

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew** 85- Hungering for God through Fasting- Part 6 Reasons to Fast in the New Covenant- Part 1

Church February 04, 2024

Matthew 9:14-17

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

15 And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

16 But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results.

17 Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

We are now in the middle of trying to determine if Fasting is the “**unshrunk cloth**” and the “**old wineskins**” of verses 16&17. In other words, is Fasting an Old Testament Truth that has been made *obsolete* by the entrance of the New Covenant? So, has Fasting gone the Way of Sabbath observance; going to the Temple in Jerusalem once a year; the Levitical Priesthood; the Sanhedrin Court; animal Sacrifices; and the dietary and ceremonial aspects of the Old Covenant?

And last week- we found out that it is *absolutely* God’s Will for *every* genuine Believer- who has *already* experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; who has *already* been forgiven and made Righteous; and has *already* been adopted into God’s Family- to NOT remain as they are- but we are told to *constantly* and *consistently* “**grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (2Peter 3:18). And God NEVER commands us to do ANYTHING unless He *first* supplies both the Power as well as the Desire to obey. And I truly

believe that this is one of the Areas of our Lives where Fasting can be of extreme Benefit.

Now that does NOT mean that Fasting is the ONLY Tool that *makes* or *causes* that to happen. But what it DOES mean is that Fasting is *ONE* of the “*Weapons*” that God has *graciously* given to ALL genuine Believers- to help them *successfully* wage this ongoing War against the three main Enemies of the Believer:

1. This fallen sinful world “*System*”
2. The devil
3. Our own fallen and unredeemed Flesh

So, we could fast all of the Time and yet, if we do NOT avail ourselves of all the other “*Means of Grace*”¹ that God has given to His people- we will probably still NOT be “**Strong in the Lord and in the Strength of His Might**” (Ephesians 6:10). So, *whatever* else you get out of this Sermon Series on Fasting- you should NOT think that I am saying; or that the Bible teaches that Fasting- *in and of itself*- will cure ALL of your spiritual Problems and Challenges. It won’t.

But by any honest Examination of the average Church that lays claim to be “Biblical” or “Reformed”- you would NEVER know that Fasting is even included as being one of those Weapons; as well as a biblical Truth that we are COMMANDED to *periodically* engage in. And that means that those Churches are either NOT “Biblical” or “Reformed” at all; or those Churches do NOT contain any genuinely saved people- because Jesus said,

... **WHEN** you fast (Matthew 6:17)

... NOT ...

IF you fast

... and if those people were genuinely saved; and/or IF those Churches were truly “Biblical” or “Reformed” and they were constantly being subjected to a steady Diet of the Word of God- they would know that.

According to Statistics that I have seen- one of the of the most *common* Struggles that modern Believers experience- is that they do NOT sense that they are growing in the Lord. And, while they might be getting “smarter about the Bible”- they don’t think they are getting *stronger in the Lord*- precisely

¹ Bible Study; Prayer; godly Fellowship; The Lord’s Table; Giving; and Service

because they don't see much Victory in their Lives over the three Problems that Martin Luther warned the Church about- 500 years ago.²

In addition- according to those same Statistics- a full 6 out of 10 men in the modern Church secretly live their Lives enslaved by the horrific Plague of Pornography on a regular Basis. And I am convinced in my heart- after spending over a half- century in Church- that this particular Problem is the Result of those men NEVER seeing...

... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2Corinthians 4:4b)

Now why do I say that? Because God the Holy Spirit *infallibly* spoke through the Apostle Paul and promised something marvelous to God's people if they were to behold God's Glory in the Person of Jesus.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2Corinthians 3:18)

So, as our eyes and minds and hearts (that satan has blinded) are sovereignly *unveiled*- and we are able to behold "**the glory of the Lord**"- the Promise from a God, who CANNOT lie- is that we will be, "**transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**" Now look again what that says,

... so, we will be, "**transformed into the same image...**"

So, we will be powerfully and effectively *transformed* into what we see- Jesus in His Glory- when God *sovereignly* unveils our eyes and minds and hearts; and we behold the Glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ! And if we are being progressively transformed- we will still be fought- but we will NOT be a helpless Victim of the Issues that entice our Flesh!

And look at what the Apostle taught was HOW we will be transformed into that SAME Image:

... from glory to glory

.... or from one realm of Glory to the next.

² The World; the Flesh; the Devil

So, this Transformation in both “ongoing” and “progressive”. And yet, for the most part, besides just being good, “*preaching Material*” this Promise from God goes completely *unrealized* in the average Believer’s Life.

