

This Kind: Matthew 17:14-21

by Shane Idleman

Jesus reveals the power source of prayer and fasting as the key to breaking strongholds and seeing miracles.

Duration: 31:39

Scripture: Matthew 17:14

Topics: "Fasting", "Prayer"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical role of prayer and fasting in overcoming spiritual challenges, referencing Matthew 17:14-21 where Jesus explains that certain afflictions can only be addressed through these practices. He highlights the disciples' failure to heal a boy possessed by a demon due to their lack of faith and spiritual preparedness, urging the congregation to prioritize these disciplines in their lives. Idleman draws parallels between the disciples' struggles and the modern church's apathy, calling for a return to fervent prayer and fasting as essential tools for spiritual breakthroughs. He encourages believers to identify their strongholds and commit to seeking God earnestly, asserting that true power in prayer comes from these combined practices.

Transcript

And I'm encouraged to see you guys all here tonight. I just want to commend you for prioritizing God, putting Him in His rightful place in the beginning of this new year, and I think God's going to honor that. Take your Bibles with me to Matthew chapter 17.

Matthew 17 will be in verses 14 through 21 tonight. The title of tonight's message is this kind. Now, I have prepared different messages for this week, and then on Sunday, during the message, God completely downloaded this message into my heart, gave me the outline.

He actually gave me three messages. You guys know that our focus this week is going to be on prayer, right? And I was just meditating on prayer, praying, and God just really put it on my heart to talk about important elements of prayer. And so tonight, we're going to talk about prayer and fasting.

On Thursday night, God willing, we're going to talk about prayer with fervency. And then on the final night, I believe, we're going to talk about prayer with faith. And we're going to look at prayer, because I've learned this.

There are certain types of prayer that, you know, we learned last night. It just hits the ceiling. It doesn't get past the ceiling.

And I think what we're going to learn tonight, beginning tonight, with prayer and fasting is that when we add certain elements to prayer, it supercharges it. How many of you guys are car guys in here tonight? And if you want to get more horsepower out of that engine, you know, you throw it, you slap on a blower on it, right? A supercharger. And then, you know, you're able to get more out of the very same engine, you know.

And I believe with prayer, what we're going to learn about tonight is that with fasting mixed with that, it's a powerful tool that is very underutilized today in the church, sadly. And so the title of tonight's message is called, This Kind. This Kind.

Of course, referencing what Jesus says in verse 21. But let's read beginning in verse 14. Matthew chapter 17.

You're there tonight. Say, Amen. And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to him, kneeling down to him and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely, for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

So I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, Oh, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to me. And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the child was cured from that very hour.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, Why could we not cast it out? So Jesus said to them, because of your unbelief. For assuredly, I say to you, if you have the faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

Matthew chapter 17 is a a very exciting portion, of course, of the Lord's ministry. When we come to verse 14, Jesus had just come down off of the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John, where he unveiled his glory before them. And, of course, Moses shows up, and Elijah shows up, and now, most importantly, the Father shows up in a cloud.

And these three disciples in the inner circle got to hear the audible voice of God. They got to see Jesus transfigured, and it was quite an experience, no doubt. But I've learned this, that shortly after mountain top experiences, we often find ourselves in the valley of need, and this is no different here in this case.

Jesus is no a few minutes off of the mountain, having had this experience with those chosen, where he is confronted with a desperate need, a seemingly hopeless situation, and this is what we pick it up at tonight. And as Jesus comes, he is, of course, encountered by a man. Now, the Gospels record this scene, and we discover that this was this man's only son, and that he was in great danger.

He was troubled. He was demonized. Matthew records that he was epileptic.

He had epilepsy, and it caused him to go into these, of course, seizures, and these type of reactions that he'd have from time to time. And this young man was very ill. Not only was he ill because of the demonic influences in his life, he was suicidal.

Often, the Bible says he would throw himself in fires and in the water and in the ocean, and he would try to drown himself. Often, this demonic oppression in his life was causing him bodily harm, and ultimately, it was trying to snuff out his life. Mark also described him as immune.

He could no longer talk legibly. Often, he would foam from the mouth. He'd grind his teeth, and this display would cause him to make his body contort in unnatural ways, and the demonic oppression on this young man was unbelievable.

And then we find a distraught father. He'd come while Jesus was on a mountain, and he'd brought this troubled young boy to the nine disciples who remained behind, and he'd come to them with the request, could you help my son? Can you heal my son? He begged them, but the Bible is very clear. They could not do anything.

They were powerless against the demonic influence in that young man's life, and you can imagine that this father was distraught even more. And the sad thing about it, too, there were witnesses who were watching this all play out. You read in Mark's gospel, the scribes, the religious folks, they were witnessing this, and they were seeing the powerless attempts.

I imagine that maybe they lined up, and they each took a shot at this young man, but they were all unsuccessful, and no doubt this caused the scribes to sneer and to make fun of them, and when Jesus came off the mountain, the Bible says that he witnessed them arguing, and Jesus had to ask, what is this dispute about? And then it was made known that these disciples were powerless. I don't know about you, but I've been there. I've walked by people who are obviously demonized and not have the courage to go up to them because I don't feel like I have the authority.

I don't know about you. There's situations that even sometimes in my life that I feel just completely powerless against. I don't know about you, but there are times when things come up, and it just seems like just normal prayer isn't getting it done.

It just seems like we're not able to press into the spiritual and seek change. It just seems like we're powerless to this, and I don't know about you, but over the last year and a half, even more so as we've watched all play out in this nation, and it just seems like even the prophets missed it, and even those who claim to be religious leaders, they were off on what they were prophesying. I mean, it just seems like the churches, many closed down not to reopen.

It just seemed like we were powerless against the attack, obviously, of the enemy, and it just seems like to me that it was just for many of us that there were times of just despair and hopelessness. Well, Jesus walks into this situation, and He witnesses this. He witnesses the helpless attempts of the disciples and the quibbling that they were having with the scribes because they were embarrassed, and He sees this needy father, and as this needy father sees Jesus, the Bible records, he runs to Him, and he throws himself at His feet.

He says, I came to your disciples. They couldn't cast them out, but Lord, if you are willing, I know you can. See the hopeless situation.

We see powerless disciples, but then we see the power of Jesus on display. Jesus, of course, before He addressed, before He heals this young man, He's like many of us, you know, when you're frustrated, He has a response, right, and His first response to the powerless disciples was that of sorrow. He was

sorrowful.

You see, Jesus had already given them the power over the demonic realm. He already given them the power and authority to cast out devils, and yet He'd come back, and they were powerless, and He groaned inwardly at the sight of this, and I wonder today what Jesus must feel when He looks at the powerless church in America. What does He say? I'm sure He shakes His head at us, and Jesus, He quickly tells those disciples the reason, because they were perverse, and they lacked faith.

Now, I was thinking about this. I read several commentaries like what had taken place. You see, Jesus had maybe left for a day or so, or a few days on His journey to the mountain, and within that small space of time, the disciples forgot everything that He had taught them, obviously.

They had backslidden to the point where they had no power, and I was thinking about that today, and I can't help but think that maybe the disciples, those nine, were like us. They had grown stagnant, maybe, without Jesus close to them, and that's what always happens. When we're content to live our Christian lives with Jesus at arm's length or keeping Him away from us, it's only a matter of time before we're pulled away by the world.

We're pulled away about other lusts. We're pulled away from His presence by other things, and it's only a matter of time before we become stagnant. I remember the last time we were in the heavens, we were here, and just God did a miraculous thing, and I was on fire for Him, like never before.

Going to bed at 11, but waking up without hesitation at 3 a.m. just to get more of Him. But you know, over time, that started to wane after we're in the heavens. Then the holidays come, and then all the distractions of the holidays, and then all the feasting of the holidays, and you start to feed that fleshly nature, and before you know it, you know, you're light years away from where you were just a few days before.

Maybe the disciples have become overindulgent like we are. I think that one of the biggest problems in the American church is that we're just far too comfortable. We have far too much.

Now, I'm not decreeing, I'm not saying that blessing is a problem, but I'm telling you, we have so much, it has caused us to become apathetic, indifferent. I know people who have children who are far away from God, who are living lifestyles that ultimately will lead to their destruction, and maybe even their damnation, but you never see them at 6 a.m. prayer. When you mention fasting, they don't want no part of it.

These disciples have become maybe apathetic. Maybe they begin to neglect their prayer lives. Maybe since Jesus was away, and he wasn't watching them during this time, they neglected their prayer lives, and it affected their faith, and no doubt, I'm telling you this, their faith was weakened, so when the crisis came, they were unprepared.

Don't you believe that's what--Pastor, I can't--I think that's what happened in 2020. When the crisis came, because the churches had abandoned the prayer meeting long before, when the crisis came, there was very few bold voices. There were very few bold churches.

There were very few men and women who went to prayer, even during the midst of all that was going on. You didn't hear about prayer meetings, you know, starting. You didn't hear about a revival being sought.

You didn't hear about those things, and I'm telling you, that's what always happens. The crisis comes, and it comes unexpected, and if we're far away from God, if we're lackadaisical in our spiritual disciplines,

when it's time to run our race, we're not prepared. We're exposed.

They were exposed publicly, and it caused shame to Jesus. Here we are, we live in a day where I think we're causing a lot of shame to Jesus. We say we believe in miracle signs and wonders.

We say that we believe that we can lay the hands on the sick, and they'll be healed, but yet Christians are living in fear of a virus with a 98% survival rate. When Jesus touched lepers, the early church saw the dead raised. I'm telling you, they saw regular miraculous things, and it was because these people believed in what I'm going to talk about in just a moment.

They believed God. Oh, they believed that Jesus was able. They believed in prayer and fasting.

We're going to see it in just a moment, so they weren't powerless like we are. So these disciples, these nine, for whatever reason, they were not prepared when the crisis came, and it was ashamed. So much, you see, Jesus reveals the power source.

Jesus says to this man, bring your son to me. Bring him to me, and he, of course, bemoans the generation. He said, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? How long shall I have to deal with this spiritual immaturity and perversity? How long do I have to suffer through this unbelief? And he heals the young man, and if you read in Mark's gospel, the demon didn't come out.

Before he did his last ditch effort, the demon threw him down one more time, threw him into convulsions. He tried to take him out once and for all, and I'm telling you, this is what the demonic realm does often. I'm experiencing it right now.

You know, when Pastor was preaching on Sunday, I came under the conviction of an error in my life, and I'll just be transparent, of my sugar addiction. And you can ask my mom. She would catch me as a five and six-year-old.

She'd catch me drinking the syrup bottle that bad. I'm gonna be honest. I mean, from as long as I can remember, sugar has had a vice grip hold on my life, and when it would call, I'd have to run and find it.

And you know, it seems like something innocent and all, but I was with my wife when her grandfather went to heaven, and before, they of course had to amputate both of his or one of his legs. I was there watching how he could no longer get around, and how that diabetes took over his life. I know of several pastors who have ceased to serve in ministry because of their obesity, and the heart disease, and the diabetes that comes with the lifestyle choices.

I'm going to tell you something tonight. The devil doesn't really care what he uses to take us out. He doesn't care if it's sugar.

He doesn't care if it's heroin, and we know that sugar is just as addictive. I'm telling you, he doesn't care if it's sexual immorality. He doesn't care whatever he can get a vice grip, a stronghold in our lives.

He will use it, and ultimately, our flesh will lead and reap towards destruction. I'm telling y'all, when I made the decision that I was going to ditch sugar, all hell broke loose within me. I'm telling you, I'm not kidding you.

Every possible irritant has popped up in my life, or maybe it's just the withdrawals, but it was like the devil was giving that last ditch effort to say, you're not breaking. You'll never be free of it. You'll never be able to

win the victory in this portion of your life.

This is what he tried to do with this young man, but of course, Jesus is greater. As we sang this song, just a moment ago, faith and wondering how Jesus, he's able. He shakes mountaintops.

You know, I just was reminded of who it is who we who we serve. There's nothing that we can't see the chains broken this week, y'all. I believe it.

Now, I'm not saying that we won't struggle, but he can give us the victory even in our struggling, and I know there's many testimonies in here tonight where God has broken chains in your life, and you've overcome struggles, and maybe you've overcome something for a season, and it's come back. That's what happened. I was doing really good for a while, and then it came back in full force, and I just want to encourage someone tonight.

It's not hopeless. You may feel powerless, but there is a solution. There is a way to get over this kind, this kind of affliction, this kind of seemingly impossible situation to break.

So, Jesus reveals the power source when he gets with the disciples alone, and they ask him, why weren't we able to heal? And Jesus says, because your lack of faith, because of that, and he says, and he gives them a nugget. He shows them what it is that they really need to learn to utilize in situations that are in the category of this kind. He says in verse 21, however, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

This kind. I just want to talk about this kind for the next few minutes. We all face this kind of situations.

Some in here tonight, you're facing this kind of stronghold. You're facing this kind of addiction. You're facing this kind of demonic oppression.

You're facing this kind of seemingly impossible obstacle that you have not been able to get over. You have not been able to break the patterns, destructive patterns, but I want you to understand what Jesus was opening their eyes to was that there are some miracles, there are some breakthroughs that only come through prayer and fasting. I want to say that again.

There are some things, some miracles, some breakthroughs that will only happen in our lives through prayer and fasting. You see, the flesh doesn't want to die. The flesh wants to rule and reign in our lives, and somewhere along the line in western civilization, fasting has become the, how can I say it, something that we occasionally may observe in dire straits, but not a part of our life.

In our apathy, in our pride, in our rebellion towards God, we have put aside this spiritual discipline, and it has been to our detriment. It has shown up in our homes. We're powerless.

Some of you have a teenager who is in the midst of rebelling. They're heading down the road of destruction, and you haven't even pulled out the big gun yet. This is what Jesus was saying.

This kind, this kind only goeth out, but by prayer and fasting. You guys know Jesus fasted before he started a lick of ministry? You know that 40 days he fasted. I was singing about John the Baptist, one of my favorites in the Bible, and he lived a lifestyle of fasting.

He was out in the wilderness. There were no 7-Elevens on the corner. When he found some honey, when he found some locusts, he ate that day, but when he didn't, he prayed and he fasted, and this is why when

he came on the scene, he shook the nation of Israel, and I'm telling you, who is hungry tonight to have this kind be broken? Who's hungry tonight to have the power of God on your life, on your family? Who is wanting that more than the other appetites that dominate us, more than the caffeine, more than the food? I'm telling you, we've got to get hungry for God.

Fasting should be a regular part of every one of our lives. I'm going to say that again. Fasting should be a regular part of every one of our lives, not something we do occasionally.

Just do a brief study of fasting in the Bible. Oh, Moses fasted for 40 days when he was on the mountaintop with the Lord, and when he came down, he shone bright as a sun. They had to put the veil over him.

The glory of God was on him. Oh, Ezra, when he was commissioned to lead the remnant back to Jerusalem, he called a fast at the river Ahava, and he prayed for safety on that journey because he was too ashamed to have to go to a pagan king and say, hey, can you protect us, when he already said, hey, the hand of our Lord is on us, and we don't need anything else. And he called the fast, and the people set themselves apart, and they fasted there at the river, and God gave them safe passage back to Jerusalem.

Oh, I think about the early New Testament church in Acts, the church at Antioch was a dynamic, multicultural church. Oh, I would say it was one of the most powerful churches in the New Testament, and the Bible says that they were worshiping and fasting and praying when God said, separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the work of the ministry. I dare say that many are in the pulpit who have no call from God because they've never really fasted or prayed or sought God, and they have no unction or anointing or the Spirit's power on their ministry because they don't want to have anything to do with that life.

But the early church lived that. They fasted and they prayed. Daniel fasted when the king came to him and wanted the interpretation of his dream, and he had already cut the necks off of the others who could not give the interpretation, and when his life was on the line, he went into fasting mode, and he sought God for the interpretation of the dream, and God, of course, met him right there.

I'm telling you, David fasted. Oh, with the death of Saul, he fasted seven days because he was going to make that transition pretty soon into the king of God's people, and he knew the brevity of that. He knew what he would have to do to lead the nation spiritually.

