

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 1: Here as in Heaven

Today we begin 21 days of prayer and fasting, and we are calling on God to answer the “here as is Heaven” prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. This is not a timid, play-it-safe kind of prayer, so it is no surprise that the person who taught us to use those bold words was none other than the Son of God. Jesus said, “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.’” (Matthew 6:9-10).

There is no doubt the disciples were taken aback by such an audacious request. As New Testament Scholar Leon Morris writes, “In Heaven, God’s will is perfectly done now, for there is nothing in Heaven to hinder it, and the prayer looks for a similar state of affairs here on earth.” Sometimes it’s hard for us to see anything beyond hinderances—earthly roadblocks to Heaven’s agenda abound. So, there’s a choice: do we yield to the current state of affairs that surrounds us or do we refuse to accept the status quo of our sin-sick world and believe for the priorities and power of Heaven to flood our lives? Jesus’ instruction makes the answer quite clear—we believe for **“here as in Heaven.”**

As the Kingdom of Heaven advances, the powers of darkness begin to retreat. We can pray confidently for healing, sickness does not exist in Heaven and God is our Healer. Anxiety can be defeated because God is never worried, and He is our help in any time of trouble. We can be assured that as we call on God, He will make the impossible possible.

As we prepare our hearts for these next 21 days, we are praying for Heaven to come, and as God’s will is accomplished on the earth as it is in Heaven, we will see what we have never seen before!

Matthew 6:5–10 (NIV)

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. “This, then, is how you should pray: “ ‘Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Revelation 21:4 (NIV)

‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 2: How to Fast for Revelation

During these 21 days of prayer and fasting, God is going to speak to you. God speaks through His revealed Word, the Bible, but He also speaks through divine revelation. There is no doubt that God wants to bring powerful answers to the things you are praying for, but He also wants to reveal things to you through this fast.

Revelation is a critical component to our walk with the Lord. Proverbs 29:18 tells us, “When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild.” Apart from God’s revelation, our lives can become increasingly destructive and confusing.

Jesus told the disciples how they would receive such divine revelation:

John 14:26, “But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”

John 16:13-14, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.”

These passages teach us several things about revelation:

Revelation provides wisdom and supernatural insight. The life of faith is a life of learning and discovery. But with more revelation comes more responsibility. Proverbs 25:2 says, “It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.” God doesn’t conceal things **from** us; He conceals them **for** us! The same Hebrew word for glory is used both times in the verse – God’s glory becomes a glory we can personally experience as we search and discover, and if we seek, we will find!

Revelation guides us into truth. In today’s pluralistic society, truth has been diluted and redefined based on whatever people think is true. Imagine living your life based on a false truth. This will lead to destructive decisions, poor choices, and ultimately a life of confusion and chaos. But God wants your life to flourish, and revelation is key to receiving His guidance and direction in every season of life.

Revelation reveals the future. Throughout Scripture, God regularly revealed coming events to different people. Whether through dreams, visions, or divine visitations, God’s desire is to lead us into the future. He cares about the paths our lives take and offers to show us the way to go.

God wants to speak and reveal things to us through this time of prayer and fasting. Our job is to seek revelation, and God promises He will reveal it! So, as you’re fasting and praying, be expectant for God to speak – grab a journal and a pen. Write down what He says because it will prepare and direct you in the days ahead.

Proverbs 29:18 (NLT)

When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild.

John 14:26 (NLT)

But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

John 16:13-14 (NLT)

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring Me glory by telling you whatever He receives from Me.

Proverbs 25:2 (ESV)

It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.

Ephesians 1:16-17 (NIV)

I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 3: Hearing from God

Have you ever found yourself in a place where it's been so loud that you couldn't hear the person you were talking to? Perhaps a concert for one of your favorite bands or a busy airport with constant announcements over the intercom. Regardless of the setting, the more noise in our surroundings, the more difficult it is to hear someone speaking to us.

The same thing can happen when it comes to hearing from God. It may not be the physical environment that limits our hearing but rather the place we find ourselves spiritually. This can be a dangerous place because hearing God is a critical component of walking in His plans and purposes for our lives.

One person in the Bible who understood this was King Solomon. At the beginning of Solomon's rule, God extended an incredible offer. He said to King Solomon, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!" Wow! That's an amazing question coming from God, who can give anything. At this moment, Solomon could have asked for whatever he wanted. All the gold in the world, military dominance over the surrounding nations, or to become the greatest king who ever lived. Rather than being rash or self-centered, he asked for what he knew he desperately needed: the ability to hear from God. Verse 9 in The Message paraphrase says, "Here's what I want: Give me a God-listening heart so I can lead your people well." Solomon knew that if he could hear from God clearly, everything he needed in life would be taken care of.

