

# The Ministry of Fasting

by Wesley Duewel

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*Fasting is a spiritual discipline that can help us draw closer to God, intensify our prayer, and see God work in our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:00:40

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 33:8, Joel 2:12, Joel 2:14-17, Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:31

**Topics:** "Fasting"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the impact of one lone monk named Savonarola who preached against the sins of Rome and the Roman Catholic Church. Despite facing opposition and eventually being martyred, Savonarola's preaching drew thousands of people who were hungry to hear the word of God. The speaker emphasizes the power of fasting and prayer in turning the tide of sin and encourages believers to be all out for God and against sin. He shares personal experiences and testimonies of how fasting can bring joy and blessings in one's life. The sermon concludes with a challenge to set examples for future generations through our actions and devotion to God.

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## Transcript

together in unity. Amen. Praise God.

It was like the precious oil came down upon the head of Aaron. There the Lord commanded blessing, even life forevermore. May the Lord bless us with that sweet unity, that sweet sense of His presence again this session.

Praise the Lord. The Holy Spirit wants to lead us deeper and deeper in prayer. Not just in our understanding of prayer, but at times when we have time alone with God in a personal prayer retreat or with several people together really seeking God's face.

The Holy Spirit wants to lead us on deeper and deeper in prayer. That's His delight. Our helper, our great helper in prayer.

We praise the Lord for all the Holy Spirit does for us, but remember that one of His great ministries is to help us in prayer. May He really help us. May He really help our churches.

May He really help us to satisfy the longing of God when He set up the arrangement for prayer. We talked last night about levels of prayer. Maybe that's a crude way to express it, but just trying to get a picture of

how the Holy Spirit can lead us deeper and deeper, higher and higher.

Whatever you want to say. Asking, seeking, knocking. What more could there be? More, we could add fasting.

And I wanted to talk about that this morning. It is not a popular topic. It is more welcome among God's people, but among people unawakened, it seems a very strange and odd topic.

Why should you fast, they say. And I want to suggest this morning there are at least two reasons, maybe we can say three reasons, why we should fast. I will read the scripture in just a moment.

The one reason for fasting is just because we love Jesus so much and want to draw closer to Him. A second reason for fasting is we make it a part of the spiritual discipline of our life. Just like we make going to church on Sunday or the weekdays when we have set apart times for fellowship with the brethren.

Just as we make Bible reading a part of the discipline of our personal prayer life. We wouldn't think of doing it without it. Just as we make prayer a part of the discipline of our life, so fasting, many people make it a part of the spiritual discipline of their life.

Not because there is a crisis, not because there is an emergency, but just because this is a part of their drawing near to God. Then the third form of fasting is we fast because we are seeking God for a situation that has not yielded thus far. Maybe early on the Holy Spirit will lead us to include fasting in our seeking God.

Or maybe we have sought God for some time and then we feel led to add fasting and that thus becomes a fourth level of prevailing prayer when you add fasting. Now the Bible tells us of times when God called to fasting. Isaiah says that.

You see the example in the book of Joel and let's read together one of those examples. I'm going to read from Joel chapter 2 beginning with verse 12. Even now declares the Lord return to me with all your heart.

And what does all your heart mean for Joel? With fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. That was an outward expression of grief.

Rending the garments in those days. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God for he is gracious and compassionate.

Slow to anger and abounding in love. And he relents from sending calamity. Who knows he may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing.

Great offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion. Declare a holy fast.

A holy fast. A fast can be holy before God. Blow the trumpet in Zion.

Declare announce a holy fast. I have an article by Charles Stanley of Atlanta telling how some years ago God led him to declare a holy fast in his church. This was after God did something very special in his own life.

And he was led see if I can this is odd but I'm interrupting my reading of scripture. It just occurred to me that I had this with me here. Confronted with a crucial decision of my life.

I prayed and read the scriptures but I failed to receive guidance. Then I remembered a conversation during a visit with my grandfather an evangelist. Then in his seventies he fasted one day a week.

That was the discipline of fast. That was fasting as a part of his regular disciplined life. That's example two that I gave.

And often a week at a time. That was for urgent situations most likely. Extraordinary answers to prayer.

The fruitfulness of his ministry, his perfect health and the power and authority with which he prayed seemed directly tied to his habit of fasting. Perhaps it could work for me too. On my knees I told God I would not eat until he gave me clear guidance.

Within three days I received an answer one I have never doubted. From that day to this God has never failed to give guidance after I have fasted and waited upon him. For more than a year our church has seen phenomenal growth and so on.

Talking about the hunger and so on. Once I challenged the entire congregation to fast one day a week for three weeks. After the first week a deacon, a 73 year old retired army colonel said, Pastor this has been one of the greatest experiences of my life.

A divorced mother of three said God has miraculously changed my financial circumstances doing something to me and for me. And he goes on telling a college senior and so on. I suggested this senior set aside three days to fast and meditate upon God's word.

This young man is now in a seminary. And he goes on and tells everything. So he felt led to bring fasting into his ministry.

It was his grandfather's example that God used to challenge him. Blessed are those who have such examples in their heritage. What kind of examples will we set for our children and our families and our congregations? Alright, back.

Blow the trumpet in Zion. Declare a holy fast. Call a sacred assembly.

Gather the people. Consecrate the assembly. Bring together the elders.

Gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests who minister before the Lord weep between the temple porch and the altar.

Let them weep between the entrance and the altar. What is between the entrance and the altar? That's where the people are. Let the priest in other words go among the people weeping.

Whoever did that, Paul did that. Remember Paul's testimony to the Ephesian elders? He did not cease for the space of three years going house to house pleading with tears with the people. That's the way he founded New Testament churches.

Let the priests who minister before the Lord weep between the porch, the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, spare your people, O Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations.

And why should they say among the peoples, where is their God? So a fourth level of intensity or a fourth level of urgency a fourth level of depth or height or however you want to express it is when God leads you to add fasting to your prayer. Now many people associate fasting with mourning. And you see that here in joy on this day of fasting.

But do you know fasting can be a joy? Do you know your heart can rejoice at the thought, I'm going to be able to fast and pray today or these days or whatever the time God leads you to set apart. I'm not a great example of fasting, though I do fast a fair amount. But I find that fasting can be a joy.

I remember when a boy hearing my father say over and over to the churches that he pastored, try it, try it, see if God doesn't bless you. And so still it echoes in my mind that try it, try it. Praise God.

Yes, not because you are so beaten down, but sometimes just for the joy of it. Say, Lord, I'm coming into your presence. I'm setting apart this day just to seek your face.

I'm coming with joy to wait before you and to fast before you and expect you to meet me and to answer prayer. And I too can say with Charles Stanley that I have received guidance on occasion for something I wouldn't trade for anything. And fasting was involved.

I don't know whether it was the time set apart or the fasting, but it was just part of it all together. And a joyous meeting with God and God said things to me that I never expected. So don't eliminate that first form.

Maybe you call that a part of the discipline of your spiritual life. But I'm thinking of emphasizing the joyousness of giving a day to God or giving some extra time to God, whatever it is. And in that giving of that to God, joyfully go into his presence with fasting as well.

If your health permits, we'll go into that a little bit more. Now, Jesus said on one occasion, then they will fast. Who was he talking about? You and me.

He was talking about us. Was he talking about you? Is that a description of you? I believe that God can make fasting have his God-chosen part in our life. There can be people going to extremes in fasting.

I'm not advocating that. And there are dangers in fasting. There can be the danger of feeling as if we're going to somehow earn God's blessing.

Fasting is not a way to earn God's blessing. It's a way to intensify our prayer. It's a way to draw near to God.

It's not a way to earn God's blessing. We never earn it. It is by grace that God does all he does.

It's not a way to bypass obedience. Some people think, well, they have a controversy with God. Well, I'm not doing that, but I'll tell you what, I'll fast.

No, that doesn't get you out of obeying God. Your fasting will not be very successful if you're not obeying God. If you have a controversy with God over something, if he is asking of you, settle that with God.

Amen. Amen. Praise the Lord.

So, fasting is not a way to bypass obedience. It's not a way to earn God's blessing. It's not a way to have power at your disposal.

Let them see the power of God. No, God forbid. We don't flash the power of God around.

We don't use the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses us when he pleases and as he pleases. Praise God.

Praise God. So, this is not a magic way to miracle. This is not a secret way to power and we'll be powerful for God.

No. We are nothing in ourselves. Keep low when you fast.

Keep low when you fast. John Wesley preached many sermons on fasting and prayer. And he's not the Bible.

And his statement sounds a little extreme to me, but John Wesley said, the man who never fasts is no more on the way to heaven than the man who never prays. I don't think many people would preach that nowadays. But the Holy Spirit wants to use fasting.

I'm convinced of this. The Holy Spirit wants to do fasting in our lives and use it in our lives and use it in our ministry. And the Holy Spirit longs to do things for us that may happen in no other way.

And so I believe that we can, Joseph, we can go into the house of the Lord with joy. Or we can go to our private place of prayer with joy. Oh, I'm going to have an hour with Jesus now.

Praise the Lord. Have you ever experienced that? When you could just figure, I've got an hour. I can just be alone with Jesus.

Nobody's going to bother me here. Or when you got to a retreat, whether it was a motel room or a place like a house called Patmos where I'm staying on the grounds. Oh, I can be alone here with Jesus.

Praise God. And you can feel that same joy when you go to him with not only with singing but also with fasting. They're not incongruous.

They can go together. Praise the Lord. The early church following Christ's example was known for its fasting.

The first Bible encyclopedia that we know anything about was written by Epiphanius in the 300s, which makes it the 4th century. And he wrote, who does not know that Christians throughout the world fast on the 4th and 6th day. In other words, that was one of the marks of being a Christian.

Who does not know that Christians throughout the world fast on the 4th and 6th day. Now that was not fasting as a 4th level of prayer. That was fasting as a spiritual discipline.

Jesus was correct when he said that after the bridegroom is taken away in those days they will fast. So they were fasting in the early centuries. Now it's true that fasting was abused, formalized by the church as it became Romanized as it got away from God.

But do you know that when we came to the Reformation, the Reformers did not reject fasting as a Romish practice. They knew better than that. They knew fasting preceded the Romanizing of the church.

And so to get back to primitive Christianity, to get back to early church Christianity, they brought fasting into their own personal lives and into the churches. Martin Luther not only maintained a spiritual discipline of regular one day a week fasting, but often he fasted additional days. And he was even criticized at times.

And at times he was physically weak because he had fasted so much. But before we criticize him, let's realize the odds he was up against. Let's realize the battle he was fighting for God.

Let's realize the crucialness of that battle. What if he had not taken his stand for God, or someone else had not taken that kind of a stand for God. And God led him in the battle for the soul of the church, in the battle that brought the Reformation into reality, of which we are the children and descendants, just as we are the children and descendants of Pentecost.

This is a part of our heritage. And that a vital part of that heritage was the role that fasting played at the time of the Reformation. John Calvin was an inveterate faster.

He fasted and prayed until God swept through Geneva with revival. The Moravians in Germany were known for their fasting. The Hussites, followers of John Huss, a martyr in Czechoslovakia.

The Hussites were known for their fasting. The Waldensians in Italy were known for their fasting. The Huguenots in France were known for their fasting.

These were all groups that God caused to spring up when the spirit of reform, and the spirit of reformation, and the spirit of God was stirring up people in different places. And wherever that fire of reformation, revival, came, fasting was a vital part of what God was using. The Scots Covenanters were known for their fasting.

We would have had no Reformation if it were not for people in country after country who were seeking God's face, asking God's mercy, daring to risk their lives and take their stand in what they said and what they did for the world, with massive prayer and fasting. And we're the children inheritors of that heritage today. But our churches don't have that fiber in the soul, don't have that vitality that they had.

John Knox referred to him yesterday. John Knox impacted the whole of Britain and moved the world toward God. He wrestled night and day in prayer and he fasted regularly.

In England, in the Church of England, heroic Archbishop Cramer and Bishops Ridley and Latimer, all three burned at the stake in the street of Oxford. You go there, you can still see the monument, where they were burned for their faith. They refused to compromise.

They were all three known for bold preaching and fasting in their prayer life. They had a cause for which they were willing to die and they were willing to give themselves to fasting. Jonathan Edwards, in our own country.

Someone asked me yesterday, what do you think of Jonathan Edwards? He was mightily used of God. He was criticized by some people. But thank God for the fasting and the prayer of Jonathan Edwards that brought revival to New England.

Charles Finney had the regular practice of fasting every week. And many a time, Charles Finney spent several days in fasting and prayer. So from the time of Moses on to our day, fasting has again and again been a part of the prayer life of God's people.

Why fasting? Fasting is a form of self-denial. It doesn't appeal to the flesh. It is a form of paying a price not to earn, let's go back to what I said, not to earn but because we are with intensity and great desire seeking God.

It's part of seeking God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. It is reaching out to God in every way we know how. Now there are other forms of self-denial and you may have a more practical form for you.

And fasting can include more than just food. I believe that when Jesus spent the whole night in prayer, that was fasting from rest. And I find in our own work in India, we have many church planting teams around 35 or 40 in India right now.

Each one, four or five Indian brothers in the team and I have been getting their regular monthly reports. We have over 150 around the world but the Indian ones I'm speaking especially about. And in their reports there are forums.

There's a forum, they fill the blanks. How many street meetings did they have? How many cottage meetings did they have? How many prayer meetings did they have? How many days of fasting did they have that month? How many all nights of prayer did they have that month? How many scriptures were they sold? So on and so on. And I watched.

Then on the back of the sheet, they usually write one or several paragraphs of description telling any special incidents of that month. Opposition, ancestor prayer, victories, and it's interesting to see how God is using it. I have noticed not one-on-one you can exactly predict but by and large the teams that are praying more all nights of prayer and fasting more are the ones having the greatest victories to report.

I see that again and again. And they're just taking it for granted. And they'll tell how many of the newcomers joined them in the all night of prayer.

And that's great. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

So fasting can be a God-ordained part of our discipline, walk with God, and seeking God's face and being on the stretch for God. And fasting can be that extra step we take because we're so desperate to get God's answer. We're seeking, we're knocking, we're fasting.

Andrew Murray said that prayer is one hand with which we grasp the invisible and fasting is the other hand with which we release the visible. Now, maybe that doesn't appeal to you but that was a statement that he made. Sometimes we are so hungry to see God work that we almost fast without realizing it.

Sometimes our heart is so crying out to God that it's the most natural thing in the world to fast. Sometimes just like sometimes it's the most natural thing to pray on into the night. Or the most natural thing to get up early and pray because we're awakened and our heart's crying out to God and we just go into it.

And sometimes, you know, that sometimes people under deep conviction of sin lose all desire for food. And it's a part of their humbling themselves before God. And repenting and seeking God's face.

So God seems to work with our bodies. I don't know how else to say it and it can be a significant thing. Jesus said, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

I often say to groups of people, how do you take up your cross? You know, so many people think that if you keep sweet when you're sick, why are you taking up your cross? No, no. You didn't choose to be sick. You didn't take it up.

And some people think that if you're sweet when people sarcastically make remarks about you or insult you or persecute you if there is such a thing, not too often. I don't think we have much persecution in our country. Maybe here and there at times.

But we're comparatively free from persecution. But sometimes they say, well that's bearing your cross. No, that's not bearing your cross.

You didn't choose persecution. You didn't choose insult. Taking up your cross is something you'd choose to do for Jesus' sake.

It might be denying yourself some expenditure that you think would be very legitimate. But for Jesus' sake, you're not going to do it. And you're going to use that money for God's cause in some other way.

That can be fasting. So fasting can be anything you do to deny yourself to take up your cross purposefully voluntarily for Jesus' sake. You wouldn't have to.

But you stoop down and you take up something that's heavy. It may not be easy. And you do it for Jesus' sake.

For the sake of the kingdom. You're willing to pay that price if it will help the kingdom to go on farther and faster. If it will speed up the work of God.

You are willing for God's sake and for the sake of His kingdom. And you can say praise the Lord. I'll be glad to do it for Jesus' sake.

God is not a slave driver. He doesn't want us to feel oppressed by the fasting. He wants us to do it with enthusiasm.

With joy. There was a time in Britain. The time of John Bunyan.

The time of the Quakers. When the British government was arresting many people because of their non-conformity with the state church. George Fox was the leader of the Quakers.

And there was a time when there were thousands of Quakers in prison. Because they did not please the hierarchy of the church. And they dared to be different.

And maybe they did things that you and I wouldn't choose to do. But there was a crisis. What would happen in the nation of Britain? And at that time God put a fast on the heart of George Fox.

He was riding on a horse when the burden struck his soul. I'm going to talk about burden later today. He was riding on his heart when a burden struck his soul.

It struck him so forcibly it almost knocked him from his horse. Such a burden of prayer because he had shortly before that visited some of his Quaker believers who were in prison for Jesus' sake. And as he was thinking about that, praying about it, riding his horse, suddenly the burden came so heavy he had to get off of his horse and go into a house and began to fast.

And he fasted so much that he almost died. Actually the word got around in Britain that he was dying. He fasted so much, he became so thin that he would hardly recognize what was going on, but all the time his heart was groaning, crying out to God for God's deliverance.

Another example of John Knox on the floor in Edinburgh saying, Oh God, give me Scotland or I die. George Fox, I don't know what he prayed. We're not told the words, at least I haven't seen a copy of the words he prayed.

But he prayed and he fasted and he prayed and he fasted until suddenly Charles the King changed the thing, issued an edict and gave people greater liberty of conscience to worship God. And out of prison came, I think it was at least 12,000 Quakers. Out of prison came John Bunyan.

Out of prison came people because there was a liberty given. And how was that pried out of the hand of an unyielding state church situation? It was pried out with prayer and fasting. Holding on to God.

Almost an extreme situation. Almost hard to understand. Some people thought that George Fox was a mystic.

They couldn't understand why he but he was wrestling with the powers of darkness. For the soul of England there could be a George Whitefield, there could be a John Weston, there could be these things later on because George Fox back in the 1400s had prepared the way with fasting, wrestling with God over the soul of the nation. What are some of the spiritual benefits of fasting? One, fasting deepens humility.

You know the Bible says that Ezra humbled himself with fasting. David, it says, humbled himself with fasting. Ezra 8.21, Psalm 35.13 when Peter said, humble yourself under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time.

How do you humble yourself before God? One possible way is fasting. Humble yourself under God's mighty hand that he may do something great, that he may lift you up. Sometimes if God could lead his people to a united humbling themselves with fasting.

There are groups that issue challenges, calls to prayer for a day of fasting. They're not too popular but there are those who follow it. There have been times in the history of our nation when this has been done.

There was a time when the state of Kansas issued a call for a day of fasting and prayer and a drought was broken. It's a way of humbling yourself before God. Second, fasting can deepen your hunger for God to work.

Early on in yesterday, I spoke about the dynamic of hunger, thirst, desire, that reaching out with all of our soul toward God. And that's in harmony with fasting. Fasting goes right hand in hand.

When you're really hungry for God to work, it's not difficult to add fasting to your prayer. Third, fasting intensifies prayer concentration. Our life becomes so cluttered with other things and it's just natural to get alone, to get apart, to fast through these various things.

That's why Andrew Murray said, releasing the things of the world with the one hand by fasting. R.A. Torrey, Moody's right hand helper, we're in the Moody Hall across the street here. Torrey said that there is peculiar power in fasting prayer.

Every great crisis in life should be met with fasting. The fourth thing is fasting solidifies determination. Fifth, fasting feeds your faith.

Not because you're depending upon the fasting, but because your heart witnesses to you that you're doing everything you know to do to seek God's face. And you just begin to expect Him to answer. I believe God's going to answer.

I know my heart is clear before God. I'm doing everything I know to do. And that assurance, it feeds your faith very often.

You know you're following Bible examples. You know you're following the example of the many occasions in the history of the Christian church and the movement of God's people. Number six, often it seems like fasting helps open your heart to the Spirit's voice and to the Spirit's working.

You just seem to hear God's voice. That I have experienced. Not that you hear an audible voice, but you just suddenly become aware of God's will in some area of your life.

I have been on a day of fasting and prayer, something that never occurred to my mind to even ask God about, just opened up. It was nothing in my program, nothing in my intention, but because I was seeking God and delighting in the Lord, it wasn't all mourning by any means. I can assure you there was joy as I saw His face with fasting.

It just opened up something that just seemed so natural and opened up. And the more I prayed about, the more I felt confirmed this is the will of God. I could have missed that and I wouldn't want to do that.

And I guess that's what Brother Charles Stanley was trying to say he had found in his own experience. And then I think fasting adds fire to our earnestness and zeal. A few words about fasting.

Let's not go to extremes. Take it easy when you start. Don't feel you have to take a 14-day fast the first time you fast.

Better try fasting a day or try fasting a weekend or try fasting two or three days or something like that. Take it a little bit at a time and learn to go ahead. Our people in Korea who do so much fasting, they all know this.

And the pastors guide the people in how to fast and how to break their fast. It is so common there. Some years ago on the 60th anniversary of the founding of our work in Korea, I was president of OMS and so I arranged that three representatives from each of our fields around the world would go to Korea.

And we would make a sort of on-the-spot study of the Korean church. So we had a number of seminars and we asked the Korean church to arrange the location and arrange the speakers. So we had a seminar on the role of women in the church.

We had a seminar on the role of training in the church. We had a seminar on the role of evangelism in the church. We had a seminar on the role of prayer in the church.

And we were in one of the churches that they chose for this purpose. I suppose it was a special example of a praying church. And there were pastors from other churches present.

There were six pastors in a panel sitting on the platform. And there was a little group of us, you know, 45, 50 of us sitting down there. And they made their separate statements, the brothers.

And then we asked them questions. And in the course of those questions, one of our young men began to ask about fasting. And they gave various answers to the questions.

And they told us that they had records. And by the way, the Korean church keeps records. They're almost fanatical on records.

Statistics. Statistics, statistics. They really keep them.

I remember going to one of our large churches. We call them one of the mother churches in Seoul, the capital. And I just picked up the church bulletin.

And the outside cover, the inside, was four pages of statistics. And that was the statistics for that week. They had, I think, 23 or so bands in that church.

Each band had a number of members. And for each band, there were statistics. How many people were in the Bible study on Tuesday night? How many people were in the prayer meeting on Wednesday night from that band? How many chapters in God's word were read that week by the members of that band? And every week they knew that the entire congregation had read how many chapters in God's word.

It was a part of the checkup of their believers. Are you into God's word? Are you really reading God's word? And there they had, they gathered the statistics. Each band leader was responsible to get the statistics for those in his group.

And they didn't think anything unusual. That's just what they regularly did. And the number of people they'd won to the Lord that week, that was on there.

And they're expecting their people to win others to Jesus. Not every band had someone. There were some blank spots.

But many of the bands had people, you know, how many, two, five, that they'd won to Jesus that week. Soul winning church. And so they keep statistics.

So when they told us this next statistic, I believed them. They said, we have records of more than 20,000 of our people who have spent 40 days in fasting and prayer. Now I'm assuming that that would be almost every pastor in the churches.

And it had to be a lot of others because we don't have 20,000 pastors. But they had a record of 20,000 people. And as we were going to different places, we were shown a big city church.

We were shown a church planting team. We sat down with the team and asked them questions how they were planting the church and how they were going ahead and how the Lord was blessing. Then we came to a church and we got there.

There was some construction going on in addition to the church. And an elder met us. And he said, now I have to apologize to you.

He said, our pastor is not able to greet you. This is the 30th day of his fast. I went to see him yesterday.

He said, you see, you have come to a very ordinary church. He said, we know we're not the church God wants us to be. He said, we have about 400 members in our church.

But surely the Lord wants us to be at least 1,000. And so he said, our pastor is in the mountains fasting. And many of the churches have their own little cottage in the mountains for their people to fast.

The Pentecostals are made famous by their big fasting area. Our people don't have a big spread like that. But many of the churches have their own separate little quiet cottage in the mountains where they go to fast and pray.

And anyone from that local church, when they go to fast, they tell the pastor and they look after them. If they're in a longer fast, two weeks, someone goes to check up on them. Are you keeping well? Everything all right? They're praying.

Brother so-and-so, this is his time of fasting. Let's pray. Let's stand with him.

He is seeking God's face. And so it's a kind of a thing, a part of the family of the Lord. It's their thing together, that they're living this thing.

So the pastor is out there fasting. The whole church, they're standing, they're thrilled. Our pastor is seeking God's face.

And so throughout the day when God reminds them, they're praying for their pastor. Oh Lord, teach our pastor what you want to teach him. Show him what we must do as a church.

Make us the church we ought to be. So this brother said to us, we know we're not the church God wants us to be, but he said, you come back in a few years and visit us again. You'll see what God has done for us.

He said, I talked to the pastor yesterday and he said to me to apologize. He's so sorry he couldn't be here to greet you. But he said to tell you God's been speaking to him.

And God's been showing him things which we must do as a church. And we're going to do them, whatever the Lord shows our pastor. We're going to do them.

And when you come back to Korea, we're going to be a different church. And then they ask questions. Oh, they said you have to know how to break the fast.

You can't go and eat real heavy food immediately when you've fasted for 40 days. They've developed, they know how to do this thing. And so they instruct their people.

They look after them. But praise the Lord, it is a church. That's a part of the reason, I think, why the Korean church grows so fast.

It is fairly common across the country. I discovered that our churches springing up across India are far more active in fasting than we are here in America. I think sometimes the mission fields are a little bit more like early Christianity.

They put us to shame. You see, that's why John Wesley required every Methodist preacher to fast two days a week. To be a Methodist was to fast.

That's partly where they got their name. He wanted to get back to where the early church was. Because the early church fasted two days every week.

He said every Methodist must fast two days of the week, Wednesday and Friday. He took the same days as the early church. Till tea time, he said.

Now, tea time in Britain is 4.35, usually around 5 o'clock. Tea is a larger meal than supper. Supper is about 9 o'clock.

And it's basically a little sandwich or two or something to drink, tea or something like that. But that's what he required the Methodists to do. And not only the pastors but the serious lay members of the church would share in this.

We're so far away from that today. I don't know what God wants you to do in your church. But it may be that God will give you two or three others who will join you in seeking God's face on special occasions when you feel maybe you're wanting to get ready for some special meetings in your church.

And you want to humble yourselves and get ready and prepare your people. Maybe you want to call a day of fasting for your people. Maybe you would want to call a day once a week for your people to fast and seek God's face and get ready for God to move among you when the evangelist comes or whatever.

As I close this part, I want to give you the example of Savannah Rolla. Savannah Rolla in the 1400s. What would you have done if there was no church but your denomination and it was a Roman Catholic church? What would you have done if there were all the evils which were in the Roman church there even before the Reformation? How would you have, if God stirred your soul over the sin in the church, what would you have done? If you saw things which you felt were a disgrace to God, what would you have done in those days? If you had felt so alone, you didn't know of anyone who sympathized with your viewpoint.

So Savannah Rolla had become a monk in the Roman church. And when he joined the church and got inside the monasteries, he did not find the holiness that he assumed he was going to find there. And he saw the sins of the clergy.

And he saw the sins in the monasteries. And he was shocked by the evils. And he took to fasting and praying.

He was just a young man. He fasted and prayed until he was thin and almost weak. In fact, he was at times so weak, he had not intended to be a preacher.

He was not trained to be a preacher. But God began to burden his heart with messages. And Savannah Rolla began to speak.

So he was offered to speak in one of the smaller churches. It wasn't long until the church was so filled that they gave him a larger church in which to preach in Florence, Italy. And as he began to preach in that church, he came to the pulpit from such fasting and prayer.

They said often his face, and I assume that this is not a Roman Catholic story, but they said his face shone at times with the presence of God. And people were thrilled. They had never heard preaching like this.

He condemned sin. He condemned sin in the Roman church. He condemned sinful practices of the Roman church.

He dared to die if need be to take his stand. He began to preach on the sins of Rome. He began to preach lectures on the book of Revelation.

Thousands of people began to come. They would fill the church. They would stand around the church on the outside as close, trying to hear what Savannah Rolla was saying on the inside.

People would get up in the nighttime to get to church, hoping to get a seat inside. People would come down the streets joining in little groups, singing as they came in the nighttime, singing as they came to the church, hungry to meet God, to hear Savannah Rolla. One lone young monk, burdened over the sins of his people.

Where does he have sympathy? Where does he have help? God so used him that thousands gathered to hear him. Poets, workmen, philosophers, day laborers, all kinds of people, the rich and the poor came to hear him. God began to send revival.

God gave him a prophecy. He prophesied that Florence was going to be invaded. That Italy would be invaded because of her sins.

Sure enough, King Charles the 8th of France gathered an army, crossed the mountains and entered Italy. And now Savannah Rolla dared, with much fasting and prayer, he went out alone and faced the advancing army from France. Do you remember that picture in the newspapers when in Tiananmen Square that one young person stood in front of the tank that could roll right over him? Remember that picture a couple years ago? This was Savannah Rolla.

It wasn't any big tank there, but there was the forces. And God protected him. They did not kill him.

And he said, I've got to see the king. And he was led to the king. And Savannah Rolla pled with Charles, turn back to your country.

You've got sins in your country. Turn back to your country. And God was so on that man that Charles of France turned around and took his army back into France.

And when Savannah Rolla got back to Florence he demanded righteousness. They overthrew the wicked government. They set up a model democracy.

Did you ever read that history? They set up a model democracy in Florence. And for several years it was as if revival had swept Florence. He preached on the sins and the vanities of the people.

Children went down the streets singing songs going house to house, calling at the doors of the people to bring out their vanities, bring out their things. They brought out cards, wigs, masks, all sorts of things that were associated with worldliness in those days. Obscene pictures, worldly books.

Did you know they had pornography back in those days? The children gathered them. They went from house to house across the city. They piled them up in the center of the city.

They had a pile 60 feet high and 240 feet in circumference. And the people gathered around began to sing songs and they began to toll the bells on the Roman Catholic churches in the area while the bells tolled

and the people sang. They had a holy bonfire.

You remember back in Ephesus there was an Ephesian bonfire. Sabonarola all by himself had this. But he said, I'm only with you for eight years.

He must have been a prophet. He didn't know how. And after eight years, Rome gathered forces.

He was seized. He was martyred and died for Jesus. And sin took over again.

But listen brothers, if one lone monk through fasting and prayer can turn the tide like that, what would happen if the believers in God in our day, what could happen in the United States of America if the people of God were that determined to be all out for God and all against sin and dare to take their stand for God. I wrote a poem. Well, I trust it's praise God.

I wrote a poem on Mark 9.29. Now, you remember Mark 9.29? This kind, said Jesus, comes out by nothing but by prayer and fasting. Some of the modern translations leave out the end fasting. All right, well, fasting is a variety of prayer.

It's an auxiliary of prayer, any way you want to say it. But let me read you this poem that I wrote. Some things will never come to pass until you fast and pray.

There is no other substitute. There is no other way. You cannot do the work of God apart from constant prayer.

You waste your time and strength until you intercession, share. Some things will never yield to God until you learn to plead. Some things will hinder God's own cause until you intercede.

The mighty movements that we need cannot be brought by man. His intercession must be made. God has no other plan.

If Jesus found while here on earth that he must fast and pray. If Jesus found that in his work there was no other way. If Jesus taught that many things await the prayer of man.

What folly to put all else first and try to change God's plan. God's cause is waiting yet today for you to fast and pray. When will you take Christ at his word? When will you Christ obey? Will you not spend an hour with Christ? Will you not learn to plead? You will have blood upon your hands unless you intercede.

I started to tell you yesterday and got sidetracked. I don't think I told you this. When I was a little boy there was one scripture that troubled me.

Just a little boy. I learned to read. It was that scripture if the watchman failed to warn him he would have blood on his hands.

And my father was a pastor who eventually left the Methodist church because of the liberalism in it. But ministers would come to see my father sometimes and the district superintendent. A little boy when a minister would come I tried to be polite and not interfere.

And then if my father stepped out of the room it was quiet a little bit. I would slip up with my Bible to that visiting preacher and I would show him the passage in Ezekiel. And I said would you explain me what this means blood on the hands? And when I was a little older there was to be a minister's conference in the

county seat of the county where my father was then pastoring.

And I was permitted to go sit quietly in the back. And then I discovered that they were going to have a question hour after the break. So I picked out one preacher that I thought was a friendly person.

I could talk to him and I said when the question hour comes don't tell who asks the question. But could you ask a question for me? Well he said yes. What do you want to know? I said I want the preachers to talk about and explain what it means to have blood on your hand.

And I have never yet had an explanation that fully satisfied me. But whatever it means I think it means an awesome responsibility. What does it mean for a Christian for a watchman to have blood on his hands? And I suppose that we could have blood on our hands for failing to preach the truth.

And I suppose we could have blood on our hands for being a coward and not speaking to someone that God is sending us to. I wish God sent us more and more. I have known people that were awakened in the night and sent to go to someone's house.

And I'll tell you as a result the person they were sent to was wonderfully converted and stood for God the rest of their life. I think we could have blood on our hands for disobeying and something like that. Could we have blood on our hands for being too lazy to fast and pray? I don't want to be morose.

I don't want to put condemnation and guilt on people. But I'm telling you that from my childhood on this has troubled me. And so I pray that God will help us to learn to pray in the way he wants us to pray.

And that he will help us teach our people to pray. The Holy Spirit teaching them through us. What could happen with all the churches that believe in the word of God across our nation? If God could mobilize the Christians of our nation what could, how could the tide be turned? If God could use Savannah and roll a single-handed in a wicked city like Florence, a city-state as it was in those days.

If God could do that with one person, what could God do if the church of God really woke up? If it really took God seriously. If it really took prayer promises seriously. If it really took prayer warfare seriously.

What could happen in our day? Is it too late for God to work? Could God send revival to the United States once more? I believe it would please God before Jesus comes. I don't know what form the revival would take. I don't know who he would use.

And I don't care what denomination he lights on first or what pastor or evangelist or Bible college or wherever. Just let God work. And just let us prepare the way of the Lord.

And may God use us as preparers of preparers. May he use us as preparers of preparers to prepare the way of the Lord. That no man may glory in his presence, but God get all the glory.

But God reveal his awesome holiness once more in our land. God bless us. God bless you.

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