So, how should we respond to a Promise straight from the Bible going *unrealized* in our Lives? I would suggest that the New Testament Believer; who has *already* experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; who has *already* been forgiven and made Righteous; and who has *already* been adopted into the Family of God- should grieve over this glaring Lack.

But why? The eternal Inheritance for the genuine Believer has *already* been made Secure. And there is NOTHING we can do to make that Inheritance MORE secure. So, why grieve? Shouldn’t we simply *celebrate* all that Jesus has done in us and for us and to us and through us and don’t worry about any Lack we might be experiencing?

Well, I suppose we could do that- as long as we either stop reading the Bible or tear this Section out. But I am making the Argument this morning that, while it is true that we CANNOT add anything to what Jesus has already done- this Promise in **2Corinthians** is just as much a part of the Bible as **John 3:16**.

But the Reality is that this Promise (as well as several others) is simply NOT being realized by the average Church-member in our Day. And that isn’t okay- because this Promise (as well as the others) were NOT given to lost people but to the saved. And so, this Promise is part of the “*Abundant Life*” in Jesus Christ that EVERY Believer is *supposed* to experience.

And as a Result of the vast Majority of Believers today NOT seeing the “**Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, Who is the Image of God**”- the people of the modern Church have turned to Entertainment and Excitement rather than godly Edification. And so, Prayer Meetings and Bible Studies bore them. And all of this- is because they have grown “Weary of the Fight” and they have “lost Heart”.

My dear Friends, the Pulpits of the modern Church are filled with Politics; and social Issues; and Patriotism; and humanly engineered Morality- but they are NOT filled with God. They are not filled with God NOR with the *Particularities* of God’s Glory. And so, the people of God are left with very vague and very *general* Information about God that leaves their Heads empty concerning the infinite Majesty and Worth and Awe of the spectacular Glory of God. And their Lives reflect this Emptiness that gnaws at their souls.

But the Answer now is the SAME Answer it has always been: We NEED to “*Fix our eyes on Jesus*”. And this is what the unknown Writer taught in **Hebrews 12:1-3**:

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

... and this is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said,

22 ... He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach —

23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (Colossians 1:22b&23)

But in order for any of us to be presented before God “**holy and blameless and beyond reproach**”- we must do two things:

1. Continue in the Faith (firmly established and steadfast)
2. Not be moved away from the “**Hope of the Gospel**”

And yes, it is true that God will do that *sovereignly* by Grace. But it is *also* true that the “*Means*” by which God will *sovereignly* do that in us- is by us *persevering* in the ongoing War against everything that would hinder that.

Now it took the Gift of “*saving Faith*” to initially bring us into the Salvation of God. And the Key for us to stand before God- acceptable in the last Day- is through the Gift of “*persevering Faith*”.

And Paul taught that one of the “*Means*” that God has graciously given that helped him to persevere in Faith- is when...

... I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. (1Corinthians 9:27b)

... where the word, “body” in this verse refers to his unredeemed Flesh.

Now why did the Apostle write this in the Bible? Because he was well aware that the “Desires of the Flesh” are both “Deceitful” as well as temporarily “Delightful”.

Ephesians 4:17-24

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,

22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

The Nature of the “**Lusts of Deceit**” that reside constantly in our fallen Flesh (**James 1:14**) is that they lure us- very subtly and quietly- into believing that living for the fleeting “Pleasures of Body and Mind” will bring us MORE Joy and MORE Satisfaction than the “spiritual Delights” of knowing and obeying God.

And these Pleasures begin with “outwardly innocent” Delights in Food and Reading and Resting and Comfort and Playing and Relaxing. But very quickly- these things become very cruel Tyrants that *demand* our full Attention and *expect* our Loyalty. And it doesn’t take long until the infallible Word of the living God teaches that we are literally “held captive” by them as they choke off any spiritual Hunger for God.

So, Paul gave us the Example of himself as he disciplined his own fallen Flesh (body) and put himself to the Test. And that required him to ask himself several very penetrating Questions:

- Have I already been *overcome* by those deceitful Lusts?
- Do I still hunger for God?
- Is my Faith Real and Powerful?

- Am I just “going through the Motions” and worshipping God with my lips while my heart is a slave to Comfort and Pleasure?

... and you can hear the Earnestness of his heart when he said:

... I will not be mastered by anything (1Corinthians 6:12b)

Now please understand that this is NOT the Arrogance of “Self-Exaltation”. It is the passionate Resolve to resist *anything* that would lure his heart away from the all-controlling Satisfaction in God. Listen to the Testimony of a unknown young man that illustrates the kind of “Discipline of the Body” that Paul was talking about.

