

Fasting: A Delight, Not Drudgery

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman emphasizes that fasting is a spiritual discipline that delights the heart and strengthens our relationship with God by starving the flesh and focusing on spiritual growth.

Duration: 55:58

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of fasting and prayer in drawing closer to God and experiencing His power. It highlights the need to address sin, repentance, and surrender to God, focusing on the significance of fasting as a spiritual discipline to break strongholds, seek direction, and deepen one's relationship with God. The message calls for genuine worship, repentance, and obedience to God's Word as essential components of a believer's life.

Transcript

The message this morning is fasting over forks, part two. Fasting over forks, part two. I thought we'd only have about 50 people here this morning, when I mentioned that we're having part two.

So I know, though, that a lot of people are spiritually hungry. I'm assuming you want more of God. And I kind of put a subtitle on here, delight, not drudgery.

And fasting is a delight. It doesn't have to be drudgery. And here's the reason why.

You have two wills competing in your body, and it's hard for them to be on the same page. They can't be on the same page. So you have the will of the flesh, what your flesh wills, and you have the will of the spirit, what your spirit desires, the things of God.

And they are fighting the entire time. Throughout your life, these two wills are fighting against each other. That's why when people say, I'm just powerless, Shane, I want to remind you, you're not powerless.

You give either power or strength to the flesh, or you give power or strength to the Holy Spirit residing in you. The lust of the flesh prevails, or the desires of the spirit prevail. And that's why fasting is so important.

I could just sum it up in a couple sentences. It would be this. Fasting starves the flesh so you can be filled with the Spirit of God, closer to God.

Because any time you starve the flesh, the lust of the flesh, the spiritual side of you is strengthened, and it grows, and there's a deeper relationship with God. That's basically it in a nutshell. But I know you want more, so I'm going to keep going, right? What happens with these desires? I liken it to a Dodger game.

Say I was planning a Dodger game for two years, and going to see the playoffs. It was already planned. That was my desire.

But then my daughter decides to get married on the same day. What desire is going to prevail? Right? I hope you answer the wedding. Correct? Right? I know some of us would, well, can you reschedule that? We've got the Dodger tickets and things.

But see, that's what it's about. It's giving up one desire for the other. It's putting the good down and focusing on the best, and seeking after God.

The motivation behind fasting is to seek God more fervently, to give up the good for the best. And that's why I mentioned it's a delight, not a drudgery. Because some people look at fasting as, oh, I'm going to get hungry.

I've got to do this. It's going to be difficult. And we look at it with the wrong focus.

If we look at it as starving the flesh and drawing closer to God, it's a very good thing. And it's interesting, any time I talk about this subject of fasting or putting the flesh at bay and starving the flesh and the food we choose, people will often say, brother, it's just about Jesus. Right? It's only about Jesus.

Just focus on Jesus. But I want to remind you that this is focusing on Jesus. Fasting and starving the body of things from time to time, of fleshy things, draws us closer to Christ.

And I read this week that the Obesity Action Coalition said this, It's estimated that every pound of fat requires one extra mile of blood vessels. That means more work for the heart. So every pound I gain leads to the body increasing the vessels that deliver the blood, the oxygen by a mile.

These little blood vessels, if you straighten them out, it's amazing how many miles and miles and miles of blood vessels we have. And you're probably saying, what does it have to do with this? Well, I'm glad you asked. Because fasting is about being good stewards of the body, the gift that God has given us.

If I'm overweight and I'm eating too much and drinking too much, and I will not want to go to the hospital homes, I won't want to preach, I won't want to pray with you, I want to go home and nap. I'm just telling you right now. It affects how I live my life.

It affects how I father my children. It affects what type of husband I am. It affects everything because energy, mood, how you live your life is affected by this area.

So anytime God calls us to spiritual health, it also runs into and overlaps into physical health. So if I'm healthy spiritually, I'm often healthy physically. Now often that's not the case too as we know.

We can be sick physically and not doing well, but our spiritual man or woman is growing and thriving. So that's not always the case. But more often than not, the spiritual and the physical run parallel, run close.

For example, if you're able to fast and put the flesh into submission, you are growing spiritually. You are doing well spiritually. So they interlap with each other.

Fasting disciplines the body. Prayer fights the enemy. And the Word of God gives us wisdom.

That's why we use all three of these. If the battle is with the flesh, I'm assuming most of you know that, right? Is your greatest battle within or without? It's within. The flesh always wants things that are contrary to what God wants.

So if the flesh is the greatest battle, why do we give it the most power? Why do we give it the most amount of attention? And the flesh leads us around. And at the risk of being repetitive, that's what I said last week, right? The flesh tells me what time to get up in the morning. If we're not careful, doesn't it? You look at your clock.

I could get up and pray right now, or I could go back to sleep. What prevails? 11 o'clock. You guys are a tough one again.

You know what prevails. Do I get up and make that organic smoothie with greens and broccoli and drink it? Or do I go to Krispy Kreme, pick up half a dozen of donuts with a huge coffee? What am I going to do? Now I'm getting irritated because the service is taking long. The flesh is hungry.

I'm not going to stay in fellowship. I'm not going to go to prayer. So my flesh wants me to go and stop and get something.

And then a couple of hours later, the sweet tooth. Have you heard of that? That starts calling your name, right? Whatever that sweet tooth is, or that sweet drink. And your flesh just begins to control your life in more ways than you think.

So fasting is a time to tell the flesh, be quiet. Shut your mouth. I'm going to control you.

You're not controlling me. So that's the point of fasting, is really to resist. But we hear in this world, be yourself.

Embrace your longings. Cave into your desires. Right? It's everywhere we look.

Carl's Jr. commercials. Taco Bell commercials. Car commercials.

Just be who you are. Just cave into yourself. If it feels good, Nike.

If it feels good, do it. Yeah, that's right. If it feels good, do it.

I'm going to stop by Carl's Jr. and pick up that double bacon western double cheeseburger. A big fry and a big shake because it feels good. Just do it, Shane.

That's right, I can do it. And we have this entitlement mentality. The Bible actually says the opposite.

Don't be yourself. Crucify the old man. Don't embrace your longings.

Flee from them. The wrong longings, right? The bad, fleshy longings and desires. Flee them.

Cave into your desires. No, the Bible says fight your desires. And the reason is because this war that's within us, the Bible says the carnal mind is at enmity with God.

The mind, the carnal nature, the old man inside of you is at war with God. I don't know how I can be more clear on that one. There's something inside of you.

That should cause all of us to sit up a little straighter in our seats, right? What was that? There's something in us that is at war with God. You either give that power or you begin to take that power from it. And fasting is a wonderful area to do that in.

1 John 2.16 I'm going to share a verse with you that I learned many, many years ago and has helped me greatly. We wonder sometimes, is this of God? Is this of the devil? Is this right? Is this wrong? Is the Lord leading me to do something? Or is He not doing me? Where's the enemy going to attack? Are you ever on alert? Where's the enemy trying to attack? Here's where he's trying to attack. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

These are not of the Father. They are of the world. Now notice, it's the lust of the flesh.

So, food is good. It's God given. But it's the lusting for it.

Sleep is really good, right? I told Brant, go home right now after this second service and go get some sleep. That's really good. But the Bible also says the lust of that.

You're like, what is the lust of the sleep? Oh, it's in the Bible. Have you ever heard the word lazy? Or sloth? Go to the ant, oh sluggard. And look how even the ant works.

So something that is wonderful, and actually sleeping is where your body rejuvenates. Sleeping is where disease is fought. Disease is where your body heals itself.

So when you're sleep deprived and you're on caffeine all day long and all these other things that kill your rapid eye movement, your deep sleep, I get real technical if you want, and I'm sure you don't want me to, but let's just say if your sleep is being ruined and depraved in this area of sleep, especially kids and things, your body's not healing. You should wake up with a deep sense of, I had a deep sleep, I feel good because my body rejuvenated itself. Instead, we fall out of bed, we drag ourselves over to the coffee pot, and we put, oh no, it's pre-programmed now actually, so it's already ready to go, and we, ah, I feel great, and then a couple hours later, I don't feel great, and we're asleep.

And so the body is, sleep is a wonderful thing, but if you get too much, right, message to the 18-year-olds or 19-year-olds out there or 20-year-olds that just want to sleep and 12 hours a day and not do anything, that actually, you cross the line from laziness, you go into laziness and slothful living, and it makes for a very unproductive life because that, you can also fall into a routine. Lazy video games all day long. If I could go in and shoot Minecraft, I would kill that game.

And never have a, if you don't have kids, you don't know what I'm talking about. But these things, it just makes for lazy, lazy, lazy, unproductive. Well, Shane, how do I know really? How do I know? Look at the attitude of your kids.

How are they acting? What's coming out of them? What are we putting in? What's coming out? So just, that was a whole rabbit trail. I know it didn't happen at the first service, but for some reason, the second service needed to hear that. Many Old Testament rebukes were because of gluttony and indulging the flesh.

Many, go throughout the Old Testament. We think of Sodom and Gomorrah, right? What sin do we think of? Okay, keep it to yourself. You know, right? We know the sin that we think of.

But if you read it, God was, that's obviously prevalent, but He was also very upset at their drunkenness, their debauchery, their wickedness, their gluttony. You're full. He'd always say, the prophets would say, you're full.

You're full, but you're empty of God. You're full of these fleshly desires, but you're empty of the things of God. This fullness.

And I, these types of sermons, believe it or not, you might not believe it or not, or you might believe it, but they're hard for me. Because I don't want people to feel condemned. I don't want people that struggle in this area.

And I was, I struggled with this when I was younger, and growing up, people called me names, and fat pig, and all these things, and I can gain weight quick if I need to. I know chocolate has my name, right? And double servings have my name. It's just this adult, but I know that people can be set free.

I've seen people, I've seen hundreds, yes, hundreds of diabetics give up their medication in a month or two. I saw it firsthand. Give up heart medication.

All these things when they put the body in proper alignment with how God created us. So wouldn't I be foolish and stupid to not help people in this area? To me, it doesn't make any sense. We pray for healing, but we don't sometimes go to the root cause of why we're sick.

As if God's saying, okay, I'll overlook the gluttony, I'll overlook the abuse, and I will heal. And He does. I believe nobody eats perfectly.

Nobody has this down. But I also believe that some disease is created because we don't take care of this wonderful gift that God has given us. And it's all about stewardship.

Trust me, when I'm taking care of the body, I'm much more effective. Ask my wife. Trash is out, dishes are done, vacuuming the house, instead of just laying around the house watching click, click, click, click, click.

Because I'm too full to do anything. Fullness is not always good. Because it leads to the cravings being fulfilled.

Leonard Ravenhill said, the early church had an upper room with fire. Now we have a supper room with smoke. And it's interesting, so many times, if people would just read the Bible, and look at the 77, I'm not sure on that, the mentions of fasting, and fasted from all throughout the Old Testament into the New Testament, you would see that it's not talked about much in the church today.

I remember I would go to church for years, never heard about fasting. I can name the churches right now, never heard about fasting. Unless you stumbled upon it, right? Okay, let's hop over that word, let's get to the context, let's not talk about that word.

And it just wasn't talked about. Then I started reading the Bible more, reading the early church fathers, reading just people that came before us hundreds of years ago that we look up to, and fasting, I was fasting. George Whitfield's journals, spent the day fasting.

Well, that's weird. John Wesley spent the day fasting. All these people, where's the disconnect at? I think, and I don't know for sure, but I think it's just something we don't want to talk about because we don't want to do.

And if you're not doing it, you don't talk about it, right? If you're bound in this area, you're not going to talk about being free. And a lot of, I believe, pastors in this area need to be the example. We need to have this area of our lives in order.

And to see somebody who doesn't have this life in order in this area preaching the word, it sometimes rubs people the wrong way. And my heart is to help in this area, not to hurt necessarily, but it hurts first, right? And then it helps because, oh, okay, I see how this is a benefit. So that was my experience.

Fasting was not in the Bible. I mean, it was in the Bible. It wasn't in sermons.

It wasn't on TV much. It wasn't. And then I started reading a lot of books and different things, early church history, and it's all over.

It's everywhere. It's part of our Christian faith. When you give, when you pray, and when you fast.

And so if you bring back that missing element, it's very important. What fasting also does, it applies pressure to the flesh. You know how you apply pressure to something and it eventually gives? That's what fasting does.

Arthur Wallace said, often pressure has to be maintained before there is breakthrough in the heavenly warfare. Pressure has to be maintained before there is a breakthrough in heavenly warfare. Because I don't know about you, but I rarely get my one minute prayers answered.

Right? It's days sometimes, or weeks, or months, or years. And you're applying this pressure, applying this pressure. It's like Popeye, that's all I can stans, I can't stans no more.

Right? That works two ways though. The flesh will eventually say, that's all I can stans, I can't stans no more. He's not feeding me.

I'm going to be quiet and go into submission while He's filled with the Spirit. Or the flesh keeps badgering us and we say, that's all I can stans, I can't stans anymore. Hand me that pill.

Hand me that drink. Hand me that you know what it is. And you go back into bondage.

You go back into slavery. In this area. Because I can't stans anymore.

Have you ever, is that pride English? I can't stans. I don't know, it sounded funny. But do you feel that way ever? I can't stans, I can't take this anymore.

9am is a lot more honest. I better start, amen, right? I can't stans anymore, I can't take this anymore. So what fasting does, is you apply pressure back.

So what's applying pressure on you, and pushing you, and I gotta run to this next thing, I gotta run to this fix, I gotta run, I can't stans it anymore. You begin to apply the pressure back to the flesh, in this area of fasting. That's what fasting does, it strengthens you spiritually.

Actually there's studies out, I wish, I would give you more articles, and handouts than you could read, if they would let me, on this area. People, they recommend kicking, any type of addiction. Alcohol, caffeine, pain meds, they recommend fasting.

Now there's some secrets there, because withdrawals are hell, unless you're prepared, and there's ways to do it. But fasting begins to starve all the appetites, even sexual appetites. Shane, can you talk about that in church? Sure you can.

God created it, it's supposed to be wonderful. That's the whole point of it. But the lust of that, and when it gets out of control, it becomes perversion, and it gets dangerous.

Fasting brings all of those bodily appetites, into submission to the Holy Spirit. And you begin to control your appetites, instead of your appetites controlling you. And I don't want to get too far, on this area of discipline, and you've got to do this, and it's all about rules.

I believe in the grace in God, and the mercy of God, and the Holy Spirit changing us, but I also believe in a lot of scriptures, that talk about bringing the body in submission. Paul said, I discipline my body daily. How does he do that? I discipline my body daily, and I bring it up under my control, so that when I preach to others, I myself will not become disqualified.

Because you can't preach to others, if you yourself are becoming disqualified, because the bodily appetites are controlling you. I don't even know if I should go here. But if I'm like coming out, oh gosh, I blew the fast again this morning, I had six donuts and pizza last night, I can't even stay on a fast.

Last weekend I got drunk. I mean, I watch that new rated R movie out at the movies, and I just keep... You guys would be like, and you're going to preach to us? I mean, yeah, ok. Because you know.

Now we all struggle, right? I've been open about that before. These things are a struggle. I want to see a good movie, right? Fast and the Furious is out.

No, you're not going to go there. But my flesh wants to see it, because I like fast cars. Right? And you see these movies, and these things that draw us into, because the flesh is wanting to dominate.

The Bible says, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Let me go back to that point for a minute. I think it's important.

When Paul said, I discipline my body, and I bring it into control, into subjection, what's he doing? What's he disciplining? His bodily appetites. Not to sleep too much, eat too much, drink too much. He's bringing those into subjection.

So when you begin to work on those things, you give them up to the Holy Spirit of God to change you. Because I don't really believe you're changing yourself. I believe the Holy Spirit changes you as you submit to the work of God.

Works in conjunction. Now there's two sides on that too. You have all the law side, right? You've got to do this, you've got to do this, you can't do this, you can't go to the movies.

You've got to wear pants down to your ankles. Actually, women can't wear pants. And you've got to wear a suit and tie, Shane.

You've got all these rules. Don't ever drink coffee. That's the church down the street.

Don't eat pork. You've got all these rules. See, here's my big list of rules you've got to follow.

If you don't follow these rules, you're not spiritual. Uh-uh, that's not a good thing. There's freedom in Christ, right? And different things.

I would avoid eating pig and stuff though, right? But then this side's all grace, all mercy, all grace and all mercy. That's it. Don't worry about all that other stuff.

Don't worry about doing things. It's just grace and mercy. As you're being led as the lamb to the slaughter, right? Because the flesh is leading, because you don't have to say no to anything or discipline your body at all because it's just all about grace.

Actually, you realize, if you've been walking with Jesus a long time, you'll realize this. That grace actually means you live under a higher standard. Not a lower standard.

So when I embrace the grace of God, it makes me want to live up to a higher standard and not do certain things and honor God and live like He wants me to live. So grace actually increases my love for the law of God. So when should you fast? Well, is there a desire to resurrect dead prayers in your life? Have you been praying for something that you believe is not going to happen now? I've noticed that God will often kill a dream before He brings it to fruition.

You'll put it on the altar. You'll give it up. Because He's not on our timetable.

His sovereignty is on a specific timetable. And it's not our timetable. They never go together.

Because we want quick, now, and fix it. We want all these things. But if you need to resurrect dead prayers, you've been praying for family members and you've given up.

You've been praying for your marriage to restore or be restored or somebody else's and you've given up. There are people I've been praying for, for their marriages to be restored at least for a year or two. And they're not happening.

And I am apt to give up. Or if you have older kids and they've walked away from God, they're not serving God. Let me first give you a word of encouragement that often they go that route until their pride is killed and they're humbled by God and then they come running back.

So oftentimes they will test those waters. But don't give up. If you want to resurrect dead prayers, consider fasting.

And I wish I had time. I could walk you through different fasts and what they look like. But start with giving up a meal.

Saying, Lord, I'm not going to eat lunch today. I'm going to pray. I've got a list of things.

I'm going to pray. I'm going to seek you. And boy, you're going to see how hard it is.

You'll see how strong the flesh is really quick. But it begins to submit. Because I remember when I started four or five years ago, I'd miss the first meal.

I'd just miss lunch. Oh, whoo. You know, it's like bad moods and anger.

It's like, where's this coming from? The flesh, right? And then I'd begin to miss two. And then I'd begin to miss the whole day. And now the flesh knows to keep its mouth quiet now.

Be quiet. We're not going there. You're waiting until tomorrow.

It's like a little whimpering dog when you begin to bring it into control. When you begin to bring it into submission. That's what this whole point is about.

Are there strongholds that have been gripping your life? Is there something, is there a stronghold that's been gripping your life? You just can't, you can't kick it. You can't get rid of it. You can't, I'm giving up.

This has got me. Well, it's time to fast. It's time to break that stronghold.

Break that bondage. And many times, how we get into bondage is we get out of something. And then as we're out of something, we begin to say, oh, I can handle it now.

I've mastered this. And we go back into it and it begins to bring us into bondage again. And if you're in that area, consider fasting.

Do you desire a deeper walk with God or increased spiritual hunger? Yes. Most of you here, I think that's why you're here, right? We figure that out now. That's the good thing about West Side Christian Fellowship.

As I know, you guys are hungry for more of God. You're not playing church. It's not on your checklist.

If it was on your checklist, you wouldn't be here because you go to one that gets over quicker. Right? Your quick one-hour service close to my house. They'll just tell me what I want to hear.

Click. You know, just check that off my church marker, your calendar. But most of you are hungry for more of God.

You want a deeper walk with God, so considering fasting. Do you need a breakthrough? Do you need direction in your life? Do you need peace? Who doesn't need direction? Where should I work? Where should I go? What should I do? What should I... Lord, I need direction in this area. And instead of seeking God and fasting, we just keep filling our bellies up with food and, oh, I'm too tired, I'll do that next week and next week.

I know people who said they'll start fasting and like a year later, yeah, I've got to do that. Just got to do that. But I have no direction.

I have no peace because they never take that time because it's spiritual warfare. Folks, this is challenging. It's a battle.

I don't want to minimize it. I want to prepare you. It is challenging, but the fruit outweighs the difficulty.

Remember how I've often said it's either the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. One or the other. You are facing one or the other.

If you want to live your whole life never fasting, never putting God first and foremost in this area, it's difficult but rewarding. So start with a meal and see what God does. Start with two and see what God does.

And that's why I don't push legalism on it. I don't tell people you have to. I just allow God to prompt it and God to show them if He wants them to do that.

Is all hell breaking loose in your life or in your family? Then fast and pray. Really, the point of fasting is to pray. The power is in the prayer.

It's not the fasting. It's in the prayer. So you fast, you starve the flesh and you go to prayer.