Every believer has the opportunity to hear from God with regularity. That's why a season of prayer and fasting is so important because it lowers the volume of the world and the voice of God becomes more easily heard. The question is never "Is God speaking?" But always, "Am I practicing a listening ear and leaning into what He's saying?" Take time today to ask for a listening heart, and then quiet your heart and lean in to listen to what God has to say.

1 Kings 3:9 (MSG)

"Here's what I want: Give me a God-listening heart so I can lead Your people well, discerning the difference between good and evil. For who on their own is capable of leading Your glorious people?"

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 4: Designed for Answered Prayer

Research shows that the older we get, the fewer questions we ask. One study shows that a 4-year-old will ask as many as 200-300 questions a day, and between the ages of 2 and 5, children will ask a staggering 40,000 questions! A few of the top 10 questions include: “Where did I come from?” “What is God?” “What does ‘we can’t afford it’ mean?” “Why do I have to go to school?” and “Why can’t I stay up as late as you?”

Kids have the inherent belief that their parents know the answers to all of their questions. Interestingly enough, parents admitted to turning to google for nearly half of their answers!

As believers, we have the most reliable source for life’s toughest questions. Scripture is clear that God desires to answer our prayers – not just some prayers, but all of our prayers. He wants to provide wisdom, direction, and guidance for anything we need. We are invited to approach God with confidence and boldness, believing He will answer, and this truth is covered throughout the pages of Scripture.

Scripture teaches that we are designed to experience answered prayer. God is not afraid of our questions and never grows weary of us coming to Him. In fact, one of Jesus’ instructions is to “Keep on asking...keep on seeking...keep on knocking” What an incredible invitation!

Are there things you’ve stopped asking God for because you either got tired of asking or thought it wasn’t God’s will to answer? Perhaps it’s praying for that lost friend, for the breakthrough in healing, that dream job, a spouse, or to become pregnant. Whatever you’re praying for through this fast, remind yourself that just because it hasn’t happened yet, doesn’t mean it won’t happen soon!

You were designed to see powerful, life-changing answers to your prayers. That’s why James 5:16 tells us, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking, and you will see God answer in a wonderful and miraculous way!

John 14:13-14 (NIV)

And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it.

John 15:16 (NIV)

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in My name the Father will give you.

John 16:23-24 (NIV)

In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. Very truly I tell you, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My name. Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him.

Matthew 7:7-8 (NLT)

“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 5: How to Fast for Peace

One of the most frequent responses to the question of what our world needs today is peace. From wars to tragic shootings to an unstable economy, the opportunity to allow anxiety and fear to rule our lives is very real. In fact, studies show that more people are experiencing increased anxiety and worry, which is leading to a host of physical conditions and illnesses. The Bible shows that we were designed for something much better: peace.

Jesus said this in John 14:27, “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

What an encouraging promise we have from Jesus! People are pursuing peace in many different ways, but peace doesn’t come from a place – it comes from a person. The first step to experiencing God’s peace is to recognize that it’s a gift to be received.

Then, Paul gives us very clear instruction on how to receive the gift of peace in Philippians 4:6-9, “**Don’t** worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. **Then you will experience God’s peace**, which exceeds anything we can understand. **His peace will guard your hearts and minds** as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. **Then the God of peace will be with you.**”

That’s amazing! Paul says we can live not under the weight of worry but instead with the power of peace. Here’s the path to the peace only God provides:

Exchange worry with prayer. Every time you begin to worry about a situation, exchange that worry with prayer. Instead of focusing on what is seemingly out of control, remember and turn your attention to the One who is always in control!

Defeat anxiety with thanksgiving. The number one weapon for defeating anxiety is thanksgiving – it’s the strategic defense that disarms the enemy. We thank God for all He’s done – because remembering His faithfulness in the past is the key to fueling our faith for the future.

Foster a healthy mind. Paul provides eight areas to focus our thoughts on. The peace that passes understanding comes through strategic thinking. As you go through your day, take inventory of what you allow into your mind. Studies continue to confirm that the increase of social media and news intake is one of the leading causes of increased anxiety. A healthy mind is fostered by intentionally guarding our minds.

Peace is a promised gift from Jesus. Through this time of prayer and fasting, bring your needs to God, thank Him for all He's done, and immerse your mind in His Word, **"Then you will experience God's peace...His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."**

John 14:27 (NLT)

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

Philippians 4:6-9 (NLT)

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 6: Fasting and the Power of Praise

One of the wonderful results of extended time in prayer and fasting is an increased awareness of God's presence.

As we spend extended time in prayer and fasting, we become more and more aware of just how powerful this season of spiritual fervor is. The prayers we are praying while fighting our physical cravings are significant, and a supernatural breakthrough is on the way.

One of the powerful spiritual weapons we can utilize each day is the power of praise. Isaiah 42 illustrates this truth:

“Sing a new song to the Lord! Sing His praises from the ends of the earth! Sing, all you who sail the seas, all you who live in distant coastlands. Let the whole world glorify the Lord; let it sing His praise. The Lord will march forth like a mighty hero; He will come out like a warrior, full of fury. He will shout His battle cry and crush all His enemies.”

This passage demonstrates some of the powerful results of our praise. As we are praising, God is moving on behalf of His people. Through this fast, God is moving in the unseen realm to fight your battles and bring great victory to every part of your life. And as we see in this passage, praise preceded the victory.

The truth is the more time we spend in the Lord's presence, the more we realize there is much to praise Him for. And as we praise the Lord for who He is and all He has done, we see in Isaiah 42:13 that the Lord goes before His people as the mighty hero, like a warrior that crushes the enemy.

So, as you spend time today in prayer and fasting, utilize the powerful weapon of praise.

Praise the Lord for the answers to your prayers.

Praise the Lord for the amazing gifts and blessings He's already given you.

Praise the Lord for the victories that are yet to come in your life.

And as you praise, your troubles get smaller as you make God bigger. Victory is coming, and your praise becomes a weapon that battles the enemy. Know that with every word and song of praise from your lips, the Lord is going before you and defeating the enemy.

Isaiah 42:10, 12-13 (NLT)

Sing a new song to the Lord! Sing His praises from the ends of the earth! Sing, all you who sail the seas, all you who live in distant coastlands. Let the whole world glorify the Lord; let it sing His praise. The Lord will march forth like a mighty hero; He will come out like a warrior, full of fury. He will shout His battle cry and crush all His enemies.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 7: The Path Ahead

One of the life-giving recreational activities in the Ozarks are the various walking and bike riding trails. Anytime you're going to a new trail, there is a thrill in learning about the trail, where to cross rivers or streams, where the campsites are, and any points of interest that you won't want to miss. But more than knowing all the details is the ability to see the whole path from start to finish. When you're on the trail, your perspective is limited to what you can see right in front of you, but the map has a way of giving a bigger perspective.

As we continue our fasting, many of us are praying for situations in which, from our perspective, we cannot see the path ahead. From what we can see, things may seem impossible.

Yet fasting has a way of orienting our perspective from what we see to what God sees. God knows the whole path of our lives, from start to finish. In Isaiah 43:19, God invites us to look at things from His point of view: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

As we dedicate ourselves to the Lord through fasting, He begins to change our perspective so that we can see what He is doing and how He is working. It's an incredible gift that God tells us that the path He leads us on "springs up." When our hearts are in-tune with Him, we will not miss His plan. He makes it obvious; it springs up!

As we fast, our hearts are changing, and we are gaining a godly perspective. God already has a path picked out for us, and as we pray, He will show us the way forward.

Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 8: The Weapon of Waiting Pt. 1

According to a recent study, the average person will spend five years waiting in lines. Six months of that waiting is at traffic lights alone! So, that means, in your lifetime, you will spend nearly 2,628,000 minutes waiting. With the high value our culture places on speed and time management, the idea of waiting is often considered time wasted.

Biblically though, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, waiting could be considered a spiritual discipline vital to one's growth and maturity when utilized well. Psalm 62:1-8 recounts a waiting period King David experienced while fleeing his son, Absalom, who had stolen the allegiance of many in Israel.

During this incredibly challenging time, King David provides helpful direction when in a season of waiting:

Psalm 62:1-8, “I **wait quietly** before God, for my victory comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken. So many enemies against one man all of them trying to kill me. To them I'm just a broken-down wall or a tottering fence. They plan to topple me from my high position. They delight in telling lies about me. They praise me to my face but curse me in their hearts. Let all that I am **wait quietly** before God, for my hope is in Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.”

Two times King David says he waits quietly before the Lord. The Hebrew word could also be translated as rest. It's the idea that although his situation is chaotic, his spirit is at rest. But how is that possible? The next verse tells us how: “He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.”

King David immediately turns his focus to God's nature. His hope is not in a dwindled army or the fact that he's the true king, but rather is anchored in the truth that God is his rock and salvation, and nothing will shake him to ultimate despair.