“I grew up on the mission field in Korea. There is one Experience that is emblazoned on my mind to show the sacrificial Dedication to Prayer and Fasting in Korea. My father worked with a leper colony. And they had a Prayer Meeting that met at four o’clock in the morning. I was a little boy, but my father took me with him- getting me up at 3:30 am so we could get there on time. He sat me down in the back where I could see out the door. And I’ll never forget one man who had no legs, no crutches, and by using his hands, was crabbing along the ground- dragging his body to pray at 4am. I’ll never forget that.”

Hear me when I tell you that rising early to pray is a *form* of Fasting. It is saying that- *periodically*- rising to meet with God is *better* than enjoying God’s good Gift of Sleep. And when I say that- I’m *not* advocating that we *neglect* Sleep to the point of harming our physical Bodies. I am simply saying that this is an Example of what Paul was talking about- that has NOTHING to do with Food.

But I am also saying that, when I was saved- over 52 years ago- Statements like this- from redeemed people from every walk of Life- were common. Barely a month would go by- when I was a young Convert of 16, 17, & 18 years old- that I would not hear someone give a Testimony; or make a Statement like that man from Korea- that would bring deep Conviction in my heart; keep me focused on what really matters; and what I needed to do to be changed into the Image of Jesus Christ. But today- not only are Testimonies and Statements like this Korean man *uncommon*- they are practically *non-existent*! No wonder the modern Church is so worldly and sinful!

You see, when we make Choices like this- we are not trying to compete with other Believers as to who is the most “spiritual”. Because that would mean we aren’t being spiritual- at all. No, we do so out of simply seeing the Need to make

War on the Deceitfulness of our fleshly Desires and- at the same time- we testify to the *preciousness* of Prayer and the all-surpassing Value of God in Christ.

So, has Fasting become Obsolete because of the New Covenant? Not as long as our Flesh; and the World; and the devil; continue to trouble us. Is Fasting a “*Christian*” thing to do? Yes- IF it *flows out* from the Confidence of Jesus Christ; and IF it is *sustained* by the Power of Jesus Christ; and IF it has, as its Goal- the Glory of Jesus Christ!

Therefore, waving powerfully over every single “New Testament Fast- this Banner should fly,

Philippians 3:7-11

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

In Fasting- as well as in all other *deliberate* Privations- every “Loss” is for the Sake of “Gaining Christ”. And that doesn’t mean that we seek to gain a Christ that we do not already have in fullness. Nor does it mean that our Progress in God depends solely on what we do.

In the very next verse- Paul makes the Dynamics of the entire Christian Life very clear- including Fasting- when he said:

Philippians 3:12

I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

... and this is the very *Essence* of “*New Testament Fasting*”.

We ache and yearn to fast- so that by- *periodically*- forgoing the good Gifts of Food; and Comfort; and Relaxation and Rest and Enjoyment in a thousand different Ways- we come to know more and more of all that God is for us

in Jesus. But we only do this- because He has *already* “laid hold” on us; and is drawing us ever *forward* and *upward* into “all the Fullness of God!”

My Prayer for this Church is that God will awaken us to a new Hunger for Him. *Not* because we haven’t *already* tasted the New Wine of Christ’s Presence- but precisely because we *have*. And so now we hunger for *more* of His Presence and Power in our midst.

Now as far as I can tell from my own Research- there are at least 5 *Reasons* for New Testament Believers to fast:

1. New Testament Believers Should Fast for “*God to raise up Ministries that will Change the World*”
2. New Testament Believers Should Fast for “*Waters that do not Fail*”
3. New Testament Believers Should Fast for the “*Safety of the Little Ones*”
4. New Testament Believers Should Fast for the “*Father’s Reward*”
5. New Testament Believers Should Fast for the “*Return of Jesus*”

... and even though we certainly will NOT finish this today- we can begin to look at each one.

1. New Testament Believers Should Fast for God to Raise up Ministries that Will Change the World

The Acts 13:1-4

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

It is my firm Conviction that we need MORE Ministries that *continually* put themselves into a Position to be used by God to change the World. I realize that it is common today to simply dwell on the many Compromises and Sins that are in the modern Church. And really and truly, people talk about this- in such a Way- that would make me think that Jesus has failed in doing what He said in **Matthew 16:18b**:

... upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

... and the “Rock” on which Jesus is building His Church is the Divine Revelation that God the Father revealed to Peter- in verse 16:

... You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

So, instead of simply bemoaning what is wrong with many who say they are part of this invincible Church- we need to celebrate the Reality that this Divine Revelation is being preached today by MORE people today by MORE godly bond-slaves of Jesus- to MORE people around the world- than at any Time in the History of the Church!

Let me say this another Way:

MORE people are hearing the Gospel preached to them today than at any time in the History of the Church!

... and so, if it is true that preaching the Gospel is the ONLY Way that God has chosen to save His elect- then MORE people are being saved today than at any time in the History of the Church! And that is something to celebrate!

And yet there is a great NEED for Ministries that God has chosen to change the World. Ministries like Barnabas and Saul had in the 1st Century. But the Way that God used to sovereignly “call” that Ministry into Existence- was through Prayer and Fasting.

The Situation was that Saul (Paul) and Barnabas and some of the other Leaders in the Church at Antioch were worshiping and ministering to the Lord. And Dr. Luke says they were fasting! And based on what happened next- I think we can *assume* that the Burden that drove them to push away from the Table and forgo God’s good Gift of Food and to fast was this:

“What’s next?”

These men were celebrating the finished Work of Jesus Christ- NOT by sitting down as though Christ’s Work was now completed in the earth. It WAS completed in them- but it was NOT completed in the earth. So, they were asking if God would have them take what He had done *in* them; and *to* them; and

for them- to the Ends of the Earth- so others might be saved? We would NOT be saved unless they had done this.

So, they fasted- even though they had already been forgiven and redeemed- so they might seek the Leading of God the Holy Spirit in the Direction of the Church in general and their Ministry in particular. So, this was an early form of “*Master Planning*”. But the Difference in them back then and the Way that the modern Church engages in their Planning Sessions today- was that those men didn’t think they could get God’s Direction by any other Means other than through Prayer and Fasting. Without Computers; without telephones; without any mail Service; without easy modes of Transportation; without leaning on 2,000 years of experience of millions of people throughout Church History- this Ministry changed the World!

And in began with Prayer and Fasting. And so, even though I know of no one who suggests that Prayer has been made obsolete by the New Covenant- many think that Fasting has been abrogated by the superior Covenant in Jesus. And that simply makes no sense to me.

This Account by Luke here in the “Diary of the first 30 years of Christianity on the earth” illustrates as well as anything else why I am convinced that Fasting should still be a common and viable Part of everyday Life in the Church that is being built by Jesus on the Rock of that Divine Revelation.

Now remember, Jesus had *already* told them to,

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you... (Matthew 28:19&20a)

... so, they *already* knew what His Will was.

But what they did NOT know was the Details of this Command- like: HOW; and WHEN; and by what MEANS they were to obey Jesus. That was NOT told to them before Jesus left. So, they were left with having to cry out to God (Prayer) and Fast before God- so He would provide those Details.

And that is the Way it will be with us. We have the Command of God as to what we are *supposed* to do- in a general Sense. But we lack *many* of the Details of just HOW we are to obey; and WHEN we should start; and what Means we should use. And that has ALWAYS been the Case with the Church of Jesus.

Every Generation of Believers are faced with a Problem; a Heresy; a false Teaching; a Situation; or a Circumstance about which the Bible itself only gives general or even vague Information. And so, those previous Generations confronted the forces of Evil; and did battle with them; and overcame them! And out from

those amazing Battles- the Church wrote down various “*Summary Statements*” or “*Declarations*” that were developed in the Heat of Battle.

And those Statements and Declarations now make up many of the cherished Doctrines of the Christian Church! And they are fully biblical- but they were forged by godly men who led the Church- AFTER the Apostles all died out. Issues that we use every Day and rejoice over like:

- The Trinity
- The full Humanity of Christ
- The full Deity of Christ
- The “hypostatic Union” of Jesus (2 Natures)
- Original Sin

For example, the word, “*Trinity*” isn’t even in the Bible- even though *portions* of what the “Doctrine of the Trinity” teaches is found in every single Book of the Bible. But that glaring Absence has given rise to many detractors of this Divine Truth over the years- even in our Day. But the Leaders of the early Church HAD to confront really damnable false Teaching and so, they HAD to find a Solution.

And so, over a period of around 300 years- the Leaders of the Church dove into the Scriptures to find every single Reference of Deity of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit found in all 66 Books of the Holy Bible and they put it all together and then hammered out this Essential Truth of Christianity.

But remember, they had no Computers; no Christian Library; no Lexicons; no Encyclopedias; and they had no access to a Commentary; or a Concordance. And they did all of this while living under intense Persecution- where they were not always able to have a firm location to hold all of their Research. So, what did they do? They fasted and prayed and God the Spirit led them.

So, many of the Doctrines that now define biblical “Orthodoxy”- were not pieced together until the Church was confronted with specific Evil.

And today- the seminal issue of our Day- that we now face- that *previous* Generations of Believers did NOT face- that we must answer- biblically- is the Issue of “Manhood and Womanhood”.

And so, we should emulate what the early Church did- and we should cry to God (Prayer) and fast- so that God the Spirit will say to us,

Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them

... and God will then use that Ministry to change the World!

So, I pray you will consider with me four Observations that I got from **The Acts 13:1-4:**

1. This Fast was AFTER Jesus had Ascended into Heaven

While a few in the modern Church actually teach that Fasting was a part of the Old Covenant spirituality but was phased out with the Coming of New Covenant spirituality- many, many more passively *affirm* that false Teaching by NEVER fasting.

So, is Fasting part of the “old garment” and “old wineskin” of **Matthew 9:16&17** that needs to be discarded so that the “unshrunk cloth” and the “new wine” of the Kingdom of Heaven will not tear the Garment and burst the wineskins and be lost?" The apparent Answer is that *manifestly*- Saul and Barnabas and the others in Antioch did not think or believe that Fasting was either an “old garment” nor an “old wineskin”. And, manifestly, God honored their Prayer and Fasting by moving to sovereignly “call” a Ministry into Existence! So, God the Spirit didn’t think that Fasting was obsolete either!

2. This Fast was carried out by a Group of Believers Together

A valid Concern about Fasting is that Jesus warned *against* Fasting that is done for no other Purpose than to be “**noticed by men**” (**Matthew 6:18a**). And then He said,

Your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:18b)

... and yet this Group here in **The Acts 13** fasted *together*- and everyone involved knew they were fasting!

And so, manifestly, neither Saul nor Barnabas thought that Jesus was teaching that “group fasting” was Evil, even though people often know you are fasting- *especially* when you are fasting as part of a Group.

So, the church Leaders at Antioch at that Time- took Jesus to mean- that we do NOT sin if someone knows that we are fasting, but that we sin if our MOTIVE to fast is to be “noticed by men”. And that is why “Group Fasting” has marked God's people all through biblical and post-biblical History.

3. Fasting was an Occasion for the Spirit's Special Guidance

The Acts 13:2&3

2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Dr. Luke clearly wanted us to see the Connection between the Worship, Prayer, and Fasting on the one hand, with the decisive Guidance of the Holy Spirit on the other.

And so, I would suggest that this teaches us the Value of “Worship-Fasting-Prayer” in the earnest Pursuit of God's Will for our individual Lives and the Life of our Church.

4. This Fast changed the Course of History!

It is practically impossible to overstate the historical Importance of this Moment in Antioch in the History of the World. Before this Word from the Holy Spirit- there seemed to have been no organized Mission of the Church beyond the eastern Seacoast of the Mediterranean. Before this, Paul had made NO missionary Journeys westward to Asian Minor, Greece, or Rome, or Spain. Before this- Paul had NOT written any of his inspired Letters (Epistles) which were ALL the Result of his missionary Travels beginning right here with this Moment and this Fast.

This moment of Prayer and Fasting resulted in a “Missions Movement” that would make Christianity the *dominant* Religion of the Roman Empire within two and a half Centuries and would yield 2.3 billion adherents of the Christian Religion today; with a Christian witness in virtually every Nation of the world! And 13 out of the 29 Books of the New Testament were the Result of the Ministry that was launched in this Moment of Prayer and Fasting.

So, it is obvious that God was pleased to make Worship; and Prayer; and Fasting the “launching Pad” for New Covenant Missions that would change the Course of world History. Is there NOT a huge Lesson there for us?

In 1756, John Wesley wrote in his Journal of a similar Kind of “Holy Spirit Move” through Prayer and Fasting. The King of Britain (George II) called for a day of “Solemn Prayer and Fasting” because of a threatened invasion by the French. And one of the world’s greatest Preachers wrote,

“The fast day was a glorious day, such as London has scarce seen since the

Restoration. Every church in the city was more than full, and a solemn seriousness sat on every face. Surely God heareth prayer, and there will yet be a lengthening of our tranquility.”

... then in a Footnote, Wesley added,

"Humility [Fasting] was turned into national rejoicing for the threatened invasion by the French was averted."

On April 26, 1877, Governor J.S. Pillsbury proclaimed a “Day of Prayer and Fasting” for the people of Minnesota to plead with God to prevent an impending locust Plague that would have meant ruin to thousands of families. Four days later Pillsbury wrote,

“A sudden climatic change at dusk flicked a blanket of frost across the entire area where the locusts waited for the dawn and take off. Most were killed right where they crouched...God wonderfully responded.”

Amen. Let’s pray.

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