
DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING ~ 23-MAY-23

Welcome to “the cowboy church’s” day of prayer and fasting. I trust that as you engage with the LORD in this way that you will grow deeper in your relationship with Him. *If you are new to our “fasting and prayer” day, there is some introductory material included on the last page that you may find helpful.*

2022-23 – A “YEAR” IN GOD’S HOUSE OF PRAYER

This month wraps up our focus on “a Year in God’s House of Prayer”. As we close this ministry year, I want to leave you with something to ponder over the summer. We will look at application points from a previous message, and I am hoping you will take some time during the summer to further ponder these thoughts and questions.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION ~ ACTS 3:1-4:12

Who is the most important person in my life today? That usually gets an easy answer from us Christians – “Jesus, of course!”. However, when we look at the time we spend with Jesus, the Christ, it often shows a much different answer. Is Jesus really the centre of our life? There are so many things that try to demand our time and attention. Is Jesus truly the cornerstone that my life is built on? Is He the guide for all I do, think and say? Let’s spend some time with Jesus today.

Acts 3:1-26

- I would encourage you to read through this chapter a couple of times. This will allow you to have the context for the next passage firmly in mind.
 - Notice the absolute centrality of Jesus in everything Peter did and said.

Acts 4:1-12

- It was all about Jesus. Jesus was the one person they couldn’t stop talking about. Jesus was the person they loved, worshipped, and served. And it cost them! Notice the opposition they

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faced. From the religious community and from the political powers. These persons of power and authority were the ones who should have known better, and yet they were threatened by this man named, Jesus. His message was different.

- How is Jesus' message different from the world around us – not just in the obvious ways. Stop and ponder. Let what you know of Jesus message sink into your mind and show you the difference. Read John 13-17 and Matthew 5-7 for a greater understanding of His message.
- What do you think it looks like to have Jesus as the “cornerstone” of your whole life. Does all you do and say line up with the life Jesus lived (and wants to continue living through you)?
- It goes so much beyond just external obedience to what Jesus did and said. The love the apostles had for Jesus was the central fact of their life. He was their greatest love. He was the one who was in charge. He filled their thoughts (and indeed their whole lives) moment by moment. Were they perfect? Of course not. Committed? Absolutely! In love with Jesus? Evidently!!! How about you? Does it show – your love for Jesus?

PRAYER THOUGHTS

Many godly people of years gone by have left us prayers that they prayed or used personally. Sometimes this can be a help in launching some of our own personal prayers and prayer times. Here is one for us to read, perhaps pray, and see where the Lord takes us in deeper conversation. I found this prayer in one of my devotional books that I use from time to time and adapted it for our use today. It is a prayer that challenges me. It is a prayer that helps me refocus on Jesus when I'm tempted to put something else in His place.

*One true God, the notion of images and idols seems so primitive, yet they still threaten to steal the worship of my heart. I set out to worship You but end up adoring my own experience. I take greater pleasure in the music, the study, the fellowship, etc. than in You. Forgive me for all my misguided worship; renew my focus on You alone. Amen**

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PRAYER CONCERNS

There is much in this world that we can and should be remembering before the Lord. Here are some suggestions based on the situation around us the prayers we have just spent time pondering.

International:

- Conflict Zones
 - There are still many areas around this globe that are involved in significant conflict or war. Let's continue to pray for "God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven".
- Pray for the salvation of world leaders.
- World Churches
 - As you think of your brothers and sisters around the world, I would encourage you to pray for them that in the midst of their circumstances, they would be strengthened in their love for our Lord Jesus.
 - That those in oppressive states or who are being persecuted would be strengthened to pray the prayer of the Apostles in Acts 4:24-30

National:

- Salvation for all those involved in National politics and policy creation.
- May God be seen once again in our Country.
- Pray that the churches in our country would be known for their love of Jesus and not for their dislike, disagreements, or hostility towards the world around them and other Christians of a different "brand" then they adhere to.

Provincial:

- Upcoming provincial elections.
- The salvation of our provincial leaders.
- That our government's policies would somehow reflect God's glory and His will.

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- Again, that the Christians in the churches of this province would be consumed with a passion for knowing God and not settle for knowing about Him.
- That the churches of our province would be know for their love for Jesus, as evidenced by the way they exist and interact with the community and other churches around them.

Local & Personal:

- God’s continued blessing and guidance in each area of ministry at “the cowboy church”
 - That Jesus, the Christ would truly be front and centre in all we do as a church.
 - His Word, music, fellowship, and prayer.
 - Continued blessing of the finances for His ministry here.
 - God’s provision of people whom He has chosen to help build His ministry His way here with us.
- Pray any other requests you may have.

May the LORD open to you His ways so that you may come to *know* Him in an even deeper and more personal way and that your love for Him would be evident in your life day by day.

Thanks for praying with us.

Pastor Orban

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THOUGHTS AND TIPS CONCERNING FASTING

Often, we approach fasting as a way of showing God how serious we are about the things we are asking from Him. We think that because we are giving up food, time, etc. that He will pay closer attention to us and our requests. Not True. Fasting is not a means of manipulating God to give us what we ask for. Really, it isn't even about asking for things in prayer. It is about sitting with God, in His divine presence, and allowing Him to lead and guide our time. It is a time for praise and worship, for scripture meditation and for prayer according to His desires and His will. Through the time of fasting, our prayer focus should be one of aligning ourselves with the will of God and deepening our relationship with Him. In this way, He can lead us into His thoughts, attitudes, and possible action plans in our daily and community (church) life.

Here are a couple of articles that may give added information along with some practical tips for fasting. I may not agree with everything on these sites but there is a wealth of practical information that can be helpful when you add fasting to your life regularly.

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.html>

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/7-steps-to-fasting.2.html>

* Adapted from the prayer from "Seeking God's Face" on page 623. Written and compiled by Philip F. Reinders and published by Faith Alive, Grand Rapids MI, 2013.

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