

WHAT DID JESUS BELIEVE ABOUT FASTING?

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GREETINGS: Today I'm going to be talking about fasting and what that looks like even in the Old Testament, Old and New Testament, and what it was all about. So many times, when it comes to fasting, we think of this specific scripture in Matthew 17:21. We also think of Jesus going on a 40-day fast and so many times we think that there are things that we need to do in order to get a breakthrough so that God can do something for us. One of these things that we think we should do is to fast.

Now, how does fasting look? What is this in the New Testament? For a start, I just want to say that the Jews did have the practice to go without food and to be in prayer. They did continue with that into the New Testament. Even into the New Testament we find that the Apostle Paul would still go to the temple. He would still follow some of the customs of the Jews, like going to the feasts and so forth. Those were things that the Church of that time continued to do. It was part of their Jewish culture and I think we should be very careful to look at what the Jewish culture continued to be after the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension and interpret that as law in the Church where we should continue with those practices.

First, I want to say that I'm not saying that a person is not allowed to go without food if he feels to separate himself and fast and pray. I mean there is nothing wrong with putting time aside and praying and studying the Scripture and seeking to understand more and better. But I also think that it would be very helpful if we look at the finished work of Jesus Christ. When I talk about the finished work of Jesus Christ, I talk about the order that He has placed in the earth through His death, burial, resurrection and ascension after which He poured out the Holy Spirit. The order that He has brought to the earth and that we rest in that order and also see that as the fast that God has called out and has brought forth.

One of the scriptures that people have always had in mind is Matthew 17:21 and this is in connection with the boy that had a demon and the disciples could not cast the demon out of this boy and then they came to Jesus and they asked Jesus why they couldn't cast the devil out.

Matthew 17:19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence and go to another yonder place; and it shall be removed; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. 21 Howbeit this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.

Now that specific verse in Matthew 17:21 is not in the oldest manuscripts. It's simply not there but we do find it in Mark 9:29. And since a lot that was written in Matthew and Luke was quoted verbatim from Mark, because Mark is the oldest Gospel, this was the translators fail to put this in or some of the younger manuscripts put this verse in. So, this verse does not actually appear in Matthew 17:21. When we look at the grain of mustard seed and faith that can move mountains and those kinds of things, it actually has to do with the ending of the law, the destruction of the temple, the ending of the old system and the resurrection of Jesus wherein that which is true comes to the earth now.

But I don't want to get too technical and too deep into to that but I just want you to know that the passage there in Matthew 17:21 is not in the oldest manuscript. So, you can just stop reading at verse 20 and then jump to verse 21. We also see that in the NIV. I mean there's no perfect translation but the NIV clearly states that that scripture is not in the oldest and therefore it's not put into Matthew 17:21. Verse 21 is taken out and it's not that something was taken out of the scriptures or out of the Word of God. It is also, basically, not that I would say that the King James version has added anything to the Word of God. I mean, putting that verse in there or not in there, is not adding or subtracting to the Word of God since Jesus Christ is the Word of God. As long as we're not taking away from what Jesus Christ did for us, we are not taking away from the Word of God. As long as we are not adding things to what Jesus Christ has done for us like adding laws and prescriptions and things that you have to do like what the people did in Galatia and Paul had to correct them. As long as we don't do that, we're not adding to the Word of God because Jesus is the Word of God. So many times, we can just get a heart attack over a little scripture somewhere and we say, "Well, you know, if it is not exactly this way it is not the Word of God." We should not be so splitting hairs about this. The Word of God is Jesus Christ.

Now we are going to look at Isaiah 58. We are going to look at fasting and the fast that God has chosen and what it is. Then, I think then I am going to give my attempt and put my attempt forth on explaining what I think that verse would when it says that this kind only comes out through prayer and fasting. I can tell you now that Jesus did not have a hunger strike in mind when He said this to them. Neither did He have in mind that people would go aside and spend a week in fasting and prayer.

Sometimes fasting and prayer can be the worst thing that you do because you can go and say, "Well, I'm going to go without food and I am only going to pray and reinforce what I already believe into myself." What you already believe could be very harmful for you and you would not see results. You would not see a breakthrough. You would not see what you think you ought to see and you could actually end up where the Israelites ended up when they said, "We have fasted. We have afflicted our souls and you are not hearing us." So, it is not guaranteed that when you fast that you are going to get an answer. So many times, we think, "Well, if I stay without food and I am serious enough, then God is going to give me an answer." But that is not how it works because there's a great example of this in Isaiah 58.

Now, let us get right into it. Isaiah 58 needs to be read from the perspective that it was a writing that was written to Jesus. If we truly want to know how this scripture reads, we can look at it in its historic context. In other words, what it would have meant for the people at that time. Remember this was not written to us. It was written to the people of its day, as well as to Jesus. Then the correct interpretation and the fulfillment of this would be for us.

So, if we read this and we see the historic context and we would see how Jesus would treat this and how it would pertain to Jesus, then we can know what it says to us. So, was it written to us? Well, it was written to the Jews or for the Jews and then it was meant to be something that Jesus, when He was on the earth because in the fullness of the scroll is written to Him. It was written to Him as to know who He was and what He had to accomplish in the earth and all of that is now for us. So, that is how I read the scriptures. I know some people would differ with my hermeneutic there but that is how I read the scriptures and I find it brings a lot of understanding and fruit in my life. And I submit that to you that you can also look at the scripture from that perspective and it will bring a lot of peace to you.

Now, if we read ***Isaiah 58 from verse 1***, we would see what God says to Jesus. He says, ***Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.***

Now, that doesn't sound like Good News. It sounds like God telling Jesus to tell people that they are rebellious and to tell people their sins. Now, the Bible says that love does not keep score of sins or of harm done. So how could Jesus then come and tell people about their sins? And is it Jesus' job, is it the Holy Spirit's job, to tell us of our sins every day? Now I want to tell you that it is not the work of the Holy Spirit to remind you of everything that you do wrong during the day. What we do find is that the Holy Spirit will remind us of sin, or remind, back then, people that did not believe in Jesus, of their sin which would be unbelief in the Lord. So, reminding of sins and what Jesus Christ had to come and do here is that He had to basically come, when He was walking on the face of the earth two thousand years ago, is to tell the Jewish people that they are actually rebelling against God.

They think that they are serving God by trying to obey the laws and trying to afflict their souls, going through difficult times so that the kingdom of God can come forth, and all of those kinds of things. But that they are actually in rebellion and they are not busy with what they are supposed to be busy with. And he had to declare, to the descendants of Jacob, their sins. And then he now explains what the sins are. Remember when Jesus said to them, "These people draw near to Me with their mouths but their hearts are far from Me." And that is basically what he is talking about.

Isaiah 58:2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. (In other words, they come and they are as if they are a nation that are truly seeking God, but they are not.). **They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.** (In other words, they say, “God, we want what is right. We want what is just. We want You to come close to us. And then they say,

3 ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed’

So, what we see here is that these people are complaining to God. They are saying to God, “We have come and we have fasted.”

Now I want to read that in the King James.

3 ‘Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and you do not see. Why have we afflicted our soul, and you take no knowledge?’ What these people are doing is they are saying, “We are drawing close to God. We are seeking God.” And the way they have done it is by fasting and then now they accused God and they are saying, “We fasted. We have afflicted our souls.” That word, afflicted, means to be occupied; to be busy with; to oppressed; we have humbled ourselves; we are afflicted; we have bowed down; we humbled ourselves; we basically put pressure upon ourselves but you have not heard.

What they are doing is they are quoting a command in Leviticus which said that you should afflict your soul before God. We are going to look at what that means.

This is what God says:

Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. In other words, he says here, “In the day of your fast, you still let people work.” That’s what he’s talking about. “Behold you fast for **strife for strife and debate.**” What he is saying is that there is a strife and there is a debate. And now you are fasting for the purpose of winning your debate. You are fasting for the purpose of being victorious in the strife that you have with your neighbor. It says, “to smite with the fist of wickedness.” ,

4 You shall not fast as you do this day to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen a day for a man to afflict His soul?

In other words, what he is saying is, “When you come and you afflict your soul, is it for the purpose of striking with a fist of wickedness?” Now what the Jews would have understood here is you have fasted so that you, as Jews, might be shown as the victorious nation, as the great nation.” The reason why they fasted was so that God could give them victory over Rome, make the Jews rule over the Romans, and so that the fist of wickedness, which would be to rule over another man, would continue. They were continuing with their own labor, with their own effort and the fasting then was just part of the labor that they put forth to make themselves to be heard on high.

Leviticus 16:29. We are going to look at this affliction of the soul because if we don't see that in its context, we will not know what fasting is all about... what it is truly all about. **29 This shall be a statute forever** (In other words, this shall be a commandment forever) **for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country or a stranger that sojourn among you.**

30 For on that shall the priest make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

So, the affliction of the soul, the fast that they had to take which this scripture refers to in Leviticus, the fast was the affliction of the soul was not to work, not to feed yourself by your own works. Now we know that in the New Testament we cannot have life by our own works. We are not saved by our own works and the affliction of the soul, or the humbling of yourself, was to say, "I cannot feed myself. I will not feed myself, but I will only live from the life that God gives me.

In that day, you were not allowed to work at all. Neither should the stranger work. We can actually take this to the commandment that was in the law if you read Exodus 20 from verse 1. It says there that you shall honor the Sabbath day because in six days God did everything and, on the Sabbath, He rested from everything He's done and He's made it holy. He's set it apart. He's made it Godly. What he is basically saying is that God did everything that had to be done in order for His rule to be established in the earth. Then He rested from everything that had to be done in order for you to have life by Him. So, every Sabbath day, these people had to say, "Well, we are not working today. It's not by our works and we are reminded of what is truly holy and that is the rule and the law of God wherein we live by God's doing and not our own.

So, this fasting was basically an extra Sabbath. It was basically an extended Sabbath although these people did eat on the Sabbath, fasting was also something wherein you just said, "I'm entering into the rest of God. It's not by my works. It's not by my ability to feed my flesh. My flesh shall be fed by the resurrection power of Jesus Christ and His rule in the earth and so will I have eternal life."

Now, in that day, not even the stranger was supposed to be working. These people would have people that would work for them that might be of other nations, their animals and all those kinds of things. What they would do is they would go through the ritual. In other words, they would not eat physical food and then they would look very sad because they were saying, "We are so sad that we are under the rule of these other people. But what they would then do is they would say they would still continue to have work being done. They would just follow the ritual of not eating, but work would continue to be done.

So, they didn't follow the shadow the way it was supposed to be done. What they were doing is they were using the fast even as a work that they were doing. They were working by fasting to try and get the kingdom of God to come into the earth instead of entering into the rest of God. It's complicated to explain but I hope you are getting what I am saying. I want to read on and we are going to get into the depth of this now

Isaiah 58:3 ...Why have we humbled ourselves and you have not noticed? (And now Jesus says, or God says, and this is basically Jesus' message to the Jews when He walked on the earth.) Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and you exploit all your workers.

He is saying they are exploiting the workers. It means that those, on the day of fasting, the workers were also not supposed to work. What he is saying is, "You are still providing for yourself. You are still living by your own power. You are still now following the commandments thinking that by your following the commandments, you are basically still working because you are saying, "I'm following the commandment and by my following of the commandment, I'm going to produce for myself." Where they basically should have rested from everything and said, "Not by my following the commandment. Not by my following my own works. Only by Him shall I have eternal life."

4 Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast that I have chosen? Only a day for people to humble themselves? In other words, what he's saying is, "Is this a fast that I have chosen just for you to be without food and ritualistically follow a custom to just be without food? No, this is not what I've meant when I said, "You shall fast or you shall afflict your soul." The affliction of the soul was something else. And now he explains what the true fast is.

Let's read from ***verse 5: Is this the kind of fast that I've chosen only for a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for laying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?***

So, he says, "Is fasting about a ritual? The King James says, "***Is it about not bowing your head like a bulrush, and putting, laying down in sackcloth and ashes?***" He said, "Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?"

Let's look at verse one again. Jesus would have to come to the Jews and tell them, "Listen. You are missing. I want to tell you that you are in rebellion and that you are in sin." And they might say, "Where have we sinned?" Then Jesus says, "Here's a good example: When you fast, your fast is only about the tradition about staying without food. That is not the true fast. Let Me explain to you what the true fast is. All that you do is you are humbling yourself, putting on sackcloth and ashes and you follow the rituals and the purpose of that is to strike with a fist of wickedness and that is to rule over other nations to make yourself great, to get Israel to rule over the race.

You've basically have politics in mind in your fasting." That's what He's saying. You want your voice to be heard on high. That's all that you want to do. It's about you ruling over other people. You being the victor. This is all it is all about. But, let me explain what a true fast is, a day that is acceptable to God. It is not acceptable to God that you just stay without food. It's not about the ritual. There's something deeper.

I want to say to you that you that God fasted in bringing forth Jesus and that the way you fast is by believing in Jesus. That's what all this is going to amount to.

:6 Is this not the kind of fasting that I have chosen? to loose the lose the chains of injustice and untie the chords of the yoke to set the oppressed free and break every yoke.

When God talks about a fast, He says, "Is it not to loose the chains of injustice..." I don't have time to explain that now but that basically means to walk in forgiveness. You lose the chains of injustice. So, people have chained you with injustice to say that chain that they chained mw with, I lose that. I let go of that. Yes, these Romans have chained us. Yes, these Romans are against us but I'm not looking at that. I am letting go of that chain of injustice. I am basically saying that they are also part of what God would save. They are also part of the people of God that the Messiah would come for to bring forth life.

6...and untie the chords of the yoke to set the oppressed free and break every yoke.

We can go and read that just a few chapters on:

Isaiah 61: 1 Jesus says, The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (or God's day of favor) the day of the vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn

3 and to provide for those who grieve in Zion--- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, and oil of joy instead of mourning,

Now that is a direct connection to Isaiah 58 here where he is talking about fasting. So, what he is saying is, "You, as Jews, you tried to fast and what you try to do is to stay without food so that you, as Jewish people, can become the rulers over the Gentiles and so have the kingdom given unto the Jews so that you can enjoy rulership and be heard on high and that people must do what you say. You've basically got politics in mind. You have war in mind. You don't have in mind what God has in mind."

Then he explains in Isaiah 61, the way the fast is supposed to look and that is that the spirit of the sovereign God has to be upon you to loose the bonds of wickedness. We find Jesus Christ quoting Isaiah 61:1 in Luke 4:16 where the fast that he is now explaining here is being done by Him.

So, the fast that can make the voice be heard on high is not our voice that would be heard on high. The fast that must be done in order for the voice to be heard on high is a fast that Jesus Christ would be so that His voice, the voice of salvation, can be heard on high... not our voice. Your voice should never be heard on high. It is the voice of God that must be heard on high. It is His word that must be higher than any other word.

So, what was taking place here in Isaiah was Isaiah was writing an inspired message under the influence of the Holy Spirit which pointed to Jesus to tell the Jews that their way of doing is wrong. It is not about the temple. It's not about the Jewish nation. It's about setting people free and the reason why their voice is not heard on high is because they don't understand what this whole thing is about. But Jesus Christ has come to do that.

He now explains what a true fast looks like. A true fast is where you don't feed your own flesh, where you don't feed yourself. In other words, it's where you don't want to be heard on high. It's not about your own ability. It's like Jesus when He was in the desert and He became hungry. What did the devil say to Him? He said, "Feed yourself by Your own works. Keep yourself alive by Your own works." Then He said, "No, I shall not be kept alive by my own works. I'm fasting here. I shall be kept alive and I will only eat what comes from the mouth of God." Then He was given food and the food that He was given was the power of the resurrection that raised Him from the dead." That is what it is basically about.

Isaiah 58:

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry (in other words, you eat and you invite somebody for a meal. You share your food with the hungry) **and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter---** (He is saying that there are people that are oppressed. There are people that are hungry. There are people that don't have shelter.) **when you see the naked, to clothe them** (There are people that don't have clothes that need to be clothed), **and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?** (It says not to turn your own away from you... not to push your own kind away from you.))

8 Then your life will break forth like the dawn, and your healing...

Now, before we get into that, let me just go through these four points:

...to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke (What was the yoke? The yoke that was on people was the yoke of sin. Now, the true fast will be to be without food or to share your food, or to share your life with others to the point that the yoke of sin and death and the yoke of wrong teaching would be broken off people. That is what Jesus Christ has come to do.

7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer (the one who wanders, that are without shelter; to provide a home for them. Who are the people that don't have a home according to God? Isn't that humanity who don't have a home? Isn't it when Jesus came and said, "I've come to break the yoke of bondage over you." Isaiah 61 and also quoted in Luke 4. "I've come to break the yoke of sin and death off your back. That's what I've come to do. You didn't have a house because I've come to prepare a place for you so that where I am you may be also. In My Father's house are many dwellings. If it were not so I would have told you but I go to prepare a place for you." So, a true fast is when you come down and lay down your life to the point that you can prepare a place, in the presence of God, for others.

So, what did Jesus do? He said that the good works that I do, it's not I who do it but the Father that is doing the work. It's not I who work. Jesus laid down His life. He fasted from doing His own work and made Himself available for the work of God and this is the fast that God wants.

Is the fast a day for a man to afflict his soul just to go through the rituals? No, the fast that God had in mind is for those who were bound by sin and death to be set free. Those who don't have an abode in eternal life, which is heaven, I'm not talking about the place heaven. I'm talking about where Jesus dwells and that is in eternal life, in eternal light, that we could have a place there.

When you see the naked, to clothe them, and not turn away from your own flesh and blood?

For those that are naked, to be clothed. What is this nakedness? Adam and Eve found themselves naked, not clothed. And then we find 2Corinthians 5, Paul says that we should be clothed and not be found naked and we should be clothed from above with our heavenly body, our immortal body. This more mortal must be clothed with immortality. So, when he talks about the fast, it is about bringing forth that which can clothe the naked, give them a home. What he is saying is the bondage of sin and death must be broken. This is the true fast. Food must be given to the poor. That they have no energy, nothing to be clothed, nothing to eat. The food is the will of the Father. Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of My Father." What is our food? Our food is to eat the flesh of Jesus which is the will of the Father which is a physical human being living forever by the doing of God.

So, the true fast would be to provide that body, break the bondage of sin and death, clothe from wickedness and then not to hide yourself from your own. That, and this is what Jesus Christ did: He became the good Samaritan. He lived among humans and He didn't hide Himself. The Word of life was born into this world through Mary and then when Jesus was raised from the dead, He did not hide Himself from humans. He continued to make Himself available to humans by pouring out His Spirit on human flesh. Jesus Christ is not ashamed to call us His brethren. He's not hiding Himself from man. He's not saying, "Well, God is hidden from man." No, He's saying that man is dwelling in the presence of God at the right hand of God, God not being ashamed. Jesus not being ashamed of man. That is what takes place.

So, the true fast is this:

Break the bondage of sin and death.

Share your food with the hungry, that which gives you life, give it to other people.

Provide shelter, prepare a place and

not to be ashamed to call humans, His brethren, His friends. We find that clearly seen in John 17.

8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn (So what Jesus is saying is, "Jewish people, you are basically not doing the correct fast. The correct fast is what Jesus would do and His light shall **break forth like the dawn, and His healing will quickly appear;**

What did Jesus do? He came and gave His body as a sacrifice for sin. He laid down His life and didn't hide Himself from His own people. He went into death for the purpose of preparing a dwelling place in the resurrection for His people that are in sin and death. That is the fast. That is the affliction of the soul. It's not merely a ritual. It is to abandon your own life and to only trust in the life that God has given. Affliction of the soul means not to work. Jesus Christ did not come to work. He said, "I have not come to do my own work in how I think it fits to bring salvation to man. I make myself available for the work of God." And He afflicted His soul. He abandoned His own life wherein we even see that in prayer when He prayed in the Mount of Olives. He's saying, "Father, not My word be done but Your will be done." That is fasting. That is the affliction of the soul. That is saying, "Not my life..."

Another definition of affliction of soul is to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. He humbled Himself. He said, "Father, is there be any other way, let this cup pass by before Me." Why? Because He didn't want to drink that cup. It was not pleasurable to Him as pertaining to His own will but He submitted His will to the will of the Father. That is a fast. That is fasting and that is the fast that we need. That is the fast that Jesus Christ has brought forth wherein He didn't try to promote a Jewish nation. He didn't try to promote any of those things but where He was saying, "No person shall work, neither the Jews nor the Gentiles. None of them are going to work. All are going to enter into the rest of God where I am submitting myself to the rulership of God whereby God will bring forth life.

