

Introduction:

- We start our fast this Monday evening. And for 21 days we will humble ourselves before God with prayer and fasting and worship. Kids do not be surprised if your parents lead you in the fast as well.
- We are calling this fast the: Be Strong and Courageous Fast!
- The real question is "Why would anyone want to fast?" What caused people to want to fast?
- I want you to be ready on how to spiritually respond to life when it is challenging, hard, or scary.
 - How will fasting help in these times?

I. Crisis Calls For Fasting

A. Crisis calls for humility.

1. Humility says I need to hear from heaven...NOW!
2. Humility is the kind of heart that God desires us to have.
3. Humility gives us access to the Father.
4. Fasting is when we intentionally afflict ourselves (hunger) to encounter Him. It is not works motivated. It is a heart expression before God. It is the weaker party/ person in covenant with God, that is appealing to Him and his strength,

B. 2 Chron 20:3 Jehoshaphat proclaims a fast – protection

1. Jehoshaphat is afraid and he calls a fast. The whole nation and the king now fasts.
2. While they are humbling themselves before God in fasting, their prayer is filled with covenant language. Suddenly, Revelation comes through a prophet.
3. "This battle is not yours it is God's"
4. They worship. The next day they put the singers first then the army and God fights the battle. Their enemies kill themselves. Ps 8:2 Praise silenced the enemy.

C. Esther 4:16

1. Haman has a plan to wipe out all the Jews.
2. Esther calls a three day fast
3. She gets an audience with the king.
4. Haman is hung from the gallows he built. Ps 8:2 The enemy is silenced.

D. Joel 1:14; 2:15 Proclaim a fast.

1. This one is interesting because it is God who is calling the fast through the prophet Joel.
2. It is God who is releasing the army of Lord to devour Israel and soon Judah.
3. *"and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster."* (Joel 2:13, ESV)

II. Mercy Calls For Fasting

- A. 2 Sam 12:15 David fasts for his sick son born of Bathsheba.
 - 1. The boy dies.
 - 2. David gets up and eats.
 - 3. *"He said, 'While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?'"* (2 Samuel 12:22, ESV) David was fasting and praying for God to have mercy on his son.
- B. Jonah 3:5 Nineveh calls a fast. Gentiles.
 - 1. *"And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them."* (Jonah 3:5, ESV) Again, it was the humility demonstrated through the heart by fasting that released mercy.
 - 2. This passage is interesting because it is Gentiles who are repenting and receiving mercy.
- C. Traveling Mercy Ezra 8:21
 - 1. Ezra talks the king of Babylon to let him return to Jerusalem.
 - 2. Ezra is boasting to the king that the Hand of God is upon him (Ezra)
 - 3. Now he is afraid to ask for an armed guard, so he fasts and prays for protection.

III. Intercession Calls For Fasting.

- A. Both Daniel and Nehemiah are burdened by God to see God's people return to their land.
- B. Both Daniel and Nehemiah fast and pray over this burden.
 - 1. They are humbling themselves in fasting. Are you seeing this is a heart issue not a works issue.
 - 2. Fasting is about our heart. Ie. There have been many times that my heart has not been into a fast but in faith I choose to humble myself before God, He shows up!
 - 3. As they are fasting they start confessing the sins of the nation. Dan 9:1-ff *"As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth."* (Daniel 9:13, ESV) Intercession calls for fasting.

IV. Spiritual Battles Call For Fasting

- A. Luke 4:1 Jesus goes into the wilderness to do battle with Satan.
- B. He fasts there for 40 days.
- C. When you are fasting you are humbling yourself before God.
 - 1. You are confessing your are weak
 - 2. You are in the Word to see Him more clearly and to find the way of success or prosperity.
 - 3. It is in the Word while in the Presence that you are empowered to overcome.

D. Jesus wins.

1. He fasted before the start of His ministry
2. He came out in the power of the Spirit.
3. May we be lead into this fast by the Holy Spirit and May we come out of this fast in the power of the Spirit.

V. Longing Calls For Fasting

A. Luke 2:37 Simeon and Anna fasted and prayed.

B. Matthew 9:15 Can you fast with the groom?

C. These secret acts are noticed by God and will be rewarded by Him. Most of the time it is His presence...the very thing we long for.

VI. Apostolic Alignment/Accuracy Calls For Fasting

A. We are hungry for more Kingdom movement in our State.

1. Acts 13 While worshipping and fasting they set aside Barnabas and Saul
2. Acts 14:23 Lystra, Iconium and Antioch They installed Elders after fasting a praying.
3. Jesus appointed the 12 after all night of praying.

Conclusion:

- I have given you six different scenarios that will call for fasting in your life.
- Is 58:3-15 Is a clear statement of what God looks for when we fast. You will find they are all heart issues.
- Is this not the kind of fast I have chosen?