Matthew 7.14 says this, And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to him, kneeling down to him, saying, Lord, have mercy on my son. So picture this. Have you ever had children that are having seizures? Or that are going through a lot of pain? It breaks your heart as a parent, right? So he's having seizures.

It says here, He's an epileptic and suffers severely, for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him. So see here, we have one instance and many more, if we had time, of demonic oppression causing certain illnesses and injuries.

And there's something in the church, well, let me give you the two sides again, because I like doing that. This side is where it's all about the demons, right? You got the demon of bad breath. You got the demon of, you know, just whatever.

They just put a demon on everything. So instead of taking responsibility for my actions, I can just blame a demon. That demon of Coors Light again, he just planted that thing right in the refrigerator.

That demon of marijuana, that just showed up right in my doorstep. And we just, everything's a demon. Everything's a demon.

Cast out that demon. You got to vomit up that demon. It's too much emphasis.

But then the other side where, don't mention demons. That was back in Jesus' time. It's just, we're not going there, right? We're not going there.

Because, number one, they don't know how to handle it. Number two, it seems odd. Number three is, the church is probably dead, spiritually, because the church is living vibrantly.

It will have demonic attacks come against it. It's just there. So the biblical account of demonic possession, demonic influence, is that it's very possible.

Jesus said he healed that woman that was bent over like this, probably. Can you imagine living 17 years like this? And she was bent over, and walking around. And Jesus came, and he healed her.

He said, Woman, thou art loose from your infirmities. And she stood up. And he said, Why should this daughter of Abraham, who was bound by Satan, not be loosed? So we just, well, she didn't need to go to a chiropractor.

She just needed to have surgery. The disc one, disc two, all these things. See, this is out.

See the x-ray there? That's what's happening. So you need surgery. That's what we run to.

But some of these things might be of demonic influence, of demonic nature. Jesus said, Those who believe in me, these signs will follow. They will cast out demons in my name.

They will cast out demons in my name. So we still believe, as a church, we believe in that. We don't get fanatical, but we believe in it.

Often, I'll start there. I'll pray with somebody, and I'll say, Is there any demonic activity in your life? Have you opened up your door to it? Let's start with that. And you just use wisdom and see where God leads.

And a very good thing is to ask people, right now, say, Jesus Christ is Lord, and they cannot say it if they are possessed, or if they've got a demon. Really, it's what the Bible says. They are demonized.

And believers can be influenced by demons. Not possessed, but they can be influenced. They can open a, you go get drunk tonight, you'll watch what door you open.

It's called spirits for a reason. Because you give yourself up to this demonic influence, and now you're no longer controlling you, yourself. The Holy Spirit's not controlling you.

What strength have you just given yourself? You've given your strength. You've opened the door to that demonic realm, and it begins to do things that you normally wouldn't do, right? You can't walk or talk right. You're going to play.

That's not, they say, that's not them. I know such and such. That's not them.

Then what have they done? They've given it up. They've given themselves up to that demonic influence. So what we did at the first service, I'll even do at the second service, we want to, the prayer room is opened for that.

If there's a demonic stronghold in your life, if there's something demonic that you know you're struggling with, come back there for prayer. We believe in the power of prayer. We believe in the gospel to set people free.

The devil and Jesus Christ are not co-equals. We believe in the higher power. They say that, right? My higher power.

Well, you better have the right higher power. Right? You better have Jesus Christ as your higher power, if you want to call him that. I avoid that term at any time I can because it's not a higher power.

It's the Lord Jesus Christ. Every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The demon, actually, the devil has no authority in this place. There are people who come into this church and they want to be disruptive. They're filled with the spirit, the wrong spirit.

They've got a demonic spirit. And I don't care. You are not going to affect the preaching.

You are not going to affect the worship. The devil himself has to sit here and bow to the foot of the cross. So that's spiritual authority.

You take those things. You pull down those strongholds. Cast down those arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

And I know, I can tell in services when there is demonic influence that somebody is here that doesn't necessarily want to be here. And it's okay to call that out. It's okay to pray for that person because you're not going to be disruptive.

You're not going to take this in a different direction. God has given us a platform to preach His Word. That was a long rabbit trail.

So I brought Him to your disciples but they could not cure Him. This is interesting. This passage, I've looked at it all week and it's interesting because Jesus, it's not like, hey guys, you didn't quite believe enough.

You know the guy who said, I believe but help my unbelief. And sometimes I'll have, oh man, I'll pray for somebody at the hospital and something's coming up in me that's just, I don't think, God, where's that unbelief coming from? It's part of the Adamic nature. It's part of that.

So you just fight that off. You say, in Jesus' name, I believe. But He's not saying, look what He says here.

Then Jesus said, you faithless and you perverse generation. So if I told the prayer team, Shane, we're praying for this guy, I said, you're faithless and you're perverted. What? Pastor Shane, that was so mean.

But then He goes on to say, how long shall I be with you? How long am I going to pray in this prayer room with you? You're perverted. You're faithless. I can't stand to be in this room with you and pray with you.

Right? Something's happening here. That's my point. It's not just like, something is happening in these disciples.

The carnality has come in and crept in their lives and these people, I believe. It's the idlemen commentary, right? I believe that this is not just a little bit of unbelief. A faithlessness, a perverse generation.

How long will I bear with you? How long will I be with you? You're driving me crazy because of your carnality. So Jesus said, bring him here. And Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him.

And the child was cured from that very hour. That's why I said, if you need prayer in this area, if you feel there's a demonic influence in your life and you want to run from prayer instead of run to it, I would encourage you to go to prayer after the service. Let us pray for you in this area.

So He rebuked the demon. The demon didn't debate Him. Say, no, I'm not coming out.

No demon. No demon. In all the scripture, will you ever see debating with Jesus Christ as if they have equal power? Now they'll negotiate.

Don't throw us into the abyss just yet. We know our time is coming, but throw us into that herd of swine. They'll negotiate, but they have no power.

They have to listen to Him. So as believers, you need to understand that you walk not perfectly like Christ, but you walk in the fullness of the Spirit. You have the greatest authority in you.

He that is in you is greater than is in the world. If you believe the Bible, the Bible says, cast out, pull down. You have the authority.

It doesn't say if the day's just right and it's God's will and you get the person at the right time, He says, do this. Cast out demons in My name. And you will see the fruit of that.

So then He said, bring the boy to Me. He rebuked the demon. It came out of him and the child was cured from that very hour.

And I often wonder how many illnesses are due to demonic activity? How many illnesses are due to the devil oppressing and suppressing and bringing havoc on a person? Things our children go through. See, I'm just not, I'm not as quick to run to the doctor as I am to the great physician. And sometimes I catch heat for that because I'm not minimizing.

We need wisdom. We need to go to the doctor. We need it from time to time.

But it seems like we always, it's like it's got to be linked to, you know, something. It can't be a demon. I just need amoxicillin.

I just need the antibiotics. And I could really go off on that. If you keep taking those things, you're just destroying your body.

And that's why we're seeing a lot of illness and different things too. But be careful. Run to the great physician first.

He might lead you through prayer and fasting to go and pray for that child. And get them off of medication, but pray for them and release that demonic hold that the enemy has on them. See, I'm not saying everything.

But I'm concerned that sometimes we say nothing is of the devil. Nothing. It's all natural now.

It's all body chemistry, brain chemistry, neurons firing the wrong direction, the nucleus doing this. It's all physical and we all can fix it with a pill. But sometimes, I mean if you look at all of Scripture, sometimes it's demonic at its core.

And I know because I've seen people release of so many things, mainly read about them in books in early church history, being just set free once that demonic realm has been dealt with. Jesse, you know this. You're sitting back there going, amen, amen.

This demonic realm does so much damage in people's lives. He said, why could we not cast it out? Why could we not cast this out? Jesus said to them, because of your unbelief, for surely I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move here or move there and it will move and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

Now, I could spend a half hour here, but I'm not going to. I'm going to encourage you to go to our website and listen to a message entitled How We Got Our Bible, What Translation Is Best. The reason is because, however, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting is not in some of your Bibles.

The older manuscripts, let's say the older manuscripts here that came from what they call Alexandria, the Alexandria School of Text. I mean, this is, you're probably going, what is he talking about? The Bible came

from different manuscripts. We didn't just find one Bible.

We've got 6,000 manuscripts. They all say the same thing in regard to truth. But some of them, where we get the King James, the New King James, the New American Standard Bible, they came from what is called the received text or the majority text.

We have the majority of manuscripts. And then there's the other school of manuscripts that come from a different area in the Middle East that where the NIV comes from, the different ones, and they're called the oldest, but they're not the majority. And they don't have this last verse in there.

But we can look at people like Ignatius or Polycarp or Tertullian or Justin Martyr, some of the early church fathers. I believe Ignatius or Irenaeus was actually born right around the time that Jesus was crucified. So some of these guys were close to the early recordings of the Bible, and no church father explicitly says that the verse was not in there.

In other words, they all teach, many of them teach on this verse being in there. This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting. So what do we do with this? Well, Mark 9.29 has it and Matthew 7.21. There is some demonic activity that is not released until there is prayer and fasting.

That's how you'd have to take this. Do you ever have to kick it up a notch in anything? Like you say, this is not working. I'm going to have to kick it up a notch.

The kids are not acting good at home. We're going to have to kick it up a notch. Things are not working in my marriage.

I'm going to have to take some time off of work and focus on that and kick it up a notch. I'm going to have to, whatever it is, in sports, do you think the Olympic athletes train the same as my Little League baseball team? No, they don't. Do you think because they have to kick it up a notch, we have to bring in more prayer and fasting? The weapons need to match the warfare.

So in other words, at least from my understanding, here's how the demonic realm works. Somehow there's a stronghold. Somehow the demonic realm, the demon latch onto something and a person is influenced, has a demon or is demonized and he latches on.

You think you're going to say a little prayer and read a five-minute devotional and it's going to unlatch and leave. But he's not going anywhere if he doesn't have to. He doesn't go, he's not going, and sometimes it's piece by piece.

All right, I'll give you that. It's just peace. It's like a battle.

It's warfare. I mean, ask anybody to overcome addiction. Piece by piece.

That's why I tell, sometimes if I talk to an alcoholic, I'll say, yeah, but now you're a caffeinaholic. You just gave up. See, we just trade one for the other.

There's no true healing and freedom. You give up one addiction for the next. The demonic influence doesn't want to give up easily.

So it requires this prayer and fasting and prayer and fasting. It could take days or weeks or months. Maybe I'm not eating on Sundays every week.

I'm praying and fasting. It could take weeks and it could take weeks. But I've never met anybody.

I've never read in a book. I've never crossed a sermon online. I've never even talked to anybody.

Maybe if there's an unbeliever, this would not qualify. But from a believer, that it's ever said that they wished they had never fasted. That was a waste of time.

I don't know why I did that. Now if their heart's not right, maybe, but nobody's ever prayed and fasted and has regretted it. Regretted it.

We need faith, belief, and power. I believe here's what Jesus was teaching here. This verse.

We need belief. Lord, I believe and not live in carnally. In other words, I forget who it was.

Ian Bound said, you only pray as well as you live. So if a person is bound in carnality, they look just like the world. There's no difference.

There's no distinction in their life. Their prayers are not very powerful. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Our holiness, the way we live, affects our prayer life. You live well and you pray well. You don't live well, you don't pray well.

They go together. And fasting helps us pray well and in that direction. So if you're thinking, okay, how? What do I need to do? Well, I don't want to do part three.

So let me try to get this out real quick. Prepare, plan, and have a purpose. What I mean by that is this purpose.

This really isn't about fasting. It's about prayer and seeking God. For example, when I stop by Chevron and get gas, is it really about the gas? Or is it about getting me to the next destination? That's what prayer and fasting is.

So your purpose is to seek God. It's not just a hunger strike and just watch the same things, do the same things. Nothing changes.

There's a purpose behind it. And you prepare. Prepare for a fast.

Remove the dinky, the twinkies, and the ding-dongs. I try to combine them with one word. Rewind.

Just clean out the pantry. I'll tell you now, you better clean out the pantry. Because if you've got Fritos and Doritos and Captain Crunch and Pebbles and all these things and Oreo cookies and just dryers in the freezer, you've just got a clean house.

It's okay, I'm giving you permission. So out of sight, out of mind. You get on worship music.

You get the Word of God out more. You unclick Netflix. Turn it off.

Unsubscribe for a week or two. Or Facebook. Now your flesh is going to fight you.

Oh, this is not easy. I don't want to paint this picture of this. Oh, la la la land.

It's a warfare. That's why very few people will do it. Very few people will do what I'm talking about.

But I'm talking to those who want to draw in closer to God, who want to do this. And the plan, the length and the type have the prayer list available. Be ready.

Have it out. We have a three by five card. All the prayer requests.

We're going over those. We're targeted on those prayer request areas. Now I didn't get a chance to do this at the first service and I think we'll be pressing it here as well.

But I want to encourage you to read Isaiah 58. All of Isaiah 58. It takes about seven minutes.

This weekend. Tonight, tomorrow. If you can't get to it.

Isaiah 58. This is fasting that pleases God. Fasting that pleases God.

It begins with this. Cry aloud and spare not. Lift up your voice like a trumpet.

So God is telling the prophet Isaiah to cry loud. To lift up your voice like a trumpet. Amen.

That's my life verse. Anytime anybody tells you they don't like bold preaching, remind them of this verse. Okay.

He told the prophet Isaiah cry aloud. Spare not. Lift up your voice like a trumpet.

And then what's he say? Tell my people of their sin. Why is he doing that? He's challenging the people. Lift up your voice like a trumpet.

Tell them of their transgressions. Because here's what I've noticed. Silence often confirms our lifestyle.

Right? If nobody says anything and everybody's just silent, it confirms it. If there's no challenging. Hey, here's what the Bible says.

And that's why people either love it. Oh, that's right. I need to get back on track.

Or they hate it. I'm never coming here again. Because they're not open for what the Bible says in this area of sin and transgression.

Transgression means they've broken God's commandments. In the house of Jacob, there's sins. There's besetting sins.

Here's what's happening. I'm gonna sum it up for you. The people are saying, we are fasting, but you don't hear us.

Why are we fasting? You don't hear us. And God says it's because you've allowed things into your life such as sin and transgression and you're continuing in the sin as if it doesn't matter and you're fasting. He said it's not gonna work.

And what the people were doing, they were oppressing the people. They were charging them money. They were taking advantage of them.

They were competing and arguing and debating and all these things. Their hearts were evil and corrupt inside, but they were doing fasting. Look at what I did to God.

Aren't I spiritual? And God says, I will not hear your fasting or honor your fasting. I won't even hear your prayers. Because your sin, the way you're treating people, the heart issues have separated me from you.

So I also want to throw this out there. You can't have counterfeit obedience. I'm going to talk to the fasters just for a second.

You can't fast and then continue in a different area of your life of sin that God has called you away from. The fast is of no benefit. You can't say, I know God wants me to obey in this area.

I know He wants me to obey. But I'm not going to. But I'm going to fast.

God, why aren't you hearing me? Why aren't you listening? Why aren't these things happening? Shane talked about in a sermon, I don't see them. He says, get back to what you know. Get back to what you know to be right.

And then it goes on to say, once you begin to do what you know to be right, get the heart right, and you fast, your light will break forth like the morning, like the dawn. Your light will break forth. You'll have peace and joy.

You'll be called repairer of the breach. You'll begin to repair things that are broken. You'll stand up for what is right in your homes and in your family and in your job.

You'll be the repairer of the breach. Yes, the dam has been broken in the United States of America. Has it not? The Titanic has been hit.

But I'll tell you what, I'm not giving up. We are called to be the repairer of the breach when we fast and when we pray. If my people, who are called by my name, who will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven.

Oh, you can clap on that one. That's a good one to clap on, right? But that's what we are called to do. We are called to be the repairers of the breach.

Yes, the paper this morning just said opiate abuse is skyrocketing. I'm not surprised. Everything is falling apart.

Yes, it is. You are called to be the repairers of the breach. You are called to pray and fast and contend for what is right.

That's what we're supposed to do. It's not just Shane preaching and everybody going, oh, that was good. Let's go eat.

We're all to be repairers of the breach. Let our light shine forth. We're all supposed to be fasting and praying.

We come together. I'm just leading the ship. I'm not the only one on it.

Oh goodness, let's stop there. What do you think? I have a whole other page. I might get to it next week.

I'll leave you hanging though. You want to be here next week. That's for sure.

I can already feel God wanting to do a lot in our lives. Two things happened at the first service. We did baptisms.

We had about seven people get baptized. And I would encourage you, if you want to be baptized, if you haven't been baptized before, I'll just get baptized in this if it makes you feel better. We have towels that we can give you.

But baptism is a sign saying, you know what, God? I was baptized as an infant. I was baptized as a child. I didn't really know what it meant.

I'm coming back to the Lord. I want that fire again. I want to obey God in this area.

Let us know in the prayer room after the service. Let us know you want to be baptized. It's full of water.

We will baptize you. And the other thing we're doing is we're doing communion. Up front here and up in the balcony is communion.

Instead of passing the plates this week, what we're doing is we're having you come up and get it during worship. During the first song, during the second song, if there's a third song, you come up and you get the communion. Take both cups, the juice and the wafer, the bread, and take those back.

You can pray with your spouse, pray with your children. You can reflect during worship. You don't have to be in a hurry.

Just reflect and thank God for what He's done. Because see, Christ is the real repairer of the breach. Did you catch that? There has been a breach in our relationship with God.

That's why the world is going to hell in a handbasket. You've heard that saying. That's why everything is out of control because our relationship with God has been broken from creation, from Adam.

When he sinned, that relationship has been broken so God has been bringing a remnant. He has been saving His people. And so Jesus Christ is that final sacrifice, the repairer of the breach.

He's restored that relationship. So communion is for those who believe and have repented of their sin and want to remember what Christ did on the cross. We also have to come to communion with a clean heart.

If you're holding in bitterness and a critical spirit, you just as mad as you know what at somebody right now, and I don't care, you're engaging in sin, you're not going to repent, do not take communion. Paul says that you have to examine yourself. I have to examine myself before we partake because we're coming with a clean heart, a repentant heart, and we're taking communion in that.

And if you're not a believer, this is a wonderful opportunity. The Bible says repent and believe. Repent means I see sin the way God sees it.

I'm a sinner. I need a Savior. I'm repenting.

I'm believing in Jesus and I'm partaking in communion. So you could do that today. You could do communion today and you could get baptized.

My goodness. Isn't that cool? We just baptized a seven-year-old. I think he's six or seven at the first service.

During worship, he turned to his teacher and said, I want to know Jesus. I want to go to heaven. During worship.

I mean that's what God does in worship, in prayer, fasting in a church that surrendered to him. And I've noticed this. Here's where my heart is.

Boy, I could raise up the volume on this one and grab a microphone even. The closer you draw to God, the more you'll be filled with his Spirit. The closer you draw, the more you surrender your life, you give up everything because you know those things come in and take us away, right? The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life and most of the men in here, why you haven't fully surrendered your life is because you still think it's macho to not.

That's why. Real men. I see them at the baseball field all the time.

Oh, church, yeah. I'll go when I can but my kid's into this and that. They think the persona of a man that worship is for women.

Actually, Jesus Christ is a worshiper. David, a man who killed more men than anybody in this whole room times 10, right? Because hopefully none of you haven't listened to the military maybe. But he danced until he came out of his clothes.

David was a worshiper. He slew men. He took a slingshot and killed Goliath.

These guys are worshipers. You see Jesus Christ worshiping, praying to the Father. You see great men of God coming bowing down before God and worshiping.

So it does beg the question, where are the worshipers? Guys, you weren't just designed to sit there and look at your watch and get through this. You're supposed to be leading your family in worship. They should sometimes come into your room and see you on your face before God and worshiping God.

That's a real man, a worshiper. But I'm also here to encourage. And if you need work in this area, let's pray that this morning.

Come next door and say, I need to be a worshiper. Pray that I'm a worshiper. Pray with your spouse.

Say, I need to be a worshiper. Put away these things that are drawing you away from God. And begin to take communion.

Get baptized. Whatever it needs to do, make the change today. Because another frustration I have, often it's just normal, is I see so many people.

I know what the answer is. They know what the answer is. But they're not doing it.

Month in, month out. Year in, year out. See, knowing, there's no power in knowing.

The power in the Word of God is application and doing it. And we have the answer. You know the answer, right? Ah, I gotta do this.

Don't you ever leave here? Ah, I gotta do that. Ah, that's right, I gotta do that. I gotta do that.

Then 2018 gets here. Ah, gotta do that. 2019.

And I just encourage you, do it. Whatever God is convicting you to do, do it. And He will see you through.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/fwldIESwddc.mp4>

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