

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

45- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 25
Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy- Part 8

Church March 19, 2023

Matthew 6:1-24

1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

11 'Give us this day our daily bread.

12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'

14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

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

18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

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

Now as we *continue* to examine what Jesus is teaching here in this Passage of what we call, the "*Sermon on the Mount*"- we see that Jesus is addressing four Topics:

1. Giving to the Poor (verses 2-4)
2. Praying (verses 5-15)
3. Fasting (verses 16-18)
4. Wealth (verses 19-24)

So, Jesus is teaching that the *new* people; of the New Covenant- who will inherit this *new* "Kingdom of Heaven"- will have the Attributes that He talks about here. Another way of understanding this is to remember what Jesus said back in **Matthew 5:20**:

"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

... so, the Attributes and Characteristics that Jesus illustrates here are what that “*surpassing Righteousness*” looks like.

Now today, I want to focus on what Jesus taught in verses 16-18 when He said,

16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

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

18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

... so, this is talking about the Subject of “*Fasting*”.

And what Jesus taught here *causes* us to ask several Questions like:

- *What* is “Fasting”?
- *How* and *When* should Believers Fast?
- *Why* did Jesus teach this?

Now about eight years ago, I taught a very comprehensive Study on Fasting that goes into great detail about what Fasting is; what it is for; and how to go about doing it. So, if you want a lot of detail about this wondrous “*Means of Grace*”- I suggest that you get a copy of that Study. And I also want to say that we are in the process of posting all of these various Studies and Teachings onto the Church website as well as the other Platforms such as *Sermonaudio*; *Substack*; and *Youtube*. So, Lord willing, by the End of this year- we will have most- if not all of my Teachings on some Internet Platform and probably even *multiple* Platforms.

But suffice it to say that Fasting is one of the “*Means of Grace*”; one of the “*Gifts of God’s Grace*” that He has graciously provided for the people of His Church- to *avail ourselves of*- that will help you to become “**strong in the Lord and in the Strength of His Might**” (Ephesians 6:10).

Fasting was *originally* given to the Jews under the *inferior* Old Covenant but was carried over into the New. But like most things God gave to the Old Testament Jews- by the time Jesus entered into His Ministry back in 1st Century- many of the Leaders of the Jews had so *perverted* Fasting- that it had become a reproach to God rather than a Blessing to His people.

Now the *earliest* mention of someone not eating on purpose is found in **Genesis 24:33** when the slave of Abraham, who had been sent to find a Wife for Isaac, said this,

But when food was set before him to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business.

So, even four Centuries BEFORE God gave the Law to Moses- God's people had some *general* idea about Fasting. So, the Concept of NOT eating- because of some spiritual Issue- is *ancient*; and has been participated by literally hundreds of millions of Believers since God cast Man out of the Garden.

Now today, Fasting has become popular by the world as a way to achieve weight loss and to become healthy. But the Bible does NOT promote any physical Benefits at all to Fasting. All of the Benefits of biblical Fasting are spiritual and godly in Nature.

Now the Concept of Fasting has to do with the Reality that we, Humans, were *uniquely* created by God with certain *innate* Desires. And while *some* of our Desires do NOT glorify God and are sinful- not all of what we genuinely Desire is wrong. *Some* of our Desires are not only *acceptable* with God- but they are actually *promoted* and *encouraged* by the Author of sacred Scripture- God the Holy Spirit.

So, *part* of the "new Nature" that comes from the Miracle of the New Birth is a deep seated "**Longing**" for God. And the English word, "*Longing*" comes from the ancient Hebrew word, *chaka* which means: *to wait with Desire*. So, Fasting has to do with a God-given Desire to *wait for God*; a *Desire to see God*; a *Desire to be near Him*; and to *touch Him*; and to *be touched by Him*. So, at its very core- Fasting then, is the "*spiritual Hunger*" of a type of "*Homesickness*" for God. And this "*Homesickness*" is NOT a Longing for Heaven; it is NOT a Desire to walk on streets of gold. And it is NOT *wanting* to be re-united with loved ones- who have gone on before us. No, this "*Homesickness*" is a Longing after God Himself. Just God. It is a Cry that is similar to what Moses gave- as he saw God give the Ten Commandments by carving them into Tables of Stone with His very Finger. Moses saw amazing things. Bizarre and breathtaking Sights. And yet in the midst of it all- he cried out,

... show me Your glory!" (Exodus 33:18)

... in other words, in the midst of all that God was doing there on that Mountain- Moses wanted to see God! So, as great as it was- Moses was NOT content to merely behold what God was doing. Moses wanted to see God Himself! And God knew that was what Moses meant because in verse 20- He replied to Moses,

You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!

... that is the kind of “*spiritual Hunger*” that has to do with Fasting. And that “*Hunger*” is divided into two parts:

1. A Holy Grief
2. A Blessed Hope

1. Fasting has to do with a Holy Grief

Romans 7:14-25

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

The Bible teaches that there is an ongoing Grief in the heart of all genuine Believers over indwelling Sin in their Lives. Our redeemed Souls are encased in an unredeemed Body. And our unredeemed Body dwells in a fallen World that is *dominated* by satan and the unconverted Flesh of Man; along with a world

“System” that operates in hostile Opposition to God and His Ways. The great Reformer, Martin Luther taught that believers wage War against three main Foes:

- A. The World
- B. The Flesh
- C. The Devil

A. The World

Now the “*World*” that Luther had in mind is *not* the *created* World that God made- that He said was “**very Good**” (**Genesis 1:31**). And neither is it even the people who dwell in the world- even those who are sinful. Rather the “World” that Luther had in mind is the “world System” that was initiated by satan; and is sustained by those who follow him. This world System operates in relentless Opposition to God as delineated by the Apostle John in **1John 2:15-17** and basically boils down to three Components:

- The Lust of the Flesh
- The Lust of the Eyes
- The boastful Pride of Life

B. The Flesh

Jesus said that there were three things that appeal to our unredeemed Flesh that actually have the Ability to “**choke the Word**” so that the precious Word of the living God becomes *unfruitful* in our lives:

- ✓ The Pleasures of this Life (**Luke 8:14**)
- ✓ The Deceitfulness of Riches (**Mark 4:19**)
- ✓ The Desire for other Things (**Mark 4:19**)

C. The Devil

The “devil” that Luther was referring to is “satan”- the fallen arch-Angel, named “*Lucifer*”. And this musical and beautiful arch-Angel rebelled against God in Heaven and was “**thrown down to the earth**” out of Heaven for his Rebellion (**The Revelation 12:9**); “**like lightning**” (**Luke 10:18**); and now goes over all the earth and “**prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour**” (**1Peter 5:8**). And the half-brother of Jesus told us in **James 1:13-16** that the way that satan tempts a person is by each person being, “**carried away and enticed by**

his own lust". These "Lusts" are the Desires that we have, as human beings, that *cannot* glorify God; and that provide us with Opportunities to sin against God- even though we are saved.

And this is what brings about that "*holy Grief*"; that "*godly Mourning*" (**Matthew 5:4**) within genuine Believers that causes us great Agony. We grieve and mourn over the Reality that we are not more spiritual; that we fall into Temptation far too easily; that we don't resist the devil more effectively; that we are far too "worldly"; and that we sin far too much.

So, *part* of the godly Longing for God that *precipitates* both our Desire and our Need to Fast- is a holy Grieving over our Failures and our Weaknesses and to try to escape (even if only temporarily) our Sins, our Temptations; and the many Hindrances we face every day.

2. Fasting has to do with a Blessed Hope

But on the opposite end of the Scale lies the great and blessed Hope- that we absolutely CAN gain spiritual Strength, Insight, and Stamina on this earth and in this Life- BEFORE we go to Heaven- by temporarily pushing away from the various Traps and Pitfalls and Temptations and Idolatries that constantly plague us when our bellies are full; and we become accustomed to the Darkness.

So, Fasting consists of these two Parts:

- Part of Fasting says that we have come to recognize that our Longing for God has been compromised because our Desire to savor all that this Life offers to us- has grown so strong (a holy Grief)
- The other side says that our Appetite for this World is temporarily lost precisely because our Longing for God is so intense (a blessed Hope).

Do Business and Yet be Separate

In the Bible, God tells Believers to do two things that seem to be contradictory on the Surface. He tells us, first, to:

Luke 19:13b

Do business *with this until I come back.*

So, we are to "*Do business*" with the world. In other words, we are to "Occupy in this World" until Jesus comes back. Jesus said, "*I'm leaving- but you stay here and make a Life for yourself; and carry out My Will in this fallen hostile*

World until I come back to get you". And as we struggle to obey Jesus concerning that part- we read that God the Holy Spirit also said this in **2Corinthians 6:17**:

Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.

And so, as God's people, we are to "*occupy*" and "*do business*" with this fallen and sinful World- which means we CANNOT and SHOULD NOT become monks in a Monastery.¹ But as we obey and occupy- we are also told to "**Come out from their midst and be separate**". So, we are to be "*in*" the world and yet NOT a "*part of*" the world. And that is a whole lot *easier* to say than it is to actually do. For example, in **John 17:14-17**- Jesus Himself prayed about this strange dichotomy:

14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

So, that is what we are to do as followers of the Lord Christ. But *how* are we to do both things? *How* do we live in this world and yet not become affected by what goes on in the world? For example, how do you work hard to make money to support your family; and pray that God will bless you; and make a way for you; and then rejoice when God does that; and continue to rejoice as God continues to bless you- and yet still maintain a Life that is free from loving Money and entrapped by Covetousness and the Danger of Wealth?

In other words, there is a Line. And on this side of the Line- we are being Obedient to what the Bible teaches- but on the other side of that same Line- we are sinning. But at what point did we cross over the Line from the good and spiritual Aspect of working hard to provide for our families- into lusting for more of this world's Goods? Many times, we don't even see the Line- until *after* we have crossed it.

Likewise, we don't easily sense that we have *already* lost our Hunger for God- because all that we are enamored with- is a Blessing

¹ For over 1,000 years, the Church of Jesus entered into what has become known as "*Monasticism*" where the people of the Church withdrew to be "alone with God" so they could fast and pray and escape the Temptations of the World. But this noble Effort caused them to be disobedient to the Command to preach the Gospel to every creature and to live our Lives as Salt and Light.

from God. And why would a Blessing from God destroy our hunger for Him? It is truly very odd and strange to live the Christian Life in a fallen World.

So, we see two sides of the same Scale. As our Appetite for the World is *resisted*- our Hunger for God is *satisfied*. And as our Hunger for God is *resisted*- the more of this World we seek to have and hold. So, one “Hunger” wars against the other- yet we *cannot* feed both of them. God has created us in such a way that we must *consciously* and *constantly* choose one over the other. So, one “Hunger” must *suffer* as the other one is *filled*. And one Hunger must be *resisted* as the other one is *embraced*.

So, Fasting is the *satisfying* of a Hunger for God that *already* exists; and that has become so intense that it drowns out any Appetite we might have for the things of this World. That’s one kind of “Hunger” that results in us Fasting. But Fasting is *also* the impetus whereby we fight to *have* that Hunger for God in the first place- because we sense that our Hunger for God has *already* been drowned out by our sinful Appetite for more of the World. So, Fasting is not only the spontaneous Result of *already having* a superior Delight in God- it is also a Weapon that is used to fight against every Power in this World that would take that Delight away or fight against it.

Now if you have caught on to what I’m talking about- you would naturally assume that Fasting is one of the most *important* and thus, one of the most *common* “Means of Grace” or “Disciplines of Grace” that we can avail ourselves of. But I am sad to report to you that Fasting among God’s people has fallen on hard times lately. Fewer people Fast today than Fasted 50 years ago. And that number *continues* to dwindle as the American Church becomes safer; more secure; and more satisfied with the Darkness that surrounds us.

For example, back when the 19th Century was turning into the 20th- the Biloxi Herald reported that the Mayors of both Gulfport and Biloxi had called the people of the Gulf Coast to a Fast. So, what was going on that the secular Politicians saw the Need to Fast and cry out to God? Two people had been murdered with one month. And the thought that two human beings could be purposefully killed in a single Month on our beautiful and God-blessed Coast- was so egregious; so horrendous that even the Politician’s sought for God to move in a mighty Way to bring Repentance and Revival to our Area. By comparison, in 2020- we had 576 Murders- and yet no Leader- secular or religious called for a Fast.

This is a Phenomenon that I call, “*Getting use to the Darkness.*” It is a strange thing when God’s people begin to *wrongly* think that the “spiritual Darkness” that surrounds them- “*is normal*”; and the “*Way things are supposed to be*”.

When the Allied forces stormed the beaches at Normandy on D-Day in 1944- the President of the United States, Franklin Roosevelt went on National Radio to pray and ask the citizens to Fast before God- so that our War effort would have God's Blessings on it. That Generation was NOT content with the twin Horrors of Nazism and Fascism and so, they prayed; and fasted; and actually went to war; to stop that Darkness from dominating the world.

Now look, I love reformed Theology. I genuinely believe that reformed Theology- the Doctrines of Grace- is the correct and full Exposition of Scripture. And yet, you can go to a reformed Church for many years and never hear Fasting mentioned a single time- and that goes against every fiber of the Protestant Reformation. It is a sad Commentary that the lost Word and the Cults and those deceived by the Roman religious System talk about and engage in Fasting infinitely *more* than the people who say they are the "people of the Book".

So, I want to begin today to fix that Problem. If we say that we believe the Bible is the Word of the living God- then we MUST pay attention to the Words of our Savior- Jesus Christ- who did NOT say, "*IF* you Fast... ", but said, "*WHEN* you Fast..." So, Jesus *expects* His people, who carry His Name- to Fast.

Now we are in a time of the year that the World and the Romans call, "*Lent*". And during the 40 days of Lent- people are expected to Fast. But the Way that Fasting has been twisted and marginalized by the Leaders of that religious Cult have made Fasting to be a mockery. But they weren't the first ones to do that. Because by the Time that Jesus preached this Sermon- the Scribes and Pharisees had taken the Truth about Fasting and had made it into a mockery. So, Jesus issued Guidelines about Fasting in this Sermon that addresses the Way that God's people should Fast when He said,

16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

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

18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Now verse 16 gives us insight into what real Fasting looks like. Fasting is when God's people push away from the Table and don't eat because they either WANT a Hunger for God to exist in their Lives or they *already have* that godly Hunger and are acting upon it. And this illustrates the Distinction between our Flesh and our Spirit or our Soul.

Normally when we eat- we are feeding our Flesh and starving our Soul. But when we Fast- we are feeding our Soul while starving our Flesh. Now God knows that we HAVE to eat in order to live. And that means that ANY effort to starve our Flesh in order to feed our Soul is honored by God. So, Fasting is NOT about the sinful Pride that comes from “spiritual Competition” about who can go the longest without eating. NO! Whether you miss one meal or don’t eat for one month- *however* long you starve your Flesh- for the purpose of feeding your Soul- God is glorified.

But Fasting is like almost everything else- the *more* you engage in it- the *more* you learn about it; the *more* you understand it; and the *more* you appreciate it. And the fact that so many people in the modern Church know so little about Fasting indicates that Fasting is hardly even mentioned anymore- much less engaged in. But Fasting should be as *normal* and *natural* to the Believer as Prayer; and Giving; and taking the Lord’s Table; and Bible Study; and Service. Fasting isn’t strange or weird or crazy- either. Fasting is as biblical as those other Disciplines and is a marvelous Tool that God has given to us- so that we may “*walk this world in White*”.

But the *longer* a person Fasts- the more toll on the Flesh it makes. A person, who Fasts for one Meal may not feel much effect at all. But a person, who engages in a long, protracted Fast of 1,2, 3, or even 4 weeks- will see a *radical* transformation in his Flesh. And as he Fasts- he will care *less* and *less* about things that matter the most to those who are *not* Fasting- like his Appearance. So, a person, who has not eaten in three weeks- may care *nothing* about things like bathing; or combing his hair; or brushing his teeth; or even what he is wearing. He has starved his Flesh and fed his Soul for 21 days- so, his mind and heart and focus is on things that have NOTHING to do with this Life or this World. So, normally, a person who has been on a long Fast- might look disheveled or even like he is sick. Depending on his age- he has lost a lot of weight and his clothes don’t really fit very well; and because he is physically weak- he might slump or even have an expression his face that people might confuse with Pain or Suffering or even Anger.

But that is precisely *why* Jesus said what He said here. The Scribes and Pharisees WANTED everyone to know they were Fasting. And Jesus said that was true because these men *wanted* to receive the “praise of men.” And this shows their Hypocrisy. They *purposefully* looked unkept and tired and weak- even if they had only fasted for one Meal. So, these religious Hypocrites were “showing off”. They cared NOTHING about God- they were simply *using* God- to get the applause and accolades and the respect and fear from the people- so they could continue to control them.

Now remember- these religious Frauds were standing and sitting

right there among the people on that Mountain that day- as Jesus was preaching this perfect Sermon. So, they heard *everything* Jesus was saying and knew that Jesus was talking about them. But instead of being Convicted as the incarnate God was exposing their Hypocrisy- these men simply *hated* Jesus all the more.

And so, Jesus is confronting these men to their face- with the complete ABSENCE of any spiritual Truth and godliness in them at all. And He was revealing that *whatever* Fast these men engaged in- was a complete waste of time- because God was NOT honored by *anything* that the Scribes and Pharisees did.

Now it is hard for those of us who strive to serve God in the 21st Century- to even imagine the level of Animosity and Vitriol and abject Hatred that existed between the “Word made Flesh”- Jesus, the Christ and the Leaders of 1st Century Judaism. But it was truly, “off the charts”. And that Animosity and Vitriol and Hatred exists even to this day between the *descendants* of the Scribes and Pharisees- the orthodox Jews and Jesus- who *still* see the Savior of the World as being at best, an “Imposter and Deceiver”, and at worst, a “Devil”.

But what these men did not realize was that the Division between Jesus and themselves was NOT merely a Theological dispute. It was NOT about an honest difference of Opinion. It wasn't about just seeing Events differently. The Apostle Matthew wrote this Gospel Record to make sure that his readers would understand that the huge Gap between the purveyors of 1st Century Judaism and Jesus was about the *cataclysmic* Transformation that Jesus was bringing upon the entire world by His *first* Appearing.

You see, Jesus not only came to “*seek and to save that which was Lost*”(Luke 19:10)- our Lord was *also* bringing upon the entire World the *Conclusion* of the 1st Covenant and was bringing in the *Beginning* of the Covenant that would *forever* replace it. You see, *in, by, and through* Jesus- and ALL that Jesus taught and did- it was now time for the *fulfillment* of what the Prophet said in **Haggai 2:6b&7a**

... Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. [and] I will shake all the nations...

... which is describing the “End” of the 1st Covenant and the “Bringing in” of the 2nd- which the Scribes and Pharisees certainly did *not* want. So, by exposing the Hypocrisy of those religious Frauds about the Issues of “Giving to the Poor”; and “Prayer”; and “Fasting” and “Wealth”- in this “*Sermon on the Mount*”- Jesus was also showing the complete *Inadequacy* of the 1st Covenant and the absolute *Superiority* of the New.

So, the “Time-frame” for these religious Hypocrites to deceive people about God; and Salvation; and about being the Heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant; was fast coming to a Close. Because just before Jesus was crucified- He gave the most frightening Divine Condemnation against these men- *and everything they believed in-* that can be found anywhere in the Bible in **Matthew 23**. And Jesus *ended* that Chapter by promising that their Judgment was near- when He said this in **Matthew 23:36**:

Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

So, the solemn Promise from the incarnate God Himself was that the Damnation; and the Destruction; and the Divine Shaking; and the radical Transformation; that had been prophesied for Centuries about ALL those who would *refuse* to repent; and ALL those who would *refuse* to make the Transition from the 1st Covenant to the 2nd - would fall on “**this Generation**”. In other words, Jesus is promising that the Generation of Jews, *who were alive at His first Advent*, would not all die out- until this Change was made.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we need to realize that when Jesus comes back- EVERYTHING will change. IT is hard to even imagine it- but the Way in which we all live our normal daily Lives today- will be *radically* and *eternally* altered when our Lord returns. So, NOTHING will stay the same. Our Government and the Governments of every Nation on earth will be forever replaced by a benevolent Dictatorship- with King Jesus in the Throne. And there will be no more need for monetary Currency as everything we need to live will be provided free by our new King. So, every economic System on earth- including Capitalism- will be forever replaced. And there will be no more need for Armies or Navies or the Airforce or the Marines or the Coast Guard- because Jesus will remove ALL Evil from the earth by removing ALL evil- people who would cause War.

And there will be no more Injustice at all- anywhere- so, there will be no need for Politicians or Lawyers or humanly created Laws. And there will be no Policemen or Jails- because there will be no more Crime. There will be no need for Doctors or Hospitals or even Medicine- because there will be no Disease or Infirmities or even Accidents. And there will be no need for Morgues or for Undertakers because King Jesus will conquer every Enemy- including the *last* Enemy- which is Death itself!

But as radical and strange as the Transition of Jesus’ 2nd Coming may seem to us today- it was just that radical; just that Different; just that Strange to the Jews of the 1st Century to even imagine Life without the Law of Moses. It seemed impossible and so odd to them for Jesus to talk about the End of animal Sacrifices;

the End of the Levitical Priesthood; the End of the Sanhedrin Court; and the End of Temple Worship because of the *superiority* of the New Covenant that Jesus was bringing in. And because it seemed so strange and so odd and so impossible- most of the Jews considered it to be wrong- even sinful- for Jesus to talk the way He talked and for Him to do what He did.

Yet John Mark; Dr. Luke; the Apostle John; and even Matthew were faithful to give us example after example of Jews, who had been raised underneath the 1st Covenant- who didn't know any other way to live other than by striving to keep that Covenant- yet who DID completely *abandon* that Covenant; and who fully *embraced* the Lord Jesus and the radically superior New Covenant that He was bringing in.

And one of the Tools that those Jews used that helped them make that Transition; one of the Gifts of Grace that helped those who had been steeped in the tenets and terminology of the 1st Covenant- to make that Transition into the New- was the Means of Grace called, "Fasting". And as they hungered after God; as they fed their souls by starving their Flesh- thousands of 1st Century Jews dropped EVERYTHING they were doing; EVERYTHING they had been taught; and EVERYTHING they thought was right and good and true- and they trusted that what God was doing in, by, and through Jesus WAS heaven- sent and was the fulfillment of what they were supposedly waiting for.

And I tell you that what will help us to become willing to trust and believe that what God is doing right now- in, by, and through Jesus- is also heaven- sent and is also Right and is also Good and is also True- will be when we use this Gift ourselves and we engage in Fasting- until we are *re-united* with the Bridegroom again!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

. ; the Way we relate to each other;

Now please understand that you are *always* free to disagree with my Interpretation about anything that I believe and teach. As hard as I try to “*get things Right*”- I am a human being, who has been saved by God’s Grace and so, I am capable of “*missing the boat*” about even very important Issues. So, I am NOT Infallible.

But what you are NOT free to do- is to disagree with the *inspired* and *infallible* Word of the living God. And it just so happens that the Interpretation that I just gave you concerning the Prophecy of Haggai- was also given by the writer of the **Epistle to the Hebrews**, who made the exact SAME Interpretation about this Old Testament Prophecy in

Hebrews 12:18-29.