

FASTING

Matt 6.16-18

This is the final in a Triad of “private things”.

Private prayer Private giving Private fasting

Two thoughts:

First of all, bit of a recap from a couple of months ago:

To operate in The Sermon on the Mt requires

Radical internalization Radical obedience Radical action

I must turn on the eyes of faith,

SEE into another realm

ACCEPT the truth of it

OBEY the invisible truth

ACT on the invisible truth

Second, since the Christian walk is private...

Jesus is pointing to the fact that a Believers walk is private, intimate and personal *and that's where our strength lies*.

Public times for these things? Absolutely.

-Prayer: I would that men everywhere would pray, lifting holy hands...

Any sick among you, (James)?

-Giving: One the first day of the week... 1 Cor 16.2

-Fasting: OT called all Israel for a fast; times of Prayer and Fasting for the church.

Several types of fasting:

1. Normal Jewish (eastern) fasting is from sunrise to sunset, sunset to sunset
Common practice... "WHEN you fast..."
...this is an excellent way to begin the discipline of fasting...
2. Extended fasting, days or even weeks.
Special occasions; deep need; led by the Spirit
3. Sexual fasting for a married couple (1 Cor 7)

John Piper writes: *Christian fasting is the hunger of a homesickness for God.*

First, fasting IS an expected discipline.

Jesus assumed the disciples would fast after he was resurrected (Luke 5:33–34).

Our passage in Sermon on Mt... "When you fast..."

Fasting does NOT make you spiritual or holy (See Isaiah 58)

Fasting is NOT a hunger strike to get God's attention so He'll ANSWER.

Fasting is NOT just food!

So what DOES fasting DO??

Fasting creates a humble, broken spirit.

Yes, when you fast, *you'll feel sick and weak!*

Whenever we GIVE UP something, we feel LOSS...

That LOSS can break a hard heart; soften my spirit;

Pushes me toward more dependency on Christ

Fasting opens the heart to prayer.

We remove distractions; simplify;

...release ourselves from the "chattering" around us

Fasting tends to reveal your dependency on the visible realm.

Do I really need that food so often?

I'm shocked at how much I rely on my cell phone.

I'm stunned at how addicted I am to Facebook!

Wow, I've really spent that many hours watching TV and not reading the Word?

Oh my...I spend ONE HOUR reading the newspaper, but only 20 minutes in Word.

:do I need to change that?

Fasting breaks our reliance on resources.

When I give up food for a period of time...

I am giving up a NECESSARY resource for my physical body.

I then have to depend on spiritual food for my soul...because...

"Man does not live by bread alone but by every word..."

Fasting brings reward!

His revelation, His supply!