

Sunday, January 6, 2019
“Fasting Forward”
Mark 9:14-29

Introduction:

There are seemingly innumerable discussions and ideas that center around fasting that include the when, why, how, and desired outcome of the same. In some cases fasting can become a means by which people feel it is the last resort available that can possibly get God’s attention to address their most dire needs in circumstances far beyond man’s control or ability. Jesus desires us to make fasting a part of our spiritual discipline that will open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit released through His name.

- 1. Have you allowed fasting to become an exercise in discipline rather than empowerment to your faith?**
- 2. Does your perspective on fasting rest upon it being your desperation fueled by circumstances that seem to be impossible?**
- 3. Can you envision your fasting taking on a greater affect when accompanied by prayer?**

I Discovering the Need For Fasting Jer. 29:13

- A. Fasting is the total engagement of our spirit in pursuit of Jesus**

1. The disciples and the scribes were in a dispute with each other over a boy who needed healing
2. The controversy was centered around the inability of Jesus' disciples to heal a boy that was demonized
3. There was a lack of understanding as to what was necessary in order for healing and deliverance to take place

B. The world has expectations of those who claim to be followers of Jesus

1. Jesus made a declaration that those who believe in Him should be able to do supernatural works
2. There was an expectation on the disciples of Jesus
3. People in Jesus' day thought his disciples had powers equivalent to His

C. We must embrace the sense of urgency to be prepared to combat the works of the devil

1. The need for deliverance was immediate
2. There was no time to go away and fast for 40 days
3. It appeared the enemy had the upper hand

D. The intensity of the problem or need should not be an issue with believers

1. As a disciple of Jesus we are not subject to engage in wars with the enemy who may have held someone captive for a long time

2. We should not be intimidated by the enemy when he demonstrates his power in front of us
3. The greatness of Jesus in our lives will far surpass the power of the enemy who will confront us

E. When the enemy is confronted by the power of Jesus he will try to intimidate us with his power

1. The devil will try to scare us with his manifested presence
2. He will try to use the fact of how long he has been permitted access to a situation as a license to continue with his stronghold
3. He will make a forceful attempt to make us feel that we are powerless against him

II. If You Can Believe All Things Are Possible Mark 9:23

A. Believing in Jesus and His word are the key components that must be pursued through fasting and prayer

1. We do not need to fast to receive more power from the Lord
2. We do not fast in order to have more faith
3. Our fasting is done to remove the elements of doubt that keep us from believing what Jesus desires to perform through our lives

B. It is possible to believe and still have unbelief

1. We can believe that Jesus is the only Son of God but not put our total confidence in the finished works of the cross as it concerns our lives
2. We can believe that Jesus can heal sickness in others but not in ourselves
3. We can believe that Jesus died for our sins but still carry the burden of the sins of our past

C. Jesus said “if you can believe all things are possible”

1. There are natural hindrances to our ability to believe
2. One of the major hindrances to our belief is **IGNORANCE**
3. We will not experience the works of Jesus because of **UNBELIEF** (lack of experience or exposure to the supernatural works of Jesus)
4. The most toxic element that we must overcome is **DISBELIEF** (refusal to believe when we trust our own wisdom and instinct instead of the power of God)

D. All of us have unbelief in some area of our life

1. Unbelief is often tied to our imagination
2. Unbelief relies on our experiences to validate what we think we can believe or not believe
3. Unbelief is the product of accepting the achievements of man over the sovereignty of God

E. Technology is not the enemy of faith

1. Even if we choose to rely on technology over faith in Jesus it is not a challenge to the power of God
2. Driverless cars are in no competition with the power of God
3. Jesus has always been able to communicate wirelessly with His people without the technology of blue-tooth or Alexa

III Fasting and Prayer is the Only Way To Operate In the Realm of the Spirit Matt: 17:21

A. Jesus was not referring to faith in order to deliver the demon possessed child

1. If we have the faith of a mustard seed we can move mountains
2. Our issue with performing the things of the Spirit rest upon our inability to believe
3. There is a level of belief in Jesus we can only achieve through fasting and prayer to remove our ignorance, unbelief and disbelief

B. We must choose to operate with the signs that follow the life of a believer Mark 16:16-18

1. Signs follow believers
2. When we truly believe we will operate in the power of the Spirit
3. Doubt can only take over when we choose to operate under influence of what appeals to our flesh and understanding

C. The authority and power of the believer will be released through fasting and prayer

1. We choose to focus on Jesus and His finished works on the cross
2. We believe that the power of the enemy is under subjection to His name
3. Fasting will put our focus upon the word and the authority that God has given us as believers through it