I think about Anna in the New Testament, the prophetess who was a widow 80 plus years, but she lived her whole life worshiping God through prayers and fasting, and God kept her alive just to see redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm telling you, we need to get back to seeking God like that. We need to get back to saying, I can put aside a few meals so that I can seek God and see his hand on my life.

Jesus didn't say, if you fast, he said, when you fast. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or it would be to God, a few of those type would raise up today. He tried to kill Hitler, and he was a man of God, and in his book, Cost of Discipleship, he said, Jesus takes it for granted that his disciples will observe the pious custom of fasting.

The strict exercise of self-control is an essential feature of the Christian life. Such customs have only one purpose, to make the disciples more ready and cheerful to accomplish those things which God would have done. You see, I believe that we've neglected fasting to the of God using us in the scope that he wants to.

I was thinking about fasting, and fasting is often found in Scripture as a way to humble ourselves. God still promised, and I believe the principles apply today, that if we humble ourselves and seek his face and turn from our wicked ways, and then he will hear from heaven and heal our land. And I'm telling you, where are

the people who are putting sackcloth and ashes on for the direction of this nation, who are fasting for this nation? We're still feasting.

We're not really broken for it, America. Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal our true spiritual condition. I'm telling you, when I'm fasting and I'm seeking God, oh, it is very clear my brokenness.

And it leads me to repentance, and it transforms me. Oh, my friends, when worship is on, when I'm fasting, there's an intimacy with God that is not found when I'm full. And I'm telling you, we've got to incorporate this in our lives so that we can see the way that God would have us to see.

And fasting can also result in personal revival in our own lives, and it can also be the conduit by which God may bring revival to a local church or a city or a nation. I'm telling you, you can trace back most revivals in this nation, the great awakenings, the moves, the mighty moves of God, and you will see fasting sprinkled all throughout of that, those moves of God. I'm telling you, we've got to, we really, do we really want God to reign the heavens? And we've got to, this kind of revival only happens through prayer and fasting.

Prayer and fasting. Now, we're not legalistic about this. We're not saying that fasting guarantees God to do something.

When David fasted for his sick child, God still called him home. And I'm not saying that it is the only way that God moves. He chooses to work in different ways, but I'm telling you, this should be a part of our lives.

Jesus said, you guys couldn't do it because this kind only go without, but by prayer and fasting. You know what I've learned too? Fasting strengthens my faith. Fasting says, Jesus, I believe you can do this.

So, I'm willing to seek you. I'm willing to put myself through this to seek you because I believe you can do it. And this is why Jesus had to say, amen.

This is why Jesus said, you're unbelief. You didn't believe. You didn't have faith that I could cast out this devil.

And I'm telling you, if you truly believe that God could bring home your prodigal, if you sought him, if you prayed, if you fasted and saw his face, would you do it? I think so. I just want to encourage some of you, you're fasting right now. I just want to encourage you to continue to press into God.

Some of you, I want to say to you, you need to get on this because I'm telling you, I can look up this crowd. I can see people in here whose husbands are lost, whose kids are prodigal, whose health isn't. I can look across this room and I'm telling you, we spend a lot of time counseling people and going through, trying to work through some of these issues, these problems.

And I understand that, you know, in some cases, health reasons. I understand. I'm not saying a blanket statement, but I really want to, I've never really done this, but I really want to ask, have you fasted and prayed about this? Because this can only go without, but by prayer and fasting.

And tonight, I just want to encourage us in this area of church. We really want God to render heavens. Maybe you need to start tonight.

Maybe you need to identify your stronghold. For some of you, you've been hearing a lot lately, it's caffeine. But I believe, whatever it is, but I really truly believe God is saying to us in this week of emphasizing

prayer, there's things that you must add to your prayer to give it that supercharge, to give it that power, to have the ability to do the things that seemingly seem impossible.

If you have wayward children, if your Christian life is stagnant, if your marriage is on the rocks, if your finances need a breakthrough, if your health is on a downturn, I'm telling you, not to mention, we didn't even mention the physical aspects of blessings that come with fasting. Some of you have spouses who are gripped in fear, who are in depression, who are, I mean, just, I'm telling you, they're going through it, and have you sought God for their, on their behalf? And are we really praying, or do we really want to see a move of God if we've not even attempted to fast? This is what I believe Jesus is saying to us.

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