

## Prayer & Fasting pt 2 True Fasting

**Intro:** Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

### Celebrations & Announcements:

- Last weekend P. Martin launched our Month of Prayer & Fasting! Part 1! LISTEN TO IT!
- **New Years Prayer Summit** – was awesome! So good to build off P. Martins message!
- **Equipping Conference:** Sean McDowell is coming Feb 16-17!
- **Christmas Offering:** 527, 900\$ THANK YOU to those who gave! Let's PRAY the Lord multiples each \$\$ in Kingdom FRUIT for Church Renewal, Camp & Tupendane!
- **NEW PRAYER & FASTING CARDS** – [www.mysouthland.com/prayerandfasting](http://www.mysouthland.com/prayerandfasting)
  - **Invite to Bible Recap** – Grand Story 1 year
- **Church-Wide Prayer & Fasting Jan 9-11 this week!**
- **Wednesday - SUNRISE PRAYER SUMMIT 6:30-7:30am ONLINE**

**Church-Wide Prayer: Gen Alpha & Z (Ps 78:7-8):** Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging

- **Personal:** pray for the Gen Z & Alpha young people that you know by name! for them to Know, Love, Worship & Obey Jesus
- **Church-wide:** Middle School Church: for Gen Alpha – we want to start MS Church during the 11:00AM.
- **PRAY:** wisdom for Fam Min as they prepare. Lots of work to do! FUN & GOOD WORK!
  - That God would call & provide the right volunteer ministers to work in Kids Min
  - For the staff & volunteers working with our MS kids. Wisdom, belonging, heart, ability to truly SEE & connect with our youth.
  - MS kids to LOVE coming to church! For them to have a strong biblical worldview. The ability to recognize lies from truth.
- More details to follow. The family min team will provide.

**Recap: Last week P. Martin kicked off Prayer & Fasting with something lost, something gained.**

- He challenged us to **LISTEN** to God for what to fast from and what to pray for!
- Then to **OBEY** – he gave the example of our board chair fasting and praying for his health and not know that later that year he would almost DIE! And how God answered that!

**Today:** we are going to continue with our Prayer & Fasting theme and we'll be looking at TRUE FASTING

**Main Text: Isaiah 58** – we are going to go through this.

### A. Why we Pray & Fast

1. **Prayer:** Prayer is how we talk to God – Communication is necessary for relationship. Through prayer we worship, share our hearts, ask for help, fight our sin nature, face our problems and get to know Jesus

2. **Fasting:** Fasting is denying our appetites. Primarily food, but can include media, hobbies, etc. As we get weaker physically, we become stronger spiritually!

### **Isaiah 58 True and False Fasting**

“Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God. Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord? “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

### **B. Two Directions – “why have we fasted, and you see it not?”**

**Isaiah 58:3** Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’

**Isaiah 58:3-4** Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.

- You fast but SEEK YOUR OWN PLEASURE.

**Picture:** can you walk in two directions at once? Watch as I walk LEFT & RIGHT at the same time... OUCH!

This is a simple concept. It’s impossible. Yet, this is one of the most common complaints that Christians still make today! It was true then and it is true now!

**We want God to move in our lives.** To give us peace, joy, freedom, success! We want mountains to move! Freedom from addiction! Anxiety! We want financial provision! Healing! Joy! Peace!

**But... we want them on OUR TERMS. TWO DIRECTIONS!**

**James 4:1-9** You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God... Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- This is precisely what James echoes in the New Testament! **YOU CAN'T WALK IN TWO DIRECTIONS.**

**Personal Example:** I remember when I first started fasting. I would deny myself food, then hungry, I would distract myself by playing video games. I did lose some weight! But didn't grow spiritually during these times. Why? **Because this is a diet!**

**Fasting and prayer is NOT magic – to get what you want – NO!** they are tools, disciplines, to allow believers to draw closer to God! This is where we discover LIFE – MIRACLES – BREAKTHROUGH – this is where we experience JOY!

**In Isaiahs day...** the people were holding onto their sins, they were mistreating people, then they'd worship, pray and fast and wonder where the POWER OF GOD WAS? Why wouldn't he listen? Why wouldn't he hear?

- **Isaiah 58:1** Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins... oppress all your workers...

**Leanord Ravenhill quote:** "everyone wants to be clothed with power, but no one wants to be stripped of self."

**We have this same problem today. We hold back various areas of our lives from God and end up denying the Spirits work in our lives!**

**C. Choose FULL Surrender**

**Effective Prayer & Fasting BEGINS WITH THE HEART!!!!!!**

**CHOOSE A DIRECTION** → this is what giving our "YES" to Jesus is all about. Unfettered, unlimited, unconditional access to our lives and submission to him on our part. We are choosing to deny ourselves and to follow him with our whole lives. **THIS is where we discover TRUE LIFE.**

**Two areas that we need to SURRENDER TO GOD so that we can find LIFE as we PRAY & FAST!**

1. **Suffering that is out of your control**

- a. **2 Corinthians 1:8-10** For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.
  - b. **You don't have to be able to fix your pain! It may be hard! My heart goes out to you! DO NOT GIVE UP! Be a MARY IN THIS SEASON → SIT AT JESUS' FEET and DON'T LEAVE!**
  - c. Whether deliverance is coming around the corner, or you are to persevere through the storm – JESUS IS WITH YOU.
  - d. **Philippians 4:6-9** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.
  - e. **SURRENDER may look different – it might just be committing to PERSEVERE & WORSHIP JESUS IN THE STORM**
    - i. STAR – I do it DAILY
    - ii. Pray & Fast – breakthrough, strength, perspective, stay close to Jesus
    - iii. Connect with other believers!
- 2. Sin – compromise, immorality, offense & lack of love, disobedience, failure to engage the Great Command & Commission**
- a. **This is what happened in Isaiah!** They were living in SIN and they were refusing to LOVE people! the RESULT? God would not listen to their PRAYERS and he did not notice their FASTING!
  - b. Two kinds of sin. Bad things we do. The Good things we don't do!
  - c. **James 4:17** So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.
  - d. **Reading Isaiah 58 this week had me pondering... is this happening to the Western Church?**
    - i. **Do you have hidden sin in your life?**
    - ii. **Are you doing your best to fulfill the Great Command & Commission?**
  - e. **The church is losing influence...** we went from a Christian society, to post-Christian, to anti-Christian (Rosaria Butterfield)
  - f. **BUT: is this just leaders? We often point to others for the source of the problem! Churches! Government! Culture!**
    - i. LGBTQ ideology is destroying our youth! Yet, do you struggle with pornography? Do you lust?

- ii. Church leaders and the government! They waste money! Time! Are you using your time, money, life, to advance God's Kingdom?
- iii. If someone compared your time in prayer vs your time on your phone. Would they be confused if you said, "JESUS IS NUMBER 1 IN MY LIFE"?
- iv. If examined how you treated to your friends, family, neighbors, enemies, strangers... would they be confused when you said, "I am a Christian. I love ALL people – even my enemies!"
- g. **When I read Isaiah 58 – HIDDEN SIN & MISTREATING OTHERS** – not taking care of the poor, widows, the broken, the hurting, etc. WAS THE SOURCE OF THEIR PROBLEM!
- h. **It wasn't one persons problem** – it was the PEOPLES PROBLEM.
- i. **2 Chronicles 7:13-15** When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.
- j. **No more compromise.** If you are sitting here...
  - i. Do you have hidden sin in your life? TODAY is the day... BRING IT TO LIGHT. REPENT. And receive FORGIVENESS! MERCY! GRACE! and the power to break free!
  - ii. Are you living for yourself? Or, living for Jesus?

#### D. True Fasting & Prayer...

- Says, YES with REPENTANCE
- Says, YES with LOVING PEOPLE
- Says, YES with FORGIVENESS
- Says, YES with SERVING THOSE IN NEED
- Says, YES with SEEKING GOD WITH THEIR WHOLE HEART
- Says, YES with FULL SURRENDER

**Isaiah 58:9-12** Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

**This is an INVITATION for each one of us during the month of Prayer & Fasting – to find TRUE LIFE in CHRIST!**

## **AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM**

**MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!**

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**SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023/2024**

**Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship**

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
  - a. **Each one, reach one**
2. **Gen Alpha & Z** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
  - a. **MS Church during 11:00 AM**
3. **Persecuted Church & Israel** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
  - a. **500 average attendance at Prayer Summit**
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers