

The Power of Prayer and Fasting

There is power released when we pray and fast. Tonight I want to focus on the fasting side although they often go together.

Mark 9:25-29 TPT “Now when Jesus saw that the crowd was quickly growing larger, He commanded the demon, saying, “Deaf & mute spirit, I command you to come out of him and never enter him again!” **26.** The demon shrieked and threw the boy into terrible seizures & finally came out of him! As the boy lay there, looking like a corpse, everyone thought he was dead. **27.** But Jesus stooped down, gently took his hand, and raised him up to his feet, and he stood there completely set free.” **TPT:“Luke 9:43** adds, “Everyone was awestruck. They were stunned seeing the power and majesty of God flow through Jesus.”

28. “Afterwards, when Jesus arrived at the house, His disciples asked Him in private, “Why couldn’t we cast out the demon?” **29.** He answered them, “This type of powerful spirit can only be cast out by fasting and prayer*.” **SFLB note:** “Some demons are stronger than others, and we must be adequately prepared to engage in spiritual battle.” I’ve advised people before going through deliverance that they fast as well as pray beforehand.

***TPT note:** “As translated from the Aramaic and some Greek manuscripts. Many reliable Greek texts leave out “fasting.” However, the word fasting was found on a fragment going back to the third century. Our lives must be saturated with the presence of God through prayer and fasting in order to conquer the evil that is in the world & hiding in the hearts of mankind.”

Matt. 6:16-18 “*When [not if] you fast, don’t look like those who pretend to be spiritual. They want everyone to know they’re fasting so they appear in public looking miserable, gloomy, and disheveled (or “disfigured their faces”). Believe Me, they’ve already received their reward in full.*” **The attention they desired**

and received from others is their reward in full. “When you fast, don’t let it be obvious, but instead, wash your face (or “put oil on your head”) and groom yourself and realize that your Father in the secret place is the One who is watching all that you do in secret and will continue to reward you.” Fasting has a reward!

Paul’s Sufferings for Christ Required Fasting (sleep & food)

2 Cor. 11:27-28 NKJV **In Fastings Often** “in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, **in fastings often**, in cold and nakedness – **28. besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**”

Other accounts of Paul’s fastings: **Acts 9:8-9 TPT** After Saul, later Paul, was struck down to the ground by the Lord on his way to persecute the believers in Damascus, he was blind.

8. “Saul stood to his feet, and even though his eyes were open he could see nothing – he was blind. So the men had to take him by the hand and lead him into Damascus. 9. For three days he didn’t eat or drink and couldn’t see a thing.” Fasting will open our spiritual eyes to new dimensions of God’s reality.

Acts 13:1-3 TPT “At the church as Antioch there were a number of prophets and teachers of the Word, including Barnabas, Simeon from Niger, Lucius the Libyan, Manean (the childhood companion of King Herod Antipas), and Saul. **2.** While they were worshiping as priests before the Lord (**NKJV** “ministering to the Lord”) **in prayer and fasting**, the Holy Spirit said, “I have called Barnabas & Saul to do an important work for Me. Now, release them to go and fulfill it. **3. So after they had fasted & prayed, they laid hands on them and sent them off** [**TPT note:** “Or “dispatched them” (a military term). This was the commissioning of Barnabas and Saul as apostles. The word apostle means “sent one.” They were sent by the Holy Spirit and by the church and released as missionaries. The New Testament shows there were many other apostles besides the Twelve.”] Fasting and

prayer are important aspects of commissioning five-fold ministry & elders. They are part of our ministry to the Lord!

Kings & Priests Unto God

Rev. 1:5b-6 TPT “Now to the One who constantly loves us and has loosed us from our sins by His own blood, 6. and to the One Who has appointed us as a kingdom of priests to serve His God and Father – to Him be glory & dominion throughout the eternity of eternities! Amen!” As in Acts 13’s fasting & praying, fasting is a ministry of worship & service unto the Lord God that we, as priests of God, are called to perform!

Prayer & fasting to install elders

Acts 14:23 TPT “Paul and Barnabas ordained leaders, known as elders, from among the congregations in every church they visited. **After prayer and fasting**, they publicly committed them into the care and protection of the Lord of their faith.” **TPT note:** “The appointment of elders among the people dates back to the days of Moses in the wilderness. [In] **Ex. 18:21** … the word used to describe these leaders is *khayil*, or “mighty men of valor.” The word *khayil* is also used for the radiant church (commonly known as the “*virtuous woman*” found in Prov. 31). These elders were the pastors and leaders of the churches, ordained by the apostles.”

A Heathen City Under Judgment Fasts & Repents

Jonah 3:1-5 Jonah goes to Nineveh. 1. “YAHWEH spoke to the prophet Jonah **for the second time.**” **TPT note:** “God was not finished with Jonah. He spoke to him a second time. Past failures cannot annul the grace of God in our lives. Our Father will discipline those He loves and will restore them to their calling and mission. Ministry is not an earned position; it is a grace-gift.” 2. “Arise!” He said, “Leave at once for the great city of Nineveh and preach to the people the message I give you.” 3. This time, Jonah set out for Nineveh in obedience to the word

of YAHWEH. Now Nineveh was a very important city to God. It took three days to traverse the entire city. **4.** When Jonah entered the city, he walked a day's journey and began to preach: "God will destroy this city in forty days!"

A City Turns to God. **5.** "The people of Nineveh believed Jonah's message and turned to God. To show they had repented, **they called for a fast*** and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them." ***WW**"Heb. word *tsom*; a day of fasting; a time set aside to mourn or pray with no provision for one's normal food needs. Fasting is a voluntary denial of food. In the OT, the verb "fast" is sometimes coupled with the words "weep," "mourn," or "lay in sackcloth," all expressing intensity. Fasting is an action contrary to that first act of sin in the human race, which was eating what was forbidden. Fasting is refusing to eat what is allowed."

6. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat down in ashes [The king's actions were classic expressions of mourning and repentance in the ancient Near East.]. He then issued this proclamation: "People of Nineveh, by decree of the king and his nobles, no person or animal, herd or flock, may eat anything; they must not consume any food or water. **8.** Each of you must cover yourself and your livestock with burlap and call on God with all your might. Everyone must run away from his or her evil ways and violent behavior. **9.** Who knows? Perhaps God may show us mercy and be willing to change His mind. Perhaps He will relent and turn from unleashing His fierce anger so that we will not die."

God Forgives. **10.** When God saw their sincere efforts to turn from their wicked ways, He decided not to punish the people of Nineveh and did not bring upon them the disaster He said would come." God's justice is tempered with mercy. He doesn't want to punish except that it's necessary to turn people from their sinful

ways. His correction can also reveal His greater purposes to us (i.e. Jonah in the fish).

Jer. 18:7-8 “If I speak of uprooting, breaking down, or destroying a nation or a kingdom, and that nation turns back from its wicked ways, then I will turn back from the disaster that I planned against it.” However, Nineveh returned to its wicked ways & God destroyed it, as He said He would, 100 years later!

Other fasts in the Bible include **The Danial Fast**, which is not considered by some to be a true fast as it includes vegetables.

Dan. 1:8 “However, Daniel determined in his heart not to contaminate himself with the food and wine from the royal table, so he begged the chief official to exempt him from the royal diet.” **TPT note:** “All Babylonian (Assyrian) food was considered ritually unclean. In a sense, when Daniel rejected the food of Babylon, he was also rejecting the identity of the name given to him in v. 7 (“Belteshazzar”). Daniel’s allegiance was not to Babylon but to the King of Glory.”

11. “Daniel then appealed to the overseer whom the chief officer put in charge over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Daniel said to him, **12.** “Test us, your servants, for ten days. Give us only **seeds to eat** and water to drink. **TPT note:** “The predominant meaning of the Hebrew word *hazzero* is “something sown” or “that which is produced by seeds,” possibly “vegetables.”

13. Then afterward, compare our appearance with those of the young men who eat the king’s food. Then you can decide what to do with us.” **14.** So the overseer agreed to do what they requested and tested them for ten days. **15.** And when the ten days were completed, they looked healthier and had even gained weight. The four Hebrew young men were in better physical condition compared to any of the others who had eaten their food from the royal table. **16.** So the guard replaced their diet of royal food & wine with vegetables and water.”

Next week I plan to share thoughts from Isa. 58 “Fasting that Pleasees God”. I hope you’re participating in the “21 Day Fast”.