

# Biblical Fasting | Luke 5

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[ 0 : 00 ] Would you please open your Bibles and join me in Luke chapter number 5 this morning. Luke chapter number 5. I just took a moment to be in the Spanish church and speak to our brothers and sisters in there.

And I reminded them of something that I would like to remind every one of you in here. That we're not a church divided by language because we speak one language. And that language is that there is a grace that bought us.

There was a love that pursued us. It's a language of grace and forgiveness and love. And it was a really special moment to get to be over there. And to be introduced to the Spanish family.

And to speak to them for a moment. But since I did step out, I'm not exactly sure all Greg did in here. And I had great trust it was going to be okay. And I'm going to get one of those t-shirts before I leave because it's pretty cool.

And it's odd to not be the coolest gone staff anymore, alright. And so Greg is taking that and he told me, trust me, this is good, alright. And I said, okay Greg. And so he explained what it means to be built different.

[ 1 : 01 ] And so I love that. And also, did we talk about how wonderful that video was that Louis did. And I wanted them to hit it again. And he said, there was a time where Ben was the only person from this school.

Now there's a lot of us here. Man, I just want to hit that on repeat and play it over and over again. And I just love it. There was a different baptism video that did not make the cut.

Some of you might have seen. And tonight, if you'll show up to church on time, we may play that video before we start, okay. It is just too funny. And they're just having too much fun serving Jesus together.

And that's what we want is a group of people serving Jesus together. What I would have given that had a group of friends like that as a teenager. That's what we want to give to our kids. Not everything we didn't have, but everything that can be found in Jesus that they need, right.

And so I'm very thankful for that today. Super proud of Ben Cherry and the way he handled himself and baptizing Louis. And it's just a very special moment for all of us in here.

[ 2 : 04 ] But Louis, I don't see. But Louis is, where's Louis in here? Is he, it's okay. Okay, there you are. Okay, Louis, I mean this with all love here. And this is true about all of us in here. But Louis is a different kind of disciple, okay.

And that's going to be our first point in here today. We're going to look at a different kind of disciples. I'm going to read to you in Luke chapter number 5, verse 33 and verse 34. I always give my sermons titles even though I never tell you what they are.

But I do it just for my own fun. And so the title is, don't be that guy at the party, okay. Here the Pharisees show up and they are that guy at the party where they're saying, what are you guys doing eating right now?

Don't you know that religion is supposed to be miserable and sad and you guys are so happy. What is going on? And so I say, don't be that guy here. And Louis, you are not that guy.

You are a person who is loving Jesus and challenging other people to love Jesus as well. Luke 5, verse number 33, through the remainder of the chapter.

[ 3 : 01 ] And they said unto him, why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers? And likewise the disciples of the Pharisees, but not eat and drink. And he said unto them, can you make the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?

But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them and they shall fast in those days. And he spake also a parable unto them. No man putteth a piece of new garment upon an old. If otherwise, then both the new maketh rent and a piece that was taken out of the new agreeeth not with the old.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottles and be spilled and the bottle shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles and both are preserved. No man having drunk old wine straightly desireth new, for he saith, the old is better.

Heavenly Father, I want to acknowledge this moment, Lord, that this is your word and these are your people, Lord. And so I'm asking for an opportunity, Father, that communicates your word clearly to your people so that it will have the desired result in their hearts.

Father, you have taught me so much and you have moved in my heart so much about seeing how we can celebrate when others don't understand, how we can long for something that is not of this world, which is your return.

[ 4 : 17 ] And we are so grateful, Lord, to be considered a different kind of disciple in the world in which we live. In Jesus' name I pray, amen. For those that haven't been with us in the book of Luke, chapter number 5, I'll try to catch you up.

And I'll even alliterate it because Greg tells me that's what people like, all right? And so first of all, in the first part it says they were the catching of the fish. And so that's that great story where they throw the nets out.

They look at Jesus, who was trade, a carpenter, looks at some fishermen. And he says, cast your nets on the other side. And they said, are you sure? You know, they look at him, but they believe him.

And they cast the nets out among the other side, which is that dependence upon God to do what he has called us to do. Next we get Jesus touching a leper and healing him. Jesus not becoming unclean by touching somebody's leprosy, but bringing righteousness and cleaning to a man, a willingness to go to anybody.

Then we have the curing of someone with paralysis. A man couldn't walk, but his friends were convinced, if I get my friend at Jesus, something will happen. Which is, you will figure out the means of getting your friends to Jesus once you are thoroughly convinced that he is the only one that will bring healing.

[ 5 : 25 ] And then last week we sat at the table with Matthew and Levi, the tax collector. And we saw that he had a table full of people that would have been once like him because Jesus calls tax collectors to follow him.

He doesn't just call the one that people think are good because the Bible teaches something completely opposite of what the world would think. Is that we don't become good so that we can follow Jesus, but in following Jesus he makes us righteous and holy.

And so that was wonderful around the table with Matthew. But then now we're going to look at them criticizing Christ. And they're criticizing the disciples and in criticizing that they're ultimately criticizing Christ here in the story.

And so that's what we have in verse number 33 where it says, The disciples of John fast often and they make prayers. And so that's why I said, don't be that guy. So here they are when we left off last week.

There's this great picture, right? There's the feast. We call it the Levi's banquet. And they're sitting there and they're eating together. And so in that scenario where Jesus is eating with the disciples, a Pharisee would walk up and they would say, Why don't your disciples fast like we do, like the disciples of the Pharisees and the disciples of John?

[ 6 : 37 ] And then Jesus gives an answer to them of why they don't fast. And he said, Does the bride fast? Do they fast when the bridegroom is there? Can make the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?

And the answer is no. At a wedding, you know, you go to weddings and there's always food and there's a reception. And at some level there's a fellowship around the Word because this is an exciting day.

You know, if I was to officiate a wedding and the dad said, Instead of a reception, we all want to be fasting and praying today. I would say, You're probably pretty upset about this, aren't you?

All right? And it might seem more appropriate as a dad's giving his daughter away to be married that he wants to spend the day in prayer. And fasting. But no, that's a day of rejoicing that's going on. And so Jesus said, My disciples aren't going to be fasting at this day because they're not longing for my return because I am here with them.

And so now is a time for them not to. But they were questioned about it. They were questioned, like, Why are they not fasting in this moment? So in Leviticus, we have a day in which they were commanded.

[ 7 : 47 ] Leviticus 16, 29. And this shall be a statute forever unto you that in the seventh month and on the tenth day of the month you shall afflict your souls and do not work at all, whether it be one of your own country or a stranger that sojourneth among you.

And so there's many occasions that we're going to look at where they fasted. But there was one day set aside where they were all going to be fasting together. But that wasn't good enough for the Pharisees.

The Pharisees always had to take something that was intended for good and make it something that was dead and meaningless. And so they were seeking men's approval, these Pharisees, in the way that they were doing it.

Matthew 6, 16, speaking of the way they would fast. Moreover, when you fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast.

Verily I say unto you that they have their reward. That's real strong, isn't it? They disfigure their face like a Mr. Potato Head or something, right? They disfigure it. I can, if I don't have a haircut in a while and my hair is messed up, people walk in, they say, You look really tired.

[ 8 : 48 ] And I'm like, No, I just didn't comb my hair today, right? And so if I wanted you to think I was really tired, I'd just mess up my hair and take my glasses off. And so that's what they wanted to give the appearance of is that they had been really going through something that they hadn't.

Remember joking about people, they get a new Bible. They want to throw it in the dryer and beat it up. So when they come to church, it looks like they're really using their Bible. You know, they're disfiguring their Bible so it looks marked up and used.

And so that's what these Pharisees are doing. They're following the traditions of men. They were more concerned with the shame and the guilt than they were about God-focused guilt and offending God.

And that's the way they lived. But I want to remind you that it wasn't the Old Testament law that was given that made Pharisees not fun at a party. It was their wrong application. Because God did not give that to them.

The law was perfect and holy and wonderful. It wasn't that they were adhering to it the way that it was given and not made them no fun at a party. It was that they were misapplying the Scriptures in a way that pleased the people that were around them.

[ 9 : 50 ] And so we learned that the Pharisees were people that would have often fasted. It would become once. They said, we should fast once a week. And they would say, that's what a good person does. That's what a good God-fearing person does.

And so the Pharisee says, we're going to fast two days a week. And if everybody would have fasted two days a week, they would have fasted three days a week. All right? And if everybody would have fasted three days a week, they would have died.

All right? And so they were just always having to say, I have to be more spiritual and righteous. And so they would do that in front of them. And they would play these games about it because it was always about outward appearance.

They were always finding ways to do it. I was talking to my kids about this last night. And Carson told me that he had a kid in his class that his family fasted during a certain time of the year. And that the kid was not allowed to eat a sucker when it was given out in class.

And he said, I'm not allowed to eat this sucker. But I can lick this sucker until it's gone. And I thought, genius. All right? And I said, that must be a good little Baptist kid. Right? I cannot eat this sucker.

[ 10 : 50 ] But I can eat this sucker until it's gone. Because it really wasn't anything towards God. It was just simply about pleasing the people that were around them. And that was the heart of the Pharisees, of the disciples.

But there's another group that was mentioned that wasn't like that. That was the disciples of John that were seeking the Messiah. John chapter number 1, verse 35. And again, the next day after John stood, and two of the disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he has walked, then he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. If anybody's keeping count in here, I've referenced this every passage since I have started as the pastor a few weeks ago.

It's just a special moment for me as I look at this. And so there were the disciples who were people that were known to fast. But they were longing for the day that Jesus would come.

And John the Baptist, doing what we should all do, pointed to Jesus and said, There he is. Follow him. Which is the work of every parent, every middle school teacher, every high school teacher, every Awana worker as we start.

[ 11 : 53 ] What is it? I am not the Christ, but he is. And follow him. All right? Follow him. And that's what John the Baptist, the disciples did. They were living according to the word. They were understanding the Old Testament.

They were understanding fasting. They were living according to the word. They were more concerned with their guilt before God than they were the shame before men. They were living out their faith. Matthew 3, 6 through 8, And when we were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

And when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come, bring forth therefore fruits, meat, form, repentance.

So the disciples of John would say the disciples of the Pharisees, we're not the same. All right? We are to be repenting of our sins. You guys are living in open religion, trying to look good. But we're people that are repenting of our sins.

But then there comes a different kind of disciple that day. The one that sits at the table with the tax collectors. The ones that are eating and feasting with Jesus when everybody else in their dead religion are making a show.

[ 12 : 55 ] Or when the disciples of John, who have been waiting for the Messiah, these disciples of Jesus said, We have found him, and we're having a feast right now. And so this is a different kind of disciple.

Having found the Messiah, and they were rejoicing at the table of tax collectors, and they were living with the Word of God. They were sitting with the Word of God. He had come.

The bridegroom had come. Jesus was with them. So they were no longer yearning for that day that the Messiah would come. The Messiah had come. And so in this story, we learn so many things about the purpose in fasting.

The disciples of Jesus in the New Testament, throughout the Bible, through the book of Acts, we're going to see them continue fasting. Matthew 17, 21, How be it is this kind not goeth out but by prayer and fasting?

And so fasting was brought into light of the gospel, and it should continue to this day. The disciples of Jesus were a new kind of disciple. The world didn't know what to do with them.

[ 13 : 54 ] They know we are something new in this broken world, and they don't know what to do with it. Hey, Lewis, keep being a different kind of disciple. Keep being the kind of kid at your school that people just don't know what to do with you, where they say, hey, we know about dead religion.

We know about people that are always trying to do good. And we know about people that are trying to please and make a show of things. And we know about people who are yet without truth and answering. But we don't know what to do with the disciple of Jesus that is just rejoicing in him.

We have yet to see this. It makes the Pharisees mad. Oh, man, I want to live a life that would make Pharisees mad when I sit at a table of tax collectors. I want to live a life that would make Pharisees mad because I can rejoice when they don't want me to rejoice.

You know, one of the quickest ways to become a Pharisee is to give your whole life to hating Pharisees, right? And so those Pharisees needed Jesus, and he was there, and Jesus was coming for them. He was doing things so that they could be seen by them.

And so when the groom is gone, we will fast. It's stated. That's what's going to happen. It's interesting. But the day shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and in that day they shall fast in those days.

[ 15 : 01 ] Jesus assumes you will fast. 77 references in the Bible to fasting. Do you know what the biggest reason today that we do not fast?

Food. Food's the reason we don't fast, all right? It's simple like that, all right? And I told that to Stephanie. I said, that's an anti-joke. It means it's not really a joke. She says, exactly. It's not really a joke, all right?

So that's what makes it funny. And she's like, no, that's what makes it not funny, all right? It's an anti-joke. But honestly, what's the hardest thing about fasting? Food. Have you guys ever had it? It's incredible, all right?

It comes in shapes and forms and sizes, all kinds of different ways, all right? Food is very wonderful, all right? And if you don't know about it, I would love to show you about it, okay? All kinds of it.

If you can't, I'll find something that you like. Food is the hardest reason that fasting is so hard for us. But we have the references here.

[ 15 : 54 ] The fasting, but it isn't just food. It's understanding what's going on and having a purpose to it. It was easy for me to try to think through what are the problems in this passage because I had the problems with the passage.

And I had to look at fasting and say, God, I know my understanding of this is not right. And I know my heart towards this had not been right. And so, God, if you will show me and if you will work into my heart, I will show my brothers and sisters in Christ what I had learned and they can make their own decision towards it.

Fasting in the New Testament on occasion was done corporatively. The whole church did it together in Acts 13 too. And they ministered to the Lord and fasted. The Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work we're into I have called them.

And so, they fasted during this time where they were setting them aside. It would be appropriate to what we see in the Bible that a church might set a time to encourage the members of it to fast for a purpose.

I'm not going to do that today. And some of you are saying amen to that, all right? I'm not going to do that today. I haven't felt that that's what I should do. But I want to challenge you to think about it on your own level.

[ 17 : 04 ] And so, sometimes it happens corporately. But other times, typically, it seems to be private in nature. And it should be evident and it should not be evident to others. As I read, with the hypocrites, the sad countenance, they disfigure their face.

Matthew 6, 16. I say unto you, but they have their reward. But those that fastest anoint thy head and watch thy face, that they appear not unto men the fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret.

And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. So, maybe part of the reason, a smaller percentage of the reason you haven't heard much about fasting is that it's something that we do privately.

And when we do it, we are not supposed to be walking around trumpeting and letting everybody know, hey, I'm fasting today. Isn't it incredible that I'm a person that fasts? Why don't you fast? Disfiguring our face.

It's something that's private between us and our Creator and God. So, I'd also think that would be a reason that often you aren't hearing it spoken about because sometimes we do it corporately and I think there's a need for that.

[ 18 : 05 ] And I really do. And I'm going to pray and ask God about that. And so, there's that. But should Christians fast today? This is a question that I'd ask myself. Because the answer I thought was yes, but the Bible says we're going to, but I don't find myself doing it very often.

But Jesus said, you're going to do it. And so, what is it that I'm not understanding? Luke 5.35, it says, and they shall fast in those days. What are those days?

It's these days. We are in those days. There was going to be a time, if you were eating that day, if you were at the table and Jesus is there and He is handing out stuff, He's handing out fish and bread and feeding the 5,000, He's doing that, that would have not been an appropriate day to fast.

That would have been a day to say, everything in my heart could ever want is satisfied in this person of Jesus. I have no longings for the next world because my next world is right here in Jesus.

But when He leaves us, and He did, and He's going to come back, in those days we're between the time that Jesus came and the time that He is going to come back. And that's what the Bible teaches.

[ 19 : 09 ] There is a day that Jesus is going to come back. It could be at any moment. There's nothing that has to happen. At any moment Jesus could come back and those that are believers would meet Him in the air and forever we would spend eternity with Him.

So between those two worlds, between those two times, the world where Jesus is here, the time He was here, and the time that we will be with Him again, it says, during that time, my believers will fast. And so why would people fast?

And so it's important to know that. That's most important. That's the only thing that's important. Of lesser importance, but remarkable, all through history, Christians have fast.

Ever since the time of the disciples, they have fast. And so that is not of greater importance than the Word of God, but it means that brothers and sisters through the years, with the same Word of God in front of them, as they read it and applied it, they said the Word of God is teaching that we should fast.

And are we going to be the first generation in which that stops? Of course not. There's always going to be some people that are doing this, but the question is, are you going to be part of that group that is obedient in Scripture to being a person that would fast?

[ 20 : 19 ] I read this and love that. Fasting is a physical exclamation point at the end of the sentences. I need you. I want you. I long for you. You are my treasure.

I want more of you. I want for the day when you would return. Come, Lord Jesus. Do you know that you're supposed to long for the appearing of Jesus?

Not just on good days. Not just on bad days. On the best of days, Jesus coming back is better. Not just in bad days.

On the best of your days, Jesus Christ coming back is better. Chase, a missionary of South Africa, my nephew, on Tyler's wedding when we were at the rehearsal dinner, Chase was told to pray.

And so here was Chase's prayer. Heavenly Father, Chase is praying for Tyler. Okay, did I say that? Chase is praying. Heavenly Father, I pray that you would return tonight and that you would come back.

[ 21 : 17 ] And Tyler looked up and thought, of course, my little brother's praying for Jesus to come back before I get married and there. But even on that best day, Jesus coming back would have been better.

I can tell you so many reasons that this world has broken and him coming back is better. The world grows in population by the size of San Francisco every day. India grows by the size of Montana every 15 days.

The world is growing at an exceptional rate. Inside of this community, there's people that are being born right now that unless we do something, we'll never hear the gospel. So surely, Lord Jesus, would you come back?

We want to see you. And it does not mean that we're not grateful and loving the life that God gave us. But like Paul, we say, hey, this is a great life and I can be content, but being with you would be far better.

On the worst day, Jesus coming back would be great. On your best day, Jesus coming back would be great. And all God's people said, amen. All right, Philippians 3.20, for our conversation is in heaven. From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are to be people longing for heaven, that we're supposed to have an upward gaze, that our conversations, our lifestyles, we're supposed to be looking upward to heaven.

[ 22 : 32 ] And prayer and fasting is something that aids us in that purpose. Prayer and fasting helps remind us. Your hunger actually serves you during a fast, that it's a constant reminder about your biblical purpose and the cause of your prayer.

And so when it comes throughout the day and you say, hey, I really want to eat, and you say, well, I'm not eating. And the reason that I'm not eating is because I'm dedicating that time to prayer.

And that prayer should always have a purpose to it. And I'm going to mention some of those from the Word of God. So fasting serves us as a reminder to say, there is something in this world that is of greater importance than what I normally say is of importance.

There's something in this world that is above us. And so by refraining from food, we get to say in so many different ways that you are my all sufficiency. That what I'm thinking and praying towards you is of greater importance than what I could do for my own self at this time.

And so in Ezra chapter number 8, verse 23, so we fasted and besought our God for this, and He was entreated in us. It is a strengthening and a focus to our prayer.

[ 23 : 43 ] Fasted and besought God. And so as I said, fasting gives you a reminder for the purposes of your prayer. Acts 14, 23, and when they had ordained the elders in every church and they prayed fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.

In seeking guidance, the church was fasting. Say, God, we need wisdom. And in needing wisdom, Lord, we are going to dedicate our day to setting that aside.

And I want to make sure, I know I've got pretty far into this, but I want to make sure when I'm saying fasting, you know that I'm talking about refraining from eating food for that day to designate that time unto the Lord.

Some of you say, could it be something other than fasting? I mean, other than food? I would see no reason why it would not be beneficial for you if you say, I want to do everything in moderation. I'm giving too much time to this, or I want to set this time aside for prayer.

But biblically, we see people refraining from food as the example that is given. And it's such a good one, right? Because all of you have had food before, right? And here, and all around the world and all through history, there's something that already takes part of our time and part of our day in which it is food.

[ 24 : 54 ] And so we're talking about refraining from food for a time so that we can have focus and our energy upon God. So seeking guidance. 1 Samuel 31, 13, and they took their bones and they buried them under a tree at Jebesh, and they fasted seven days.

We find people fasting when they're expressing grief, which is a thing that every one of you should experience and lament. And we've talked about that. We live in a culture that wants to skip over grief and lament, and it isn't healthy.

And so we need to do that. I've told you how I've spoken to the directors at the funeral home, and they said so many times people never have a service. They just skip it, and they just move on. That isn't what the Bible would teach.

The Bible says you need to designate time when your life is hurting to grieve and lament. And fasting is part of that as believers of something that we would do. And so they fasted there for seven days as they would grieve.

2 Chronicles 20, verse 3 and 4. All of our out... I know that I'm going through a lot of verses. I know they're on the screen, but they're available online if you can't keep up. And Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaim the fast throughout all Judah.

[ 26 : 04 ] And Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord, even out of the cities of Judah that came to seek the Lord. And so here they're seeking a deliverance or a protection that they were fasting.



As they were praying to God, they were saying, we're going to fast. So all throughout the day when they forgot that they were needing protection from the Lord, as they were beginning to kind of live their life kind of on their own, they would hit lunchtime, they would hit dinnertime, they would hit hunger, and they would say, I am not looking to this world to appease me.

I am looking to God. My prayer is, Lord, I'm not going to go throughout my day like everything is normal. I am going to look to you for protection. 1 Samuel 7, 6.

And they gathered together to Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted on that day and said there, we have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel as Mizpah in expressing repentance and returning to God.

We find fasting in the Bible is that when I have come to a place where I acknowledge my sin and guilt before God and I'm praying to Him would be an appropriate time for fasting.

[ 27 : 11 ] Psalm 35, 13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing were sackcloth. I humbled my soul with fasting. My prayer returned into mine old house, humbling ourselves before God.

We will fast. When we were standing before God and we want to acknowledge that He alone is worthy, fasting is called for. Daniel 9, 3. And I've set my face unto the Lord God to seek my prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes, expressing our concern for the work of God.

When they set their faith unto the Lord, they're praying and they're supplicating and they're fasting. There was a work before them in this time. And they say, God, we're going to set aside time for fasting because we're expressing our concern, ministering to other people in need.

Wherefore, Isaiah 58, 3. Wherefore, having fasted, say they, thou seest not. Wherefore, have we afflicted our soul, that thou takest no knowledge. Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure and exact all your labors.

When we are concerned about people we're ministering to. Matthew 4, 1 and 2. And that Jesus was led up in the spirit in the wilderness to be tempted. During times of overcoming temptation and dedicating ourselves to the Lord, we find fasting in the New Testament.

[ 28 : 25 ] Luke 2, 37. And she was a widow of about four score and four years, which departed not from the temple to serve God with fasting and prayers night and day in an expression of love and worship.

And so maybe you could tell yourself, as I did, the problem that might have had here was that, well, they were fasting. They weren't fasting because Jesus was there. But I say, well, I'm now indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

So shouldn't my life always be a feast? I mean, I have God among us, right, among me. So should I not be a person that puts off fasting because of that? And the Bible would say that's not the case.

Because even though I have the endowment of God, the Holy Spirit in my life, I have not yet come to know Him in the way that I'm going to. And I long for that day. You know, an additional thing that fasting will do for you?

It will help you with understanding biblical expressions. Psalm 34, verse 8. O taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. Matthew 5, 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

[ 29 : 28 ] Many times when we read the Scripture, it talks about thirsting and hunger for the things of God. And we have not ever, we have not been thirsty or we have not been hungry for so long that those words mean absolutely nothing to us.

I asked a teenager not too long ago, I said, have you ever missed a meal? And he said, not that I can think of, you know. And I said, you ever been hungry? He said, never more than for about an hour, right?

And so it takes a lot of work to constantly be like that. But hunger and thirst are things that we should experience. So when we read the Bible, we understand them.

Fasting is a physical demonstration that we believe the truth declared in the Gospel, Luke 4, 4. And Jesus answering said in them, it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

And so I told the Widthorns when they first came here, I was talking about all kinds of food. And Brother Eric said, you're a foodie, aren't you? All right. And we have some other foodies in here. We talk, every time we get together, we talk about food, right?

[ 30 : 33 ] And so foodies can also be people that fast, right? It is not a problem that if you enjoy, if you, when you eat food, that you enjoy it and you want it to be the best food, all right? And that is not the problem about it.

The problem would be if we found our satisfaction only in that, that we only find it. Fasting does a revealing work in our lives. Fasting reveals the measure of food's mastery over us, or television, or computers, or whatever we submit to again and again that conceal the weakness of our hunger for God.

Fasting remedies by intensifying the earnestness of our prayer and saying with our whole body what prayer says with our heart, I long to be satisfied in God.

So fasting can help us really know what is going on in our heart. Not only a positive expression and a longing for Him, but also exposing things in our heart. I read this and wrote it and it really hit me.

And when it says, eating can be an anesthesia for sadness. Many times when we're feeling something and we don't want to feel something, we can turn to food or different vices.

[ 31 : 36 ] Whatever that vice is in your life, you shouldn't turn to it. If you're feeling something going on in your life and you know you ought to turn to Jesus to meet you, whatever you turn to is wrong.

Whatever you turn to is an idol. And so even if it's food, if you're saying, I don't want to deal with this, so I'm going to turn to food, that would be a great time to fast. That would be a great time to say, food, I'm not coming to you for comfort.

I'm only going to find that in Jesus. And if every one of you are an honest in here, and I believe that you are, you would ask the Holy Spirit to say, would you identify those things in my life that I turn to when I'm feeling emotions that I don't want to.

I'm feeling hurt and pain, so I turn into my anger. I'm feeling hurt and pain, so I turn into working harder. I feel whatever it is, I turn into it. And you should avoid that in those moments and say, God, I want to be comforted by you.

And we should join the world in groaning for redemption. And if the children, then heirs, heirs of God, join heirs with Christ, that so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

[ 32 : 38 ] For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that have subjected the same in hope. And so it says that this whole world is waiting for a time that Jesus will return and reveal the sons and daughters of God.

And it says, I know that this world is broken. And so it groans for it. In our fasting, we are groaning and saying, God, we're waiting for a day in which you will restore all that is now broken.

This passage does not only cause us to long for something in the future, but to rejoice in something that we now know is new and wonderful. So when should we fast? During times of special need, when important decisions must be made, or occasions when spiritual longings are especially intense, there's often a time to enter into fasting.

You know, it's a common thing today when people talk about intermediate fasting. I looked up that word intermediate. There's a lot of words I don't know. There's actually words I use that I don't even really know what they mean, all right? And intermediate, and there's words I use that none of you know what I mean, right?

[ 33 : 52 ] And occurring at an irregular interval, not continuous or steady. Can I tell you, outside of a diet plan, every believer ought to live a life of intermediate fasting.

And there may be long periods between it, but it is irregular. It isn't two days a week. If you're fasting two days a week, it's very likely that you're not fasting two days a week longing for the coming Jesus.

It's because you have found yourself in some kind of dead religion where you're trying to shame yourself, and you're trying to afflict yourself. But if you're coming to times, and you say, God, my time with you right now is more sweet than anything that this world has to offer, even if it's food.

God, what you have to offer me is sweeter than what they have. So there's been times that I did not calculate how much time that I had, and the day may be as bad as any of them, and I'm only one-third of the way through that.

So if you'd be all willing to fast through lunch, we're going to continue. We're going to pick up there. Great thing about the Bible. We've got two verses instead of six. The Bible is sufficient. So let me leave you with a couple thoughts about where we've got to so far here in this story, and just looking at a different kind of disciple.

[ 35 : 06 ] Because I want to share with you about, behold, all things become new, is what he does. And the wineskins, there's something new that's going on. There's something more wonderful. There's something better than a dead religion that they're saying.

They didn't want it. The Pharisees didn't want what Jesus was offering. When they saw them that day, you know what was offered to them? A Pharisee could have become a disciple of Jesus and pulled up a seat, and he could have joined the party that was going on and says, the bridegroom is here.

And that's what Jesus was inviting them to. But they like their old system. They like their dead religion. They like their religion that they can manipulate and have rules that they could follow. They said, we want rules.

But Jesus says, I want you. Pharisees says, we want rules. And Jesus says, I love you. And that's what the disciples were getting. They were getting Jesus. And step by step, they were figuring out things.

One day, they eat on the Sabbath, and they're like, they didn't know they were supposed to do that, that they put the wheat together and they eat it. But why did they do that? Because they were following Jesus on that day. And that's what Jesus was doing.

[ 36 : 07 ] But not the Pharisees. The Pharisee says, hey, give me a list of rules to follow, and I'll meet you on the other side. Hey, guys. Hey, why don't our families go? Paul, why don't we go on vacation together? It'll be awesome.

It'll be a 3-D journey to the Grand Canyon. I'll see you when you get there. That's what the Pharisees want, right? They say, tell me what the end goal looks like, and I'll just go ahead and get there on my own. Jesus, tell me what you think a perfect person looks like.

I'll just go ahead and get there on my own, and I'll see you on the other side. But not a new disciple, not a disciple of Christ. We say, Jesus, I'm going to follow you every step of the way. And whatever you tell me to do, that's what I'm going to do.

However you tell me to interpret the Scripture, that's what I'm going to do. I'm not going to fast as an outward show to everybody around me so that I feel religious, so I feel confident in myself. I'm going to fast on times because I long for the day that you will come back and make all things new.

It's a beautiful song. Do you know the world is broken? And the answer is we do, right? It is. We know the world is broken, but do you long for the day that it's no longer broken and that we can know Him?

[ 37 : 12 ] And so we should fast, not in confidence in the work of fasting, rather in the finished work of Jesus Christ. I'm going to say that again for the back row, okay?

Joe, this is for you, brother. All right? We should fast, not with confidence in the work of fasting, rather in the finished work of Jesus Christ. See, these new type of disciples, they filtered everything through the Gospel.

They filtered everything they saw through the fact that the Messiah has come and that He is coming again. When we look at fasting, we look at it through the Gospel. If you do not look at fasting through the lens of the Gospel, you look at it wrong.

Fill in the blank. If you do not look at anything through the lens of the Gospel, you look at it wrong. And so these disciples here were looking at fasting differently.

And they were going to fast, but not on the day that Jesus was there, because their fasting would be an expression that they would long for the time that the groom would return to them, that that would be brought to them, that all things would be made new again.

[ 38 : 14 ] Luke 5, 34, But new wine must be put in the new bottles, and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desires new, for he saith, the old is better.

If there was a disciple of the Pharisees in here today, and I could speak to them, I would like to say something. If there was a disciple of John the Baptist in here today, this is what I'd like to tell you. Jesus Christ had come, that Jesus Christ came, and He lived the perfect life, and He went to the cross, and He died.

And so these Pharisees, they were drunk on the old wine. They said, we're okay with this type of religion. We're okay with this list of doing. But Jesus is offering something that is better. He's offering something that is new, and it's something glorious.

He's offering His life. Jesus' teaching was considered by the Pharisees and religious leaders to be like new wine, and they wanted no part of it. And Jesus says, you're not going to be able to mix these two things together.

I have come, and this is something that is new, and you put your faith and trust that is in me. You cannot do it. There is nothing wrong with the old law. There is only something wrong with their interpretation of it.

[ 39 : 19 ] And in their interpretation of it, they wanted to mix doing and performance with something new that Jesus was offering. And He says, if you do that, that's like putting something on your jeans. You have a rip in your jeans, and if you put a patch on it, and if you haven't washed it, then when you wash it again, it's going to rip it.

Or it's like taking old wineskins, a bottle, if you will, or the neck of an animal, and if you put something new in it, it's going to explode. These two things do not come together. That you cannot be a Pharisee of dead religion.

I mean, you cannot be a disciple of dead religion, and be the disciple of a living Jesus, and following Him. And there is a new way today that is so much better than dead religion.

And we are people who can rejoice when others do not understand. We can sit at that table, and we can rejoice, because we are not living as people that are pleasing unto men, but we're living unto people that have recognized that our Messiah has come, and He is coming again.

We are people that can feast with tax collectors, because we know that just like them, Jesus Christ died for us. We are people that can miss meals, and find our happiness and purpose in God alone.

[ 40 : 28 ] We are people that do not need satisfaction from this world, because we can find it in our relationship with God. We are people who look to heaven for our satisfaction, not this world.

We are a people, a new kind of disciple, that long for the return of Christ, not only on bad days, but even on the best of days. And we are a people that long for the day that He will make all things right.

And we are a people who join in God's creation, and we long for the days of His return, and we long for His restoring work. And so for fasting, we join in creation, and we long and say, Lord, we can't wait for You to come back.

God, we want our time and our affections to be given to You. So Jesus said that we were going to fast. He said that about you. He's speaking about you. In those days, He's speaking about the disciples that would come.

John 17, we know that He prayed for you. He is speaking about you. And the question is, Jesus says that you're going to fast. And the answer is, is that the case?

[ 41 : 31 ] And if not, ask yourself. You see, for me, the confusion came into, I had a bad understanding of fasting to say, I know that I can't earn favor with God by doing anything to my body or anything like that.

And so why would I want to do that? There's no longer any condemnation in Christ. I'm indwelt by Him. I don't need to hit myself with sticks. I don't need to fast. I don't need to do like the prophets of Baal.

I don't need to get God's attention. See, that's a wrong view of fasting that the Pharisees have. But there was a proper biblical understanding of fasting that God gave us to say, I will meet with you.

When you recognize that the things of this world are not enough, and you will set yourself aside for prayer and fasting, and I can understand the fasting through the gospel lens, it becomes something that is wonderful and healthy to every believer.

And so I'm asking you to make a decision. Will you live in obedience to what Jesus said, which is, there will come a day when people will fast. You're in that day, but are you part of the group that says yes to that?

[ 42 : 33 ] Are you part of the group of the people who do not fast because you haven't recognized your longing for Him, and you're finding it in something that is lesser and not for you? Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, Your Word is clear to us today, but is not easy to follow. And so I pray for every child of God in here today, Lord, as they would make a decision about fasting, that they would see it through the gospel.

Lord, that their confidence would not be in fasting, that their confidence would be found in the finished work of Jesus Christ, and that they would recognize the longings. Lord, Lord, I'm asking you that you would help me recognize the longings that are in my heart, that they're not going to be met by anything in this world.

They're not even going to be met by food, Lord. They're only going to be met by you, and that I would turn my longings and desires upward to you. And Lord, that is my prayer today as a believer in you, that I want to be one of those obedient people here in Scripture that reject the dead religion and look to you in your living Word.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, this is a part where every Sunday and every time we meet together, that on behalf of this church, that I extend an invitation and say, maybe you would be a Pharisee of dead religion.

[ 43 : 50 ] Maybe you'd be somebody like the disciples of John the Baptist that said, if somebody would just point me to Jesus, I would go to him, but nobody ever has. I want to tell you the day that you should turn from that dead religion, and you should sit at the table of Jesus, that the day we have found the Messiah, and that we know that he had lived and he had died for us, and the day you can put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

But here's what I know as somebody who recognized that they were a sinner, that the hardest part for you is to recognize that you need a Savior, because he will meet you, and that he will forgive you of your sins.

Regardless of what it is, he has promised to forgive you of your sins. So you don't have to calculate, you don't have to wonder, would he forgive you of your sins? Upon his Word, he has promised.

So I'd like to ask you, would you acknowledge in here today that you're a sinner, that you've lived in dead religion or no religion at all, and you want to put your faith and trust in Jesus? With the first step, with the day, would you raise your hand so that I can know the prayer for you?

If you'd raise your hand, I'd give you some instructions of how you could get to a room and learn from the Word of God about the Messiah. Heavenly Father, I pray of the day, Lord, I want this to find this place deep in my heart and never be moved.

[ 45 : 02 ] And that's my prayer for my brothers and sisters in here today, that the Word of God will find this place in their heart, and that we will be a people that are changed by it. As your heads are bowed and your eyes are closed, please continue to pray.

After you've spoken to the Lord about this matter, I would encourage you to stand and sing with Stephen. Amen.