Jesus doesn't lose.

Satan has no power over Jesus.

So when Satan comes to attack, when Satan comes breathing out threats of violence like Goliath did, when Satan comes roaring like a lion, we run to Jesus who says, it is ridden.

And Satan loses.

But if we try to sustain ourselves on bread that comes from Satan's table and we rely on our own strength and power,

We'll lose.

We'll lose.

But the reason we lose is because we don't connect ourselves to the source of life.

So how do we connect ourselves to him?

How do we make sure that we are following him so closely that we win?

Listen, the answer is very simple.

We need to be a people.

Love the word.

We need to read this thing.

We need to do this thing.

And we need to believe this thing.

Pastor, that's too simple.

It's simple.

It is not easy.

Here's something else.

You want to tap into the source of all life and resurrection power?

You need to pray.

Pastor, I know that.

There's got to be some secret.

There's got to be something more complex.

No, no, no, no.

It's simple.

It's not easy.

We need to pray and draw near to God.

But that takes dedication.

That takes a willing spirit to say, I'm going to do this.

Listen, let's take it out of the spiritual and go into the physical real quick.

Do you know how to lose weight?

It's simple.

Eat less and exercise more.

That's it.

That's the magic thing.

All the diets and everything, eat less and exercise more.

Simple.

Not easy.

Not easy.

There are some things in life that are simple, but are not easy.

They're not.

Devoting ourselves to prayer and God's word is simple.

Christians throughout generations have known this.

We've done it.

But it is not easy.

It is not easy to deny ourselves and seek after him.

To tell our flesh, no.

Do you know how hard it is to tell yourself no?

I am amazing at talking myself into doing things.

I have a talent and it's that.

We do it all the time.

I'm going to, I can, I can.

It's just, it's okay.

It's a little bit.

No, no, no.

We need to connect with the source of resurrection power, with the source of the miraculous, with the source of all things good, with God himself.

We need to pray.

We need to dive into his word.

On Friday and on Saturday, we're having a revival.

We're going to invite as many people as we possibly can because our nation needs Jesus.

They need Jesus.

Jesus is the only one who's going to change things.

I want to ask your help to invite as many people as we can, not so we can boast and say, look how cool we are, look how many people.

No, because they need Jesus.

He's the only one who's going to turn our country around.

But it's going to fail if we don't pray.

It won't work.

Jesus had his identity confirmed by God.

The Holy Spirit came upon him, and yet Jesus still went into the desert to pray and fast.

We need to pray and fast.

We need to stop eating at our table and start eating at the Lord's table.

So here's what I'm going to do.

As your pastor, I'm calling for a church-wide fast, starting today and going until 5 o'clock on Friday.

Okay.

Because on 5 o'clock on Friday, we're going to have some food.

I'm going to break my fast on that day.

What is fasting?

Fasting is going without food for a set amount of time to use that time to pray and seek the Lord.

Now, we're in the modern century, too.

Our fast should probably include cutting back, if not completely cutting out, electronics.

But at its core, fasting is denying our flesh.

It revolves around food.

And it's a more intense or focused time of prayer.

How are we going to do it?

Turn with me to Daniel chapter 10.

If you've never fasted with us before or you've never done a fast before, the way that I like to do it is to base it off of what Daniel did here.

This is Daniel.

Daniel in the lion's den.



Daniel.

Prophet Daniel.

Visions from God.

Daniel.

Daniel.

Daniel is seeking the Lord.

Look at what Daniel writes in Daniel chapter 10, verse 2.

In those days, I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks.

So he was fasting for three weeks.

21 days.

Verse 3.

I ate no delicacies.

No meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all for a full three weeks.

Now, delicacies is what he says there.

And you say, Pastor, what's a delicacy?

That's for you to determine.

I'm not going to ask that we completely cut out food from today until Friday.

Some of us can't do that.

What I am asking is that you figure out what it is in your life that is a delicacy.

That word there in Hebrew is highly esteemed or highly favored.

This is my thing.

Thank you.

You know what's amazing is that Daniel does this and that word there, highly esteemed, highly favored, that's translated delicacies.

It shows up again when the angel comes and gives Daniel the answer at the end of 21 days.

And he says, oh Daniel, highly favored.

It's the same word there that's translated delicacies.

Daniel denied himself something that was highly favored.

And by doing that, he himself spiritually became highly favored.

Some of us missed that.

We'll get that in a little bit.

But highly favored.

You're going to deny yourself something to draw closer to God.

And by doing that, God sees you as highly favored and esteemed.

No delicacies, no meat, no wine entered my mouth.

So I said, you're going to decide what delicacies are.

For me, meat is one of those.

We're in Texas, man.

I've shared this story before, but one of the first times that we were fasting as a church, I wasn't eating meat.

I was doing the Daniel fast, 21 days.

We went out with some friends and I had to order a very sad salad.

And I went to the teenage girl behind the counter and I said, I want the chicken salad with no chicken.

She looked at me, what?

I know, just, I want vegetarian, like just,

I didn't want to say vegetarian, but I said it.

I was worried about here in Texas.

I said, you know, vegetarian, just no meat.

She says, okay, okay, I got you.

They come to the table.

I'm excited to eat.

And you know what was on top of my salad?

Bacon.

Bacon's not considered meat in Texas.

It's just a garnish.

That's what I found out.

But do you know how difficult it is to be picking out bacon out of your ranch and the salad is terrible?

Lord, I'm doing this for you.

Deliver me from evil.

We need you, Jesus.

And do you know what?

You deny yourself.

And what starts to happen, Satan will come up with all the reasons why you need the thing.

People you don't even know will walk up to you and try to give you the thing.

I've shared this story before, but one of the times I was fasting back in my home, a pastor that I was interning for never did this before and never did it since.

But I was fasting.

I wasn't eating sugar either.

I wasn't eating meat or sugar.

And somebody made cookies or something.

And he said, oh, Andrew, you've got to try this.

I said, no, thank you.

He said, no, you've got to try it.

I said, no, I'm okay.

And then he grabbed the thing and put it to my mouth.

Never had this man ever done anything like that to me.

And he put it to my mouth and we were friends and I looked at him and I said, I'm fasting.

Get thee behind me, Satan.

Oh, Andrew, I'm so sorry.

It's amazing.

And you know what else when we fast?

When you want the thing, when you want the bacon, when you want the brownie, when you want the hamburger, you're going to use that as an internal alarm for you to pray.

Every time you think about the thing, which let me tell you will be often, you're going to pray.

In addition, we're going to spend some more intentional time praying.

And here's what also happens when we try to pray.

This is why I said it's simple, but it's not easy.

Have you ever noticed that when you try to pray, your phone is going to ring?

Your neighbors who you haven't seen in 25 years are going to come knock on your door.

Everybody in the house can't find something and they're going to need your help to find it.

It's going to go crazy.

That's why Jesus said, go into your closet and lock the door.

And if he was in the 21st century, he'd say, turn off your cell phone too.

My professor used to say, you never notice when you sit down to pray, you start thinking about all the things that you need to do for the next like six months.

You think of every chore, every dish that's got to be done in the next six months.

And he says, you know what you need to do?

You need to quiet the monkeys.

Because the monkeys go crazy when you're trying to focus on the Lord.

It's simple, but it's not easy.

And we as a church are going to be praying and fasting this week.

We're not going to eat any delicacies.



We're going to give those to the Lord this week and we're going to spend more intentional time praying.

And here's what we're going to be praying for.

First, we're going to be praying as we say no to our flesh.

We're going to pray, Lord, let me hear you clearly.

Because we need to hear from the Lord.

We need to hear him say, this is my beloved son.

We need to hear him speak our identity over us.

We need to hear his word clearly.

So when the enemy comes, we can say, it is written.

We need to hear the Lord.

And the other we're going to pray for is, Lord, let me hear you clearly.

And Lord, bring people on Friday and Saturday who will hear you.

Let them hear you.

We don't want Satan showing up and twisting and stealing seed

From the word being spoken to the ears.

We want people who will come to hear the word of the Lord.

Because it's only Jesus.

It's only Jesus who will save and redeem our nation.

It's only Jesus who will save and redeem our children.

It's only Jesus who will save and redeem our families, our marriages.

It's only Jesus who makes all things new.

And so we're going to pray and fast and we're going to pray for those two things.

Lord, let me hear you and bring people so they can hear you.

I believe that the Lord is going to do some really incredible things in our country.

But I don't think it'll be easy.

But the answer is simple.

Jesus.

Jesus.

We need more of Jesus.

More Jesus in our lives.

More Jesus in our homes.

Jesus makes all things new.

So I'm asking you as your pastor to pray and fast with me this week.

And then we're going to watch God work.

And I'm believing for signs, wonders, and miracles.

And the greatest miracle of all is when a soul is set free.

As the worship team comes forward, let's pray.

Father, we praise you and we thank you, Lord, for there's no one like you.

Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus.

Because you make all things new.

Thank you, Jesus, that in you we have freedom.

In you we have victory.

Lord, I thank you that we're not living from a place of defeat, but we're living from the place of your victory.

And so, Lord, help us to draw closer to you this week.

Lord, as we, your people, as we, your church, as we humble ourselves and we pray and we seek your face this week, Lord.

I pray, Lord, I pray for us individually in our homes, in the quiet time, in the time when nobody's around, in the time when Satan whispers in those little moments.

Father, I pray that you shut those things down in those moments, Lord.

I pray you give us victory in the small moments, Lord.

And that those victories that add up in the small moments will be manifested in the big moments, Lord.

I pray, Lord, that you would give us victory this week as we seek your face and as we pray.

I pray, Lord, that we would hear you clearly.

And so we pray, like Samuel said, speak, Lord, for your children, your servant.

We're listening.

Help us to listen, Lord.

Help us to quiet the monkeys that we can listen to you, Lord.

Father, we also pray that you would bring people from the north, south, east, and west, Lord.

People who are hurting.

People who are broken.

People who are questioning.

People who need an encounter with you, Lord.

And that you would bring them.

And that you would speak, Lord, that they would hear you.

That they would hear your call, Lord.

Your call to repentance.

Your call to new life.

that you would send revival, Lord, and start with us.

So Holy Spirit, we invite your presence.

Be with us.

And Lord, as we enter into this moment of worship, I pray, Lord, that as we worship you, and Lord, as we come to the altar to pray, as we come to the altar, Lord, to tell you what it is that we're going to

refrain from this week.

As we come to the altar, Lord, in a moment to lay things down, as we come to the altar, Lord, to seek your face, I pray, Lord, that you would begin to move during this worship time and during this time in the altar.

Oh, Lord, that we would encounter you this morning.

We love you, Jesus, and it's in your name that we pray.