

The New Testament Church
Spiritual Warfare #7 – Prayer and Fasting – Matthew 17:19-21; Mark 9:28-29
Pastor Paul Jehle – March 19, 2023

I *Spiritual Warfare* required in these days – seven lies to keep the church ineffective

- A. 1st six lies answered with these truths – *maturity is how we live out our faith; God always joins the generations; the Kingdom is a tapestry of different ethnic groups; and we can discern by God's Spirit/Word; warfare is primarily submitting more deeply to God that we might resist the devil; and revival is the means to reformation*
- B. Today we deal with this lie – *some darkness is impossible to overcome*
 - 1. The truth is – *periodic fasting enhances the power of the Spirit in our lives*
 - 2. Prayer *and* fasting can change people, families, churches and nations!

II Prayer and Fasting – *fasting intensifies prayer because it enhances self-denial and surrender*

A. Matthew 17:19-21 and Mark 9:28-29

- 1. Three of the 12 were with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration
 - a. Peter, James and John wanted to stay on the mountain with Christ
 - b. **Revelations of Christ are for the purpose of ministering in the valley**
 - c. *“They were at college now, with Christ as their Tutor”* – Spurgeon, 1896 (quote)
 - 2. The other nine disciples were on their own ministering – but couldn't deliver a child
 - a. The demon had been in the child a long time, with some severe manifestations
 - b. **The longer the sinful habits the harder to overcome possible demonic bondage**
 - c. They asked Jesus why they were not successful – *because of your unbelief*
 - d. **It is not the amount of our faith, but increased focus on Christ that must expand**
 - 3. The father of the child said **“Lord I believe; help my unbelief!”** – humble faith!
 - 4. *“This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”* – Mt. 17:21; Mk. 9:24,29
 - a. One's authority increases to the degree Christ is formed in us and our character
 - b. **The test of a ministry is not miracles, but humble focus on Christ and character**
 - c. Christ walked in humility, not *fame or public spectacles of miracles...*
- B. Biblical examples of fasting that intensified prayer – Jehoshaphat (2nd Chr. 20); Ezra (Ezra 8); Esther (4:16); Jonah – Nineveh spared... the early church practiced prayer and fasting...
- C. So what are the benefits? – *it withholds food to transfer a deeper focus on Christ and...*
- 1. *It avoids the extremes of arrogant spiritual pride and dull routine* (we must eat)
 - 2. *It is warfare.* Christ came out of the wilderness *in the power of the Spirit* (q. Prince)
 - 3. *It is to be periodic.* *“when we fast”* – Mt. 6:16 it is part of our growth in prayer
 - 4. *Its focus is on Christ, and not to lift us up.* – Mt. 6:16 do not put on a sad face
 - 5. *It helps us hear God when making major decisions* – as a church – Acts 13:1-3
 - 6. *It deepens repentance in mourning over sin* – in the culture – Isaiah 61:3
 - 7. *It brings a greater degree of liberty from bondage* – break every yoke – Isaiah 58:6
 - 8. *It inspires us to greater selflessness in service* – hungry, poor, not a show – Is. 58:7
 - 9. *It develops character – righteousness* – Isaiah 58:8
 - 10. *It increases answered prayer – taking responsibility* – Isaiah 58:9
 - 11. *Guidance from God is clearer; you will become more fruitful* – Isaiah 59:10-11
 - 12. *Greater opportunities to help restore foundations, waste places, repair breaches* – Is. 58:12
 - 13. *It will increase our honor of keeping the Lord's Day* – Isaiah 58:13
- D. Practical guidance for fasting... read pgs. 147-149 in Derek Prince's *Changing History...*