He says, ***“Then your light shall break forth like the dawn.”*** And didn't it take place when Jesus Christ humbled Himself even unto death and when the Father raised Him from the dead, that His light, the light of His life, brought forth like the dawn. Yes, the light was brought forth on the third day. In the morning they went to the grave and Jesus was raised from the dead. When Jesus ascended on high, we find His light break forth in the darkness to a point that the darkness will never be able to end it. ***And your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.***

This is what Jesus said. He said, “If you guys could do this, what would happen is your light will truly go forth and the glory of the Lord, which refers to eternal life, would be what protects you which was true in His day. Listen to this, referring to Jesus when He laid down His life even to the grave. He says,

9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing of the finger and malicious talk (So he says, “If you do away with the law, you are pointing of the finger, you are wrong, you are this, you are that”. Jesus did away with that. He basically just said, “I've come for sinners so I'm not pointing my finger to the sinner. I'm not pointing my finger. I'm doing away with that and I'm opening My arms and I'm welcoming all.” When He said, “I'm welcoming all by Me humbling myself even to the humility of death itself, then I will call on the Lord.” Did Jesus call on the Father? Yes, when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane He was saying, “Father, I call upon You!” And with vehement cries He called out to the Father who was able to save Him but He did not work to the point that He died. Then the Father fed Him and raised His body up. In other words, He fasted, even unto death, and the Father raised Him up and His glory was over all.

So, when we are at the place where we say, “I don't live by my own works. I only live by the work of God. Where we see by my own works I can sort this thing out, I can sort that thing out by my own works, but I choose rather to trust the Father!” We'll find in that day, when we trust the Father, when we see nothing of our own works and it might look as if everything is going backwards because we're only trusting the Father, we'll call on His life because we are not providing our own life. In that day, we'll find His life start to manifest in our lives and we'll find His life break forth because we are not providing our own works to us to bring the solution but we are trusting and relying upon Him.

9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer (In other words, as you are saying this is what Jesus basically said: “This is the true fast.” Then He says in Isaiah 61, “I've come to be that fast. And this is what the fast looks like: It is when you lay down your own life and when you don't want to live by your own works, where my life is there for the salvation of other people.

Then you will call, and the LORD will answer (And Jesus did call and the Father did answer.); ***you will cry for help, and I will say: Here am I.*** Jesus did cry for help and He entered into death and the Father did say, “Here am I.” and He raised Him from the dead. ***“If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing of the finger and malicious talk*** (that is works, doing away with this accusation)

10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

So, He is basically pointing to something that only Jesus could do! That is all! It is pointing to something that only Jesus could do.

11 The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land (So, what he’s talking about Jesus, the place where He’s got no food for Himself. He’s like in the desert but that is where God will provide life for Him... and this is true for us as well. If we enter into the fast of the Lord, Jesus, where we are saying that His fast brought a reality about ourselves where we are now resting in His Sabbath day. We are ceasing from all our works. What is a true fast? It is to cease from your works and entering into the rest of God. What is the rest of God? It is the rulership of God, over the earth, in Jesus Christ. That is the rest. Next Sunday I will teach on rest) ***and will strengthen your frame*** (What is our frame that will be strengthened? It is our bodies. Our bodies shall be strengthened. We will find the Spirit come and mortify the deeds of the flesh even unto eternal life).

And I will strengthen your frame, You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail (talking about eternal life.)

12 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

13 “If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath (He is saying here, “Jews, let me tell you something. You did not keep your feet from, basically, breaking the Sabbath. You were working instead of resting.” That’s what He was telling the Jews. “You were using the fast as a work which you think you needed to do in order for your Jewish breakthrough to come. You didn’t understand what this is all about. You didn’t remain in the rest of God. But then Jesus Christ says, “I will remain in the rest of the Father. I am not going to try and make my voice to be heard on high.” The Bible says He went like a lamb went to be slaughtered in the streets, without crying. He didn’t have a political voice. He didn’t try to elevate the Jewish nation. He didn’t try to elevate Himself and bring forth His own righteousness and stand in, basically, political power to have victory over the enemy.

He basically said, "No! What I'm doing is I am going to enter into death. I'm laying down My life even if I see injustice towards certain people, or whatever. I basically see all people as sinners, all people as oppressed, and I make myself available to enter into their death. I know the Father will be faithful to Me and He will raise Me from the dead and so my voice will be heard on high. My light shall break forth but it shall break forth as I am the Savior of people and I've come to save them and all of this will be true. I will be a well-watered garden and so My life will be available for other people. And this shall be if I can keep my feet from breaking the Sabbath, meaning if I can continue to rest in the Father and not live by My own works." That is what is taking place.

