



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

**“Starve the Flesh
– Feed the Soul”**
Matthew 6:16-18

THE PARADOX

The God who invented flavor tells His people to go hungry.

16“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18 (ESV)

CONTEXT: What Jesus Is Confronting

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**The hypocrites had taken something beautiful
and made it performance.**

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The hypocrites had taken something beautiful
and made it performance.

Jesus isn't rejecting fasting.
He's redeeming it.

CONTEXT: What Jesus Is Confronting

“Return to me with all your heart, with fasting,
with weeping, and with mourning.”

Joel 2:12 (ESV)

CONTEXT: What Jesus Is Confronting

**“Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say,
‘Here I am.’”**

Isaiah 58:9 (ESV)

CONTEXT: What Jesus Is Confronting

“The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

Matthew 9:15 (ESV)

PRESCRIPTION: What Jesus Commands

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There’s something about an empty stomach that an empty inbox can’t replicate.

Fasting reveals what really controls us.

Fasting is you starving your flesh to feed your soul

PRESCRIPTION: What Jesus Commands

The point is hiddenness. Fasting is not a performance for people. It’s a posture before God.

PRESCRIPTION: What Jesus Commands

Why We Avoid It

We're too full.

“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.”

Luke 21:34 (ESV)

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Fasting is the anti-algorithm. It's the counter-practice to everything our culture has trained us to do.

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

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Information is not the same thing as intimacy.

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Knowing about someone is not knowing them.

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

**“And this is eternal life, that they know you,
the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom
you have sent.”**

John 17:3 (ESV)

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

**“Indeed, I count everything as loss because
of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ
Jesus my Lord.”**

Philippians 3:8 (ESV)

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

**“On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord,
did we not prophesy in your name, and cast
out demons in your name, and do many
mighty works in your name?’ And then will I
declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart
from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”**

Matthew 7:22–23 (ESV)

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

**“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants
my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for
God, for the living God. When shall I come and
appear before God?”**

Psalm 42:1–2 (ESV)

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

What fasting does is create space for intimacy.

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What fasting does is create space for intimacy.

“Fasting is the hungry handmaid of faith. It says, I am so hungry for You, God, that I will not be distracted by lesser hungers.”

John Piper

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

The Reward:

Fasting doesn’t move God. It moves us.

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

The Gospel:

“The gracious and merciful God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His only Son, God in human flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over death in the resurrection so that anyone who would repent and believe may be reconciled to the Father forever.”

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

The reward of seeking God is intimacy with God.

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

The War:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

MOTIVATION: Why Jesus Wants This for Us

The War:

We are not fighting for victory. We are fighting from victory.

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

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

Matthew 4:4 (ESV)

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

When you fast, let it be focused prayer.

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When you fast, let it be focused prayer.

You don't have to fast - you get to fast.

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

Next Week's Call:

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- Option 1: Fast from Saturday dinner until Sunday communion**

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Next Week's Call:

- Option 1: Fast from Saturday dinner until Sunday communion**
- Option 2: Fast from Saturday morning until Sunday communion**

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

The Bridegroom is Coming

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Christian fasting is about having tasted—and wanting more.

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

The Bridegroom is Coming

“We have tasted the powers of the age to come, and our new fasting is not because we are hungry for something we have not tasted, but because the new wine of Christ’s presence is so real and so satisfying... we have tasted it so wonderfully by the Spirit - and now cannot be satisfied until the consummation of joy arrives.” John Piper

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

Matthew 5:6 (ESV)

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

“Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready.”

Revelation 19:7 (ESV)

APPLICATION: What This Looks Like

I don't want to be found stuffed with the world.
I want to be found hungry.