

Forerunners for Christ Los Angeles

November 29, 2023 – The Cry of the Bride: Maranatha – Erlinda Cruz

Time to Continue to Burn

(Cry of the Bride Fasting Wednesday)

Through an understanding of the value of fasting as a way to sharpen in our discernment.

The Call to Fasting

The Spirit is preparing the church for the greatest revival and the most intense pressure in human history. Radical changes are needed, but they will come.

Regular fasting is part of this change, and includes restraining our natural pleasures and/or strengths to position ourselves to receive from the Spirit. Fasting is part of the normal Christian life. It is often thought of as an optional discipline. Jesus said, “When you fast,” implying that it should occur in the regular course of a disciple’s life.

“When you fast... your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Matthew 6:17-18

Jesus emphasized that the Father would reward fasting. This proclamation makes fasting important. Jesus called us to fast because He knows that its rewards will far outweigh its difficulties.

Some of the rewards are external, as our circumstances are touched by God’s power. Some of our rewards are internal, as our hearts encounter Him. We fast both to walk in more of God’s power to change the world, and to encounter more of His heart to change our heart!

God gives grace to fast. If we ask for grace to fast, we will receive it (2 Peter. 1:2; 3:18). Many fear fasting. However, the fear of fasting is worse than fasting itself. It is a lie that the demands of our modern pace of life which make fasting impractical for today’s Christian.

Throughout history, men have fasted with a wrong spirit as they sought to earn God’s favor or man’s approval. Some embrace extreme self-debasements to try to prove their dedication to Him or to earn His favor. We do not fast to prove anything to God or to deserve His favor.

Many who led the great revivals practiced regular fasting. Examples include John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, and Charles Finney. Wesley fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays each week and insisted that all the preachers under him do the same.

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The Purposes of this Fast

In Isaiah 58, fasting is:

- 1) To loose the bonds of wickedness;
- 2) to undo heavy burdens;
- 3) to help the oppressed go free;
- 4) to give bread to the hungry;
- 5) to receive the light of revelation in God’s word;
- 6) for emotional and physical health; and
- 7) for righteousness to break forth.

To set our heart to seek the Lord: Daniel intentionally set aside seasons to seek God.

“I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer...”

Daniel 9:3

“You set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God...”

Daniel 10:12

To confess our sin: To recommit our heart to 100-fold obedience and agreement with Jesus.

“I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin...”

Daniel 9:20

“Repent... that times of refreshing may come from God’s presence”

Acts 3:19

For the fulfillment of God’s promises: The Lord has prophetic plans and promises for each person, family, city, and nation. God’s prophetic promises are invitations, not guarantees. We must actively seek the Lord for their fulfillment. Daniel prayed and fasted for the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel (Daniel 9:1-3; 10:1-4). After Cornelius fasted and prayed, his whole house was saved and a door of grace was opened to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-4, 30-31).

To stop a crisis: Fasting to seek God for mercy during a personal or national crisis is biblical. Hannah, Samuel’s mother, distressed by her barrenness, prayed and fasted. God answered her and gave her a son who became a prophet (1 Samuel 1:7). Many times, God reversed Israel’s desperate situation when they turned to him in corporate prayer and fasting.

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Joel prophesied that God would judge Israel using locusts, and then later by a Babylonian invasion (Joel 1:2-18; 2:1-9). On both occasions, Joel called Israel to turn to God in prayer and fasting (Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-15). When there is no human remedy for a nation, we must call a fast.

Jonah warned the wicked city of Nineveh that God was going to destroy them. When Nineveh repented with fasting, the Lord spared the city (Jonah 3:3-9). God delivered Jehoshaphat in a military crisis (2 Chronicles 20).

For a greater release of power: We pray for God's power to bring healing to family members, and in national and international crises. When the disciples could not set a demonized boy free, Jesus told them that that kind of demon did not go out except by prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21).

"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic... I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him. The disciples said, "Why could we not cast him out?" ...Jesus said, "Because of your unbelief... This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Matthew 17:15-21

For an open heaven: Prayer and fasting release angels into personal and national situations.

"Jesus said, 'Most assuredly...you [Nathaniel] shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" (John 1:51)

For direction: The church fasted for supernatural direction. We fast for direction for our personal life, family, ministry assignment (in the church or marketplace, etc.). Paul and others prayed and fasted for direction for their ministry (Acts 13:1-2) and before selecting elders (Acts 14:23).

For grace to understand: We ask to receive more insight about God, His word, and His end-time plans (Daniel 1:17; 5:12-14; 8:16-17; 9:13; 10:11-12; Isaiah 26:9; Jeremiah 5:4-5; 23:20; 30:24).

"Your words were heard; and I have come because of your words... I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days..."

Daniel 10:12-14

"O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come..."

Daniel 9:22-23

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“The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed...the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.”

Jeremiah 23:20

Let us meditate on this study. We need to take fasting and praying very seriously as a potent tool for us to be ready for the glory of The King Our Bridegroom King and Judge.