



The Benefits of Prayer and Fasting When Combined

Text: Mathew 17:19- 21; Isaiah 58:6-8

Mathew 17:19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? **20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. 21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. [1]**

Isaiah 58: **6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy^d burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?**

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.[2]

I firmly believe that prayer is by far the greatest activity of the human soul. There is no activity that can come even close to the glory that prayer will produce.

Prayer is a rather simple activity, yet at the same time, I am convinced that we have not fully come to understand the incredible significance of prayer in our walk.

Prayer will pull down the mighty armies of the Heavenly Host. It will cause angels to work on our behalf.

Sometimes we think that prayer has to be fancy to be effective. The most powerful prayers ever prayed are simple, direct, and to the point. God is a good God.

We must consider, however, that the Word of God, and Jesus Christ himself make bold statements regarding prayer being made more effective when it is coupled together with fasting.

We know that Fasting is a Biblical practice and that it is for us today. What are the benefits of prayer and fasting?

1. Benefit #1 is for personal sanctity and humbling of the soul.

In Psalm 35:13 the Psalmist said, **13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled^d my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. [3]**

Jesus said in Mathew 5:4: **“Blessed are those who mourn.”**

When we humble ourselves before our Maker, we find a great blessing in store for all.

Some may not fast because they may not see the good in fasting, thus we are endeavoring to bring out the benefits of fasting tonight.

Personal sanctity is a huge benefit. Fasting, when done with the right motives, purges the soul of negative influences, emotions, and desires.

If humility is the basic ingredient of true holiness, the soil in which grace flourishes, then is it not needful that from time to time we humble ourselves with fasting as did also David of old?

Underneath many of our besetting sins and personal failures, behind the many ills that infect the body of Christ and clog the channels of Christian service, with all the clashing of personalities and temperaments, the strife and division,

underneath it all lies that tricky pride of the human heart.

So how can fasting help us here? On the negative side, pride and a constantly and overly full stomach are old buddies. Many people may not realize that this verse of scripture is, in fact, in the Holy Writ, but in context of the last days generation, which I firmly believe is us, Jesus said in Luke 21:34, **34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.** [4] What day was Jesus referring to? The catching away of His bride!

In a day when the buffet is very popular, and I am one of those who enjoy buffets, and I am certainly not preaching against the buffet style of restaurant, however, gorging ourselves until our stomachs are just about to burst and there is only a couple of inches of space in our esophagus is neither healthy physically, emotionally, nor spiritually. Gorging ourselves becomes a weight, literally and emotionally. This is where the benefit of fasting kicks in: it has been said that if you can do something for 30 days that it will become a habit for you. Fasting is certainly a positive habit to form in your life.

Benefit #2 according to Isaiah 58 and verse 4, fasting will make our voices to be heard on high:

Ezra 8:21-23 says, **21** Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. **22** For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God *is* upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him. **23** **So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.** [5]

So an incredible benefit of fasting is that it opens up the spiritual channels to Heaven and makes our prayers more effective. If you think about it, God hears prayers that come from humble hearts. If fasting humbles us, then our prayers will be heard much quicker by Him!

Benefit # 3 is to change the mind of God.

Some people may say that this cannot be done, however, we read in Jonah 3: **1** **And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,** **2** **Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.** **3** **So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding a great city of three days' journey.** **4** **And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.**

5 **So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.** **6** **For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.** **7** **And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published b through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: **8** **But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands.** **9** **Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?** **10** **And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.****

God was going to destroy Ninevah, but because the people humbled themselves with fasting and cried out to God in prayer, the mind of God was changed. God repented of the evil, or of the judgment.

Benefit # 4 is to free the captives:

Fasting is not to bring people into bondage, but rather to loose them from bondage. I firmly believe that more Christians would fast if they had a better understanding of what it will accomplish in their lives and in the church as a whole. We cannot afford not to fast.

Benefit # 5 is for deliverance.