In times of waiting, the focus of our thoughts and words will create either a fortress of fear or a fortress of faith. When you choose to make the characteristics of God the center of your focus, you will find your faith strengthened during your season of waiting. This turns waiting into a weapon that will thwart the plans of the enemy.

Whether you're waiting for healing, that financial breakthrough, or the salvation of a loved one, utilize the weapon of waiting, which will transform your prayers into powerful arrows against the enemy.

Psalm 62:1-8 (NLT)

I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken. So many enemies against one man all of them trying to kill me. To them I'm just a broken-down wall or a tottering fence. They plan to topple me from my high position. They delight in telling lies about me. They praise me to my face but curse me in their hearts. Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 9: The Weapon of Waiting Pt. 2

It's hard to believe that as you are sitting reading this devotional today, you are on a planet that is spinning at 1,037 miles per hour and moving through space at 1,525 feet per second. Due to the force of the gravitational pull, we don't feel the movement at all. This physical reality demonstrates a powerful spiritual truth: even when it seems like nothing is happening, things are always moving!

Yesterday we considered the power of our thoughts and words as a weapon to utilize when in a season of waiting. As King David and some of his loyal men are hiding in the mountains, he writes:

Psalm 62:5-8, “Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. **O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.**”

Nowhere in this passage does King David deny his present circumstances, but instead of making his challenges the focus, he turns his trouble into trust and declares with confidence that “victory and honor come from God alone.”

In this psalm, King David writes “trust in Him at all times.” Trust God when we can see Him working and trust Him when it seems like everything is at a standstill. Trust Him on the mountaintop and trust Him when walking through a valley.

But he doesn't end there. King David understands that part of fostering trust is through communication and encourages us to “Pour out your heart to him...” The Hebrew word for heart means the “inner part, soul.” King David is encouraging us to pour out our inner soul to the Lord. This is an incredible invitation to come to our Lord and share what's on our heart.

You can tell God how you feel, tell Him what you need, but also acknowledge the truth that He is your rock and your fortress, the One who will bring your victory. The One who will heal your body. The One who will provide for your every need.

As you turn your trouble into trust, you may not see things moving with your physical eyes immediately, but you will have a certainty within your spirit that God is working even through your waiting!

Psalm 62:5-8

“Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.”

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 10: The Power of Encouragement

Over the years, psychologists have studied the power of our words and found that they have a profound effect on the human brain. One study of how encouragement helps athletes' performance concluded that successful athletic performance is not just based on natural skill and level of training, but on frame of mind. When athletes are motivated with encouraging words, their performance increases for the better.

The truth is, words have great power. Words can either breathe life or death into the soul, build up someone's spirit or tear it down. They either encourage or discourage – there is no middle ground.

That is why both the words we digest and the words we speak each day are so critical. Reading the Word of God is a way to build yourself up. We are encouraged when we read Scriptures like Isaiah 41:10, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with My victorious right hand."

The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of encouragement in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." One of the amazing results of intentionally encouraging others is how encouraged you become through it!

The reality is that encouragement is not natural; therefore, it must be cultivated. So, what are some ways we can become carriers of courage and build up the hope of those around us?

Smile – Did you know that smiling is contagious? In fact, studies show that smiling increases mood-enhancing hormones while decreasing stress-enhancing hormones. It also reduces blood pressure and releases happy endorphins in your brain. When you smile, it not only changes you, it has a direct impact on those around you and leaves them more encouraged.

Speak Encouragement – People everywhere need encouragement – in your workplace, in your neighborhood, at your sporting events, and even in the church. An encouraging word can literally change the course of a person's day and even their life!

Many are aware of the close friendship of renowned authors C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Tolkien was highly influenced by Lewis's encouragement for him to write "The Lord of the Rings." The encouraging words of C.S. Lewis spurred Tolkien on toward what has become a literary masterpiece read by millions.

Write it out – Spoken words are powerful, but there is something special about written words – they last forever. A simple card or text message reminds someone that they are valuable and seen can go a long way.

Compliment – Enter your day with the mindset of what you can give rather than what you can get. How can I compliment someone I interact with today? How can I make them feel valued?

To encourage someone is to impart courage to them. Every day we have the opportunity to leave a conversation, a meeting, or an interaction better than we found it, and that happens through our words. Choose to use your words to bring life everywhere you go!

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Proverbs 12:25 (NLT)

Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 11: What Happens When the Church Prays

Thousands of people fasting and praying together is setting the stage for God's miraculous power unlike what we have ever seen before. There is something powerful in the number of people fighting spiritual battles together. In Acts 12, we see an amazing miracle as a result of the church praying together.