Now, I'm sure that Jesus would say, when you get to Matthew 17:21, "This only goes out by prayer and fasting." He said to them, "You couldn't cast this devil out because of your unbelief." That would be to Jesus. That couldn't have meant anything else but you don't even understand what this is about. Remember they were so happy that demons were subject to His name. They must have been thinking, "Oh, hallelujah! This name of Jesus is now what we are going to be using to show ourselves forth as powerful. We are going to conquer Rome with this!" They were in unbelief. They didn't understand the fast. They didn't understand what the true fast was all about. They had to be at a place where they refrain from works which was as I just described. They're not resting in God. They now wanted to use the name of Jesus as the principle by which they are going to work almost like a magic word... like abracadabra. That's what it means not to use the name of the Lord in vain. Don't use it as in a magic spell. Don't use it as a magical word by which you try to exert power to get things to go your way. That's what it means to use the name of the Lord in vain. It's a kind of a divination thing, a kind of a witchcraft magic like black magic, white magic, the magic kind of a thing with a specific name.

This is what the Jews did. They used the name of God to promote the Jewish nation instead of the name of God as set apart from all other gods as the source of all power and all life wherein they would have, should have, entered into the Sabbath day where they should have rested in the rulership of God over all people when neither Jew, nor Gentile, nor stranger, nor animal had to work but they had to rest in God. They didn't honor the Sabbath. They didn't honor the rest which was to rest from your own works. They didn't honor that and that was why it was going the way it was going. I think Jesus must have had all of that in mind when He said, "This kind does not go out but through prayer and fasting. The Jews still did not understand what this whole thing is all about.

I want to encourage you and I want to say to you that Jesus Christ did fast the perfect fast. He is the One that brought forth life eternal for us and the only true fast that we can ever fast is to believe in Jesus and refrain from our own works. Refrain from our own works to make our voices to be heard on high but to rest in what He has done. Every day we have an opportunity, even in our marriages, in how we raise our kids, in politics, in business, in everything, we know in ourselves when we trust God it is just something that is written in our hearts and when we are busy trying to make things happen by our own works. Let us rather rest in the final word that God has over our lives.

Let us rather rest in what He says and say, "It is not by my works. It's not by me following biblical principles trying to make something work." The moment you use a biblical principle to make something work, you are working. Even if the principle was resting. Even if we say, "We are going to rest today so that things can happen", you are working! He fasted, even unto death, and the Father raised Him up and His glory was over all. I don't rest so that something can happen. I rest in the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead and that He is Lord, because it's true, even if I would have no fruit based on that. I believe it because it is true.

It's like I don't believe that Nelson Mandela was President of South Africa for any benefit. I just believe it because it's so. I believe and we believe that Jesus is Lord and from Him flows all life not because should we do it we're going to have life now. We're working a principle. We believe it because it is so. Even if we would not have benefit, we believe it because it is true. Even if I believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, I don't believe it and if I would not have eternal life, would say, "No, no, no. I don't believe it any more. I cannot not believe it. It is true. He was raised from the dead. The Scripture does say that those who rest in that truth will find that life will flow in them. But I don't believe it to try and work a principle. We believe it because it is true and then we find that, as we rest in that, His life comes forth in us. So, we are on an eternal fast. Glory to God!

I want to encourage you: God loves you. He cares for you. Jesus fasted the perfect fast and we enter into His fast by believing upon Him and entering into His rest. Amen and amen

Let us pray together: Father, I want to thank You that I could just minister to this web church today, everybody who have slotted in and bring them this message. Thank You that You are the perfect fast. Thank You that You did commit and do the perfect fast and You did it in honestly, not in trying to work a principle so that Your voice can be heard on high, but in humility where You humbled yourself, Jesus, under the mighty hand of God. We found that He raised you up and He kept Himself true to His word of promise. And through that it turned out that we are now co-sharers in the life that You have as we, as the scripture says, work to enter into the rest as our labor is a labor of beholding and resting, seeing Your faithfulness.

Father, I thank You that Your hand is stretched forth over each one of us... a hand of love and a hand of life. Thank You that You care for us. Amen and amen