



Sunday November 13, 2016
The Chose Fast (Part-2) : Positioning

The Bible presents fasting as a "spiritual discipline" in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Lord Jesus did say that His people will fast during the time after His ascension until His return (Matthew 9:14-17).

Read Isaiah 58:1-14

Review:

Last week we talked about "Preparation" for the Chosen Fast from Isaiah 58. How to fast in a manner that pleases God.

In Isaiah 58 God addresses 4 key areas:

- 1, Having right **MOTIVES** - not trying to impress God, not trying to gain sympathy of people
- 2, Maintaining right **RELATIONSHIPS**, treating people right
- 3, Showing **COMPASSION** to the needy
- 4, A life that **HONORS** God in every way

Today we will talk about positioning - when going on the chosen fast where we discuss in a simple way: For whom, Why and How, you are going to fast.

For Whom

You can fast for yourself or fast on behalf of someone else or on behalf of a group or community.

Maybe there are some things you want to address in your own personal life, and so you set yourself before God to fast and seek God.

Maybe there is someone else for whom you want to see God do something in a special way. So you set yourself to fast and seek God on behalf of that person. You are fasting as an intercessor.

Sometimes you set yourself to seek God on behalf of another group or community. This may be for a community of believers, e.g. your local church, or for those who do not know the Lord as yet.

Why - the reason you are fasting



We see many different reasons why people sought God in prayer and fasting in the Bible.

Here are a few examples:

King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah fasted seeking God for deliverance and victory when faced with great enemies (2 Chronicles 20:1-4).

Nehemiah (in Nehemiah 1:4) for understanding his personal call and vision and what was stirring in his heart to do for the city of Jerusalem, and for divine favor with the king.

Ezra (in Ezra 8:21) for direction from the Lord :

" Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. "

Ezra (in Ezra 9:5) in repentance on behalf of the sins of the people.

Esther and the Jewish people (in Esther 4:16) when faced with a challenging situation and about to take a step of faith

"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

Daniel (in Daniel 9:3-19) to seek God for the fulfillment of the prophetic word and deliverance of his people.

Daniel (in Daniel 10:2-3,12) to get understanding and revelation of the vision God had given him.

2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.

3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

The Lord Jesus before He began His public ministry (Matthew 4:1-4).

The Elders at the church in Antioch before commissioning and sending Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).

Paul and Barnabas before appointing Elders in newly established local churches (Acts 14:23).



Paul fasted often as part of his ministry.

2 Corinthians 11:27-28

27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

As we stated last week, Fasting bring to us many benefits:

1, Expresses Repentance - in expressing our turning away from sin or the things of the world and turning toward God

2, Strengthens Focus - to help us in our pursuit of God, in our seeking God, e.g. in times when you need to hear from God, get clarity on direction and receive guidance.

3, Increases Intensity - to undergird and intensify other spiritual areas such as our faith, prayer, desire for God, e.g. Matthew 17:20-21

4, Develops Discipline - develops self-control, which is a fruit of the Spirit, and keeps the flesh under

5, Deepens Consecration - that we are setting ourselves apart for a specific purpose, e.g. before going out on a time of ministry, or as the Elders in Antioch did before they prayed, commissioned and released Paul and Barnabas for missions (Acts 13:1-4)

How We Go About Fasting

There are many different kinds of fasts that we can do:

1, Refraining from food - a single meal, or a couple of meals.

You can spend a day or a few days, fasting.

2, Refraining from certain kinds of foods for a period of time.

People call this a Daniel's fast because of Daniel 10:2-3

3, Refraining from certain activities for a period of time

e.g. someone may 'fast' watching TV and instead spend that time in spiritual activity.

4, The fasted life

is one where you are keeping certain things away from you on an ongoing basis for an extended period of time because you choose to.

The Nazirite in the Old Testament was a man called to a "fasted life" (as seen in Numbers 6:1-21 - *no need to read this entire passage*) The Nazirite would separate and consecrate himself to the Lord for a period of time.

Samson was consecrated by God to be a Nazirite for his entire life (Judges 13:7).



And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.' "

We can fast individually, in a small group with a few people or even corporately in a larger gathering.

We do our fasting as unto the Lord and as before the Lord. We do not do this to impress people.

Matthew 6:16-18

16 "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Next Sunday

from Isaiah 58, we will see the wonderful promises God has given to us, when we go on The Chosen Fast.