In your journey of prayer and fasting, you are realizing more and more just how powerful prayer is. And what's exciting to think about is how you aren't the only one fasting and praying during this time – countless others are doing the same thing.

We see in verse 5 says, "But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him." And in response to their earnest requests, God not only protected Peter from the coming sentencing, but He exceeded their expectations through a miraculous escape. We see in verses 7-10 that a supernatural prison break took place where an angel led Peter past multiple prison guards, the city gate opened all on its own, and no one could see him as he left.

Verses 12-17 show how even the believers were shocked and unsure it was really Peter when he showed up to the house where they were praying.

All of this is because the church earnestly sought the Lord.

Not only should this encourage you to continue to fight off the physical cravings for greater spiritual breakthrough, but it should also build your expectations and faith because when the church prays, the power is exponential.

So be encouraged that because we are all earnestly seeking the Lord together our prayers are not only being answered, but they are exponentially powerful. God is bringing breakthrough in ways we can't even imagine.

Acts 12:1-17 (NLT)

About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church. He had the apostle James (John's brother) killed with a sword. When Herod saw how much this pleased the Jewish people, he also arrested Peter. (This took place during the Passover celebration.) Then he imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover. But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.

The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered.

So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him.

Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent His angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!"

When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, "Peter is standing at the door!"

"You're out of your mind!" they said. When she insisted, they decided, "It must be his angel."

Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers what happened," he said. And then he went to another place.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 12: Jesus is Building His Church

In Matthew 16:13-19, we find an interesting and powerful story. As Jesus and His disciples approached the region of Caesarea Philippi, with Mt. Hermon looming in the distance, Jesus turned and asked them, “Who do people say that I am?” They gave various answers they had heard in their travels with Jesus; some said He was John the Baptist come back to life, and others said, Elijah or Jeremiah. But then Jesus quickly turned the conversation personal, “Who do you say I am?”

Seemingly without hesitation, Peter blurted out, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Out of that one statement, Jesus made a profound declaration that has since shaped the course of history, “...On this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

The “rock” on which Jesus declared He would build His Church was Peter’s realization of exactly who Jesus is. Once they knew and understood who He was, Jesus could begin using them to build his kingdom. Since then, Jesus has been building His Church, and nothing has been able to stop it.

Interestingly, the unstoppable force required to build the Church was not a unique church growth strategy or highly trained and influential people. The unstoppable power of the Church lies in ordinary people realizing who Jesus is and joining Him in His mission.

This is such a profound realization because when we understand who Jesus is and what he has done for us, the only logical conclusion is to serve him wholeheartedly. And the true power of that understanding is not our dedication to a cause but the empowerment Jesus promised would accompany anyone who chose to confess Him as Lord. He said he would give us the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, that we might bind the powers of darkness and set people free from the chains that bound them!

We have been given the keys to the kingdom; our prayers are powerful and effective. As we fast and pray, we are locking up the enemy and setting people free. Jesus is building his Church, and he is using us to do it! Nothing in all of Heaven or earth will be able to stop it!

Matthew 16:13-19 (NLT)

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." Then He asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because My Father in Heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build My church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in Heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in Heaven."

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 13: The Power of Testimony

Whatever you are seeking the Lord about during this time, be careful about only coming to Him with a narrow perspective of just wanting your needs met. Instead, come to the Lord with the kind of faith and passion to see your prayers answered in a way that ultimately brings glory to God and has Kingdom impact.

A great way to help shift your perspective on this is by taking the time to pause and reflect on the goodness and richness of God.

In the book of Psalms, you find at various times the word “Selah.” This term means to slow down, pause, and recognize the moment. We see in Psalm 67:1 that the writer inserts this word right after stating a very powerful and significant request – a prayer for the Lord’s grace, blessing, and favor.

Psalm 67:1, “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, Selah”

And after this Selah – this time of reflection – we find a shift in perspective and the motive behind such requests in the following verse. Psalm 67:2 says, “that Your way may be known on earth, Your saving power among all nations.” The psalmist desired the favor and blessing of God so that many others would know of God’s power for themselves.

The psalmist realized that our God is powerful and personal, and what He does is never supposed to be kept private. Believing in God’s favor in your life is significant, and the Lord’s goodness and blessing are not only on display for others to see but also must be declared for others to hear.

Your testimony is powerful, so let your story be known. Talk to others about the goodness of God in your life. When you do, it not only brings glory to God for all He has done but also builds faith in those who hear it. Your testimony could be what God uses to spur someone else to believe for breakthrough and ultimately experience the miracles God intends for them to have.

Psalm 67:1-2 (ESV)

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, Selah that Your way may be known on earth, Your saving power among all nations.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 14: Welcome to the Family!

There is nothing quite like going to a large family gathering or family reunion. You get together and reconnect with cousins, aunts, uncles, and other family members that you may not have seen for years. There is also the occasional moment of not knowing who certain individuals are, but you still know that they are family. No matter who is there, you know that because of relationship or bloodline each person is family – gathered from different locations, with different physical traits, different names – yet all part of the same family.

The same can be said for your spiritual life. Because of relationship through Jesus, each and every believer is grafted into the amazing family of God. Romans 8:14 puts it like this, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

What an amazing reminder! When we surrender our lives to Christ, it’s as if God says, “Welcome to the Family!” and His Spirit comes to live in us and unite us with the body of Christ.

This family we are part of, just like your physical family, is filled with different personalities, perspectives, and giftings, but what we all have in common is the fact that we are all led by the same Spirit. The Spirit who is at work in us and through us to do more through us united than we could ever accomplish on our own.

As you continue in this fast, pray that your hunger to be led by the Holy Spirit outpaces your physical appetite. Be reminded today that many others in your spiritual family – your brothers and sisters in Christ – are right there with you, desiring and pursuing the same. As we are seeking God together, He is going to work powerfully in our lives and in His church to change the world around us!

Take some time today in your prayer and fasting to remember those that are a part of your spiritual family. Let them know that you are praying for them and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in what to pray for them.

Romans 8:14 (ESV)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Ephesians 2:19-22 (ESV)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

John 1:12 (ESV)

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God,

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 15: The Light of the World

Has this ever happened to you? It's 2 AM, and suddenly, you are wide awake. You try falling back asleep, but it's not working out. You decide to head to the kitchen to grab a drink of water, hoping that will help. You don't want to wake anybody up, so you decide to go covert and not turn any of the lights on. It becomes quite the journey of feeling for walls, quietly tiptoeing, and making sure you don't step on any Legos. You make it to the kitchen, get your drink, and head back to bed. You completed your midnight mission, and the water was just what you needed to get back to sleep.

It's funny that turning on the lights in this scenario would make everything easier. You choose not to turn on the lights because you don't want it to disturb anyone. Light can't help but impact its environment. When a light is turned on in the dark, it gets peoples' attention. That being the reality, it is very fitting that Jesus is the "light of the world." Jesus came into a broken world and revolutionized it with his teachings and miracles.

What's interesting about Jesus saying that He is the light of the world is that it can seem to come in opposition with what He says in Matthew that "we are the light of the world." So, which is it? Is Jesus the light of the world, or are we the light of the world? The answer is yes. We are the light of the world because Jesus, who is the light of the world, lives in us.

This means that we are able to live in a way that radically impacts our environment, just like Jesus did. So how do we do that? We do it by letting His power operate through us. We take time to stop and pray for someone to be healed. We share an encouraging word with that person God places on our hearts. We step out in boldness to share the Gospel with a stranger. As we walk in obedience, we will see God do the extraordinary in us and through us.

During this season of prayer and fasting, God is going to give you opportunities to shine His light. Be bold, step out in faith, and watch God do the supernatural through you!

John 8:12 (NLT)

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow Me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your Heavenly Father.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day: 16: Fasting Brings Favor

One of the most encouraging aspects of fasting is that it invites God's favor in our life. We desperately need God's favor because there are times when life's circumstances are out of our control. And when we are hit with an unforeseen difficulty, the results can be tragic. Although we may not be able to control our situation, we can dictate our response to them.

A great example in the Bible of why we need favor is Nehemiah. Nehemiah was confronted with catastrophic news and was desperate for God to intervene. "Things are not going well for those who returned. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire." (1:3)

This news was shocking, but Nehemiah's righteous response would garner favor from God, which would bend the will of an enemy king and change the course of Israel's history. What did he do? Nehemiah fasted and prayed, believing that God's favor can turn around even the most hopeless situations! "When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of Heaven." (v.4)

His prayer was simple, "Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me." (v.11), but his faith was profound, and God went above and beyond all Nehemiah asked.

God gave Nehemiah supernatural favor with the king. God took a king that was in opposition to Israel and turned his heart to be gracious to them. Through prayer and fasting, a seemingly impossible situation was turned around by God's favor.

Be encouraged today that no matter what situation you may be facing, God can turn it around by imparting His favor on your life. As we are fasting and praying, we can be confident that God is on the move in our lives and is more than able to do the impossible in our situation!

Nehemiah 1:3-11 (NLT)

They said to me, “Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of Heaven.

Then I said, “O Lord, God of Heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps His covenant of unfailing love with those who love Him and obey His commands, listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for Your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against You. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! We have sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and regulations that You gave us through Your servant Moses.

“Please remember what You told Your servant Moses: ‘If you are unfaithful to Me, I will scatter you among the nations. But if you return to Me and obey My commands and live by them, then even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the place I have chosen for My name to be honored.’

“The people You rescued by Your great power and strong hand are Your servants. O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honoring You. Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me.”

In those days I was the king’s cup-bearer.

Nehemiah 2:8 (NLT)

And please give me a letter addressed to Asaph, the manager of the king’s forest, instructing him to give me timber. I will need it to make beams for the gates of the Temple fortress, for the city walls, and for a house for myself.” And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 17: The Harvest is Now

If you've been fasting food at any level, you've more than likely been hungry at this point in the fast. When we come to John 4, we see the disciples in a similar situation that we have found ourselves in. They were hungry! It was time for lunch, so they went into a nearby village to find something to eat. After successfully securing their meal, they return to find Jesus and offer Him some food. Unexpectedly, Jesus denies their offer and tells them that He has food they know nothing about.

At this moment, the disciples are confused and are asking themselves if someone else brought Jesus food while they were gone. Jesus continues to say that His food is to do the will of the One who sent Him. And as if the disciples aren't confused enough, Jesus goes on to tell them a proverb about harvesting. It's safe to say that the disciples were completely clueless about what was happening at this point.

The problem that the disciples had, which caused them to miss what Jesus was talking about completely, was that they were looking at the whole situation from their natural point of view. All that the disciples could see was their immediate need that they were hungry and needed food to eat. Jesus, on the other hand, was looking at the situation from a supernatural perspective. Jesus was not concerned with eating lunch. Jesus was concerned that the village they got lunch from was filled with lost people who needed to be saved.

So often in our lives, we can miss what Jesus is doing because we are looking at our situation with physical vision rather than spiritual vision. Like the disciples, we can find ourselves going through a place filled with people who don't know Jesus, and our primary concern is not sharing the Gospel; it is getting something for lunch.

That's why a season of prayer and fasting is so refreshing. We become less concerned with what we need and more concerned with what God wants to do in us and through us. When we take our eyes off ourselves and set them on doing God's will, we start to see what Jesus meant that the "fields are white for harvest." We begin to see opportunities to pray for people and see them healed. We start to notice people who are down and give them an encouraging word. We see lost people all around us and choose to step out in boldness to share the Gospel.

The opportunities are endless because the harvest is now. Resolve to step out in faith and obedience today and watch what God will do!

John 4:27-38 (NLT)

Just then His disciples came back. They were shocked to find Him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do You want with her?" or "Why are You talking to her?" The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a Man who told me everything I ever did! Could He possibly be the Messiah?" So the people came streaming from the village to see Him. Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something." But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about." "Did someone bring Him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other. Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent Me, and from finishing His work. You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 18: Freely Give!

Imagine this. You are going about your day like usual until you hear tragic news. A family that you know well has come across a devastating financial loss and needs \$100,000 to make up for their debts. You are heartbroken for them and want to do something to help. A friend of yours who also knows the family hears about the news and decides they will help them by covering the \$100,000. They want to keep the gift anonymous, so rather than paying the family directly, they ask if you would be willing to deliver the funds personally. You are thrilled with the news and have decided to give the funds as quickly as possible. You meet with the family and hand over the money they need to cover their debt. They are thrilled and so grateful to receive such a generous gift. Even though it wasn't your money, you were still able to be a part of making a massive difference in their lives.

This perfectly illustrates what it looks like for a believer to operate in the power of the Spirit. When it comes to healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out demons, we are not the ones who are doing it. Instead, we are just delivering the resource that has been given to us by God. That's why when Jesus is teaching the disciples how to minister to others, He says, "Freely you have received; freely give."

As believers, we don't have to worry about whether or not we have the power to impact the lives of those around us. Jesus has the power, and He has freely given it to us! Our responsibility is to go out and share with others the power that God has made freely available through the Holy Spirit.

As you go throughout your day, look for opportunities to minister to those around you. You have freely received, so go out and give!

Matthew 10:5-8 (NIV)

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of Heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 19: Keep the Fire Burning

As we approach the end of this fast, you are probably sensing that over the last few weeks God has begun uniquely moving in your heart. Fasting has a way of quieting our hearts so that God will not only start to work in the situations we have been praying for, but He often works deeply in our hearts as we draw close to Him.

Leviticus 6:9 gives us a clear picture of God's presence in our lives. God had descended on the Tent of Meeting and kindled a fire. God's instructions to His people were to keep the fire burning. God told Moses: "Give Aaron and his sons this command: 'These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and **the fire must be kept burning** on the altar.'"

God would say that every day a burnt offering would be offered in the morning at 9:00 a.m. and in the evening at 3:00 p.m. It was a reminder that devotion to God was to be continual and ongoing.

The idea behind the burnt offering is that of total devotion to God. It was a symbol of the commitment of the worshiper. Nothing would be left of the sacrifice; it would have been totally consumed on the altar in the presence of the Lord.

God has started a fire inside of us through this fast, and it is our responsibility to keep what God has sparked in each of us burning. That will require total devotion to Him because it is spiritually deadly to stop what God has started in you.

This fast has given us the opportunity to give up certain things to seek God on a deeper level. While our seeking God may look different after this fast is over, the commitment and intentionality of spending time with Him should remain the same.

God has started a powerful work in your life; keep the fire burning.

Leviticus 6:9 (NIV)

"Give Aaron and his sons this command: 'These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar.

Leviticus 6:13 (NIV)

The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 20: Boldness to Witness

Have you ever found yourself in this place? You have a friend that you want to tell about Jesus. You know that they don't have a relationship with God but have never had the courage to bring it up. Every time that you start to work up the confidence, your thoughts are flooded with "What if they think I'm weird?", "What if I don't know what to say?" or "What if they stop being my friend?" Ultimately, you decide that it's better not to say anything. You're frustrated with yourself because you know what you need to do, but you don't have the boldness to do it.

If you resonate with that scenario, then know that you're not alone. When we come to Acts 4, we find the early church in a situation where they need boldness. Except for them, the stakes are higher. If they share Christ, they wouldn't just be losing a friend...they could lose their lives. The Jewish ruling council had just given the order that Peter, John, and the church could no longer speak in the name of Jesus. If they broke this charge, it could result in a beating, imprisonment, or even death.

For most people, if they hear a threat like that, they would start praying for God to remove the opposition. What the church did was completely different. They did not pray for God to remove their problem; instead, they prayed for boldness. The incredible reality about this account is that God immediately answered their prayer. What was God's answer to their prayer for boldness? The baptism of the Holy Spirit. Every person in that meeting was filled with the Holy Spirit, which enabled them to speak the word of God boldly.

So what will give you the boldness to share Christ with that friend, neighbor, or that worker at the grocery store? The baptism of the Holy Spirit. God's desire is that we would be able to share Christ with anyone, at any time, and in any place. If you're not able to do that, then you need the Holy Spirit!

As we're in this season of prayer and fasting, it's the perfect opportunity to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you've never been filled, then start to make it a focus in your prayer time. If you have been filled but don't have the boldness to witness, then God wants to refill you full to overflowing. As we are filled with the Holy Spirit, God will give us the boldness to go out and share the Gospel. As we do, we will see revival break out in our cities, our nation, and the world!

Acts 4:29-31 (NIV)

Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable Your servants to speak Your word with great boldness. Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer Devotional – Day 21: Heaven Come

Over these past 21 days of prayer and fasting, we have set aside our comfort to seek something more valuable. It is impossible to spend time calling on God, asking Him to bring Heaven down, and there be no change because God is faithful, and His Word promises that He responds to the prayers of His people.

Throughout these past few weeks, God has shown up and moved in an extraordinary way. People have been saved, set free, and miraculously healed. There's so much to celebrate, but the exciting reality is that this is only the beginning. There is still more that God wants to do!

In Ezekiel 47, we see an interesting story. The prophet Ezekiel has a vision where he sees a river flowing from God's temple. As the water flows from the temple, it grows deeper and deeper. It starts ankle-deep, then becomes knee-deep, then continues to deepen until it is uncrossable. On either side of the river, there are many trees, and in the water, there are swarms of fish. The most extraordinary part is that at the place where the river reaches the Dead Sea, the salt water becomes fresh water. The place that was once dead and unlivable was changed so that it was fresh and full of life.

This story serves as a beautiful illustration of what we can expect in the days ahead. This season of prayer and fasting has been incredible and full of life, but the water is only ankle-deep. We have seen only the beginning of God's work, not the end. There are more miracles that God wants to do. There are more people that God wants to save. As we have fasted and prayed, we can have confidence that Heaven is coming and our best days are still ahead!

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (NIV)

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.

As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?"

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."