Isaiah 58:6 tells us that fasting breaks every yoke.

(read story on page 66 of book, "God's Chosen Fast.")

Benefit #6 is great revelation that comes to us in the Holy Ghost.

God will show us things that we need to see: fresh direction will come. Peace of mind will come. Powerful thoughts to share with others will come. Forgiveness will come.

Benefit # 7 is for health and healing.

Isaiah 58:8 tells us that it will accomplish this: **“Your health shall spring up speedily.”**

I am firmly convinced that many health ailments would be solved, or at least greatly reduced if people would just at least have a regular fasting schedule, such as once per week. Did you know that if you will fast once per week that amounts to 52 days of fasting per year?! And even if you wind up with a dozen weeks out of the year where you don't fast, you still have accomplished one 40 day fast each year, spread out! That is amazing when you think about it!

Just as the body needs sleep, so also, the systems of the body needs rest from all the constant work it does in processing the food we intake. Think about it: what kind of miserable shape would you be in if you never slept? So it is with the body if it never gets any rest from the constant job of processing food, and the body wears out much too quickly. Fasting gives your body rest from its constant work so that it can focus on ridding itself of harmful poisons, and cancer causing toxins. If your body is always focusing on processing new food, then there is a constant build-up of old stuff within the body systems. The end result is not pretty. Thank God for the incredible physical benefits of fasting. If that alone were good enough reason to fast, then why don't we engage in it more with all the spiritual benefits: the answer is simple: Satan knows that if the true Church of Jesus Christ will ever wake up to this powerful resource, that she will never be the same again, and Satan certainly does not want that to happen!

Yes, there is power in fasting, especially when it is coupled together with prayer unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

So now it is time to take action, and here is what we are going to do:

Our beloved General Superintendent, Kenneth Haney, in Salt Lake City, has been led by God to ask pastors around the world to lead their congregations into a prayer and fasting campaign chain called, “Committed To 30” We will literally be united with millions of Pentecostals all over the globe who will be joining with us to entreat the throne of grace for the bands of wickedness to be loosed and souls to be set free and saved everywhere.

Some people may feel uncomfortable with making it publicly known that they are praying and fasting because of a misunderstanding about what Jesus stated in Mathew 6:16: **16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 17** But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; **18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. [6]**

Notice that Jesus did not say, **“If ye fast“**, but rather, **“when ye fast”** Jesus expected that His people would fast.

Jesus did not say that it was a sin to be a part of a team of fasters and prayer warriors. In fact, there is something right about it. What Jesus warned against was fasting for the wrong motives: to be seen of men. He did not say that you could not inform somebody that you were fasting, only that you should not inform somebody with the motive of making yourself appear to be holier than thou. Certainly when we fast, we inform our spouses and those who may be effected by our fasting. Furthermore, when there is a mandate given by God to fast in a unified manner, we all stand together as a unit. We are launching this fast as a team effort to be heard on high for the cause of unity, spiritual and physical healing within the body of Christ, and for a more effective campaign to reach the lost of our city. We have the right drive and God is with us.

Therefore, in an effort to be organized in starting this chain this Saturday, it is vital that we participate together.

To my left is a calendar for the month of October. It is designed so that each of us can come up to the board and write our name on the days we will be praying and fasting in a combined manner.

The way in which we are going to close this service right now is to all stand and I want us all to empty into the center aisle and form a single line. When you come to the front of the line, simply write your name on the days that you will be praying and fasting with the church. Sis. Treadwell and myself are already on the board. Our goal is to have somebody praying and fasting each day, so if you see days that already have names on them, please fill in the empty days so we can fill in the entire calendar. God Bless you.

[1] The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

d the heavy...: Heb. the bundles of the yoke

[2] The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

d humbled: or, afflicted

[3] The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

[4] The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

[5] The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

a exceeding: Heb. of God

b published: Heb. said

[6] The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA