

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

May 22, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

*This Kind*

Topics – Luke 9:37 - 42; prayer and fasting; devil possessed boy

Text – Luke 9:37 – 42 (parallel passages are found in Matthew 17:14 - 18; Mark 9:14 - 27)

### Introduction

The previous passage in Luke discussed the Mount of Transfiguration where Jesus was transfigured, meaning He unveiled His deity, in the presence of Peter, James, and John; and, also in the company of two Old Testament heroes of the faith: Moses and Elijah.

While the group was coming down from the mountain, they discussed Elijah. This is not recorded in Luke's gospel so we will need to read it from Matthew 17:9 – 13 (or Mark 9:9 – 13):

*"And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." (Matthew 17:9-13)*

Note regarding the above verses:

In the Book of Malachi, there are two prophetic references to Elijah that are key to understanding what Jesus just explained to His three disciples as they descended from the Mