

Deeper Desire
Matthew 4; 6:16-18; 9:14-17
The Laurel Center
November 6, 2015

Main Idea: Fasting is a way to connect with Jesus in our moments of desperation.

Introduction

We are studying through the Gospel of Matthew and I would like to focus this month's sermons on the particularly spiritual subject matter of Jesus' teachings. I want to talk about fasting today. Fasting is not a very common spiritual discipline that we see in the Western world. Many of us do not understand why fasting is necessary. We can understand prayer and reading Scripture but fasting seems unnecessary for many.

We often hear stories about fasting as the Eastern spiritual technique but do not understand how it would benefit us. Some people fast out of necessity because they do not have enough food to eat. Others fast out of necessity for health reasons. But few understand the spiritual benefits to fasting. Jesus expected that his followers would fast and taught us the reasons for fasted and what he expected of us what we fast. Let's take a look at a few of the passages in Matthew that talk about fasting and help us to know how to serve God better in doing so.

Matthew 4:1–2

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **2** And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

- I.** Jesus is our example in fasting (Matthew 4:1 – 2).
 - A Jesus fasted to prepare for ministry.
 - B Jesus endured temptation after fasting.

Matthew 6:16–18

16 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **17** But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, **18** that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

- II.** Jesus had us to fast for God rather than ourselves (Matthew 6:16 – 18).
 - A We are expecting to fast regularly.
 - B God rewards us for right motives when we fast.

Matthew 9:14–15

14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” **15** And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

III. Fasting is about connecting with Jesus on a deeper level (Matthew 9:14 – 17).

A We fast to connect with Jesus and feel his presence.

B We focus on his promises and his kingdom.

Conclusion

Fasting gives us a rare opportunity to see Jesus on a deeper level. It shows our desire to have a relationship with them more than we need our food or even the air that we breathe. Our desire for them is deepened when we focus more on Jesus than even the necessities of life. Our souls need God more than our bodies need food. Jesus in fact compared God’s Word to human food. It is only when we are willing to pay more attention to our relationship with Jesus and prioritize that deep relationship that we grow deeper in our longing for Jesus. Fasting gives us a way to connect with Jesus on a level and show our desperation for his musings in our lives. He expects us to do it and shows us how. Let’s go deeper in our relationship with God and obedience to Jesus’ expectations.