

Fast 2018 – Pray – Fast – Give

Matthew 6:6 – Pray

6 But you, **when you pray**, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. NKJV

Matthew 6:16-18 – Fast

16 "Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but **to your Father** who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. NKJV

Matthew 6:19-21 – Lay up

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but **lay up for yourselves treasures** in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For **where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**. NKJV

- Have you lost the passion and focus you once had?
- Is your heart settled in heaven?
- Are you giving the way you should?
 - Time, Treasure, Talents

Matthew 6:25-34 – Don't Worry – Life, Clothes, Food

Are You Hungry?

Most of us have no problem knowing when to eat a meal

- Most of us eat breakfast, lunch and dinner at a specific time every day
- Basically, we eat when we're hungry

But how do we recognize spiritual hunger?

- How do we know when to fast?
- Its beyond these 21 days
- There are times to fast together
- There are times throughout the year we need to fast personally

Your spirit hungers for the things of God just as your stomach hungers for food

When you engage in seasons of fasting and prayer your stomach hungers but eventually fades

- Yet, your spiritual hunger rises up
- It can only be satisfied with the will of God and fulfilling His call on your life

Psalm 34:8 (NLT)

⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

Its impossible to do God's will with human zeal

- It requires fasting and prayer

Today we are breaking the fast

- Many of us will be going out to eat lunch
- One restaurant we like is North Peak
 - They bring complimentary bread
- A restaurant we used to go with yeast rolls
- Carrabba's brings warm bread, olive oil and spices

At one-time bread was the main course

- It also had a symbolic meaning
- Breaking bread together in one's home was an honor
- It was a mark of friendship

Jesus also used the term "bread" to refer to himself

John 6:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

- There is a bread that is not natural food
- We are learning the importance of recognizing spiritual hunger
- Jesus said His bread was to do the will of the Father

Meeting our spiritual hunger is more important than meeting our natural hunger

When we are full spiritually we don't hunger for the things of the world that get us off track

Sin is a legitimate need being met in an illegitimate way

1 Corinthians 5:6–8 (NKJV)

⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

- Sin is something that grows when left to itself
- Just a little yeast puffs up a whole lump of dough
- We start to see the things that we have allowed to become more important than the Lord in our lives
- When we are full of Jesus there is no room for the yeast of the world

In the bible, bread is mentioned many times as being something that refreshes

Genesis 18:3–5 (NKJV)

³ and said, “My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. ⁴ Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.” They said, “Do as you have said.”

- The Lord and two angels have appeared to Abraham
- They agreed to stay, and Sarah made the bread quickly
- When they left there to visit Lot he made unleavened bread for them also

Years later, when God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, they were given specific instructions on what to eat that final night, the night their homes would be “passed over” as the angel of death destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt

- They were to “be ready”, with no time for dough to rise
- Part of the Passover meal was and continues to be, unleavened bread

Then they set about wandering in the desert for forty years

- Making it hard to plant and harvest wheat for bread
- So, the Lord met the need for them

Exodus 16:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

- They ate the “bread from heaven” daily for the duration of their time in the desert
- Bread was a big deal
- It wasn’t take it or leave it
- It wasn’t a side option like today
- Bread was not meant to be an appetizer

Leviticus 26:3, 5 (NKJV)

³ ‘If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,

⁵ Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

- God intends for us to eat to the full
- We will not be satisfied until we are filling up on Him first
- His intent is to meet our need so that we can meet the needs of others – **Isaiah 58:7**

In their culture, “breaking bread” literally meant to take the bread in your hands and tear it to divide the loaf

- Sharing what you had by your own hand gave sharing a common meal a more personal atmosphere
- Jesus frequently “broke bread” with His disciples and others
- He fed crowds after giving thanks and breaking bread
- He then multiplied it to meet the need of everyone who was hungry

Larger loaves of bread were broken by hand and passed out

- People would tear their share into smaller pieces and used to dip into a common bowl of meat and vegetables or another dish

Jesus identifying His betrayer at the “Last Super”

John 13:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*.” And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

After multiplying five small loaves of barley bread and two small fish that a little boy was saving for his lunch

- The people followed Him not because they saw the miracle but because they got a free lunch
- Then they asked what sign He would do
- Saying that their fathers ate manna in the wilderness

John 6:32–35 (NKJV)

³² Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

- What a statement!
- Remember bread was not an afterthought
- It was the main dish
- This got their attention
- He was trying to get them to understand, “You need me every day”
 - Not just Sunday
 - Every minute of every day
 - You can’t make it without Me
 - Without bread you’ll perish
- You can do nothing without me – **John 15:5**
- He’s not a side salad
- He’s not something at the end of the table in a basket
- He is the source of life!

Have our lives become so full that we that we only have room for a taste of God on Sunday or Wednesday?

- Do we come to church so full of the world that we have no room for the “Bread of life”?
- Are we in a hurry to rush out to what we consider to be the “Main course” in our life?
- Do you think God looks at our preaching, our programs and nice buildings and asks us, “Would you like some God with that?”
- We need to cultivate a genuine hunger and thirst for the Lord
- We will not get far in fasting and prayer when we have the wrong idea of who Jesus is in the first place

John 6:48–51 (NKJV)

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

- When you hunger and thirst after Jesus, you will be filled
- The Christians life will not work unless you understand that He is the main thing
- House or no house, job or no job
- We must have bread
- Send all the other stuff back with the waiter
- Give me the bread!

Matthew 16:26 (NKJV)

²⁶For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

- Fasting makes you hungry for what really matters in life
 - Nothing else will satisfy
 - Everything else leaves you hungry
- If that's not true in your life fast and pray until your spiritual hunger rises
- Its not about “having church”, “singing songs” or “buildings” or “budgets”
- Its all about Jesus!

The same is true at home

You will never be the Father or Mother of your home until Jesus is the “Main Course”

- If the things of God are just and obligation that's what your children will learn
- Your children get hungry for God when you share the meal with them
- Turn off the TV, video games, computers and cell phones
- Fill up on the bread of life

Am I the “Breadwinner” of my home?

When your children feel sick do they run to you for prayer?

When they encounter difficult problems do they come to you because they know you have the “Bread of life”?

Do they see your daily walk with God and learn that your answers for life come from the Bible?

Do they see you fretting, fusing and fighting?

Or do they see you building one another up on the word of God?

Psalm 37:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ I have been young, and *now* am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.

- Jesus will give us our “daily bread”
- We can’t live off routine only
- We need something fresh every day
- He promises that He will give us something fresh every day
- Set your mind on the “main dish” and go after Him!

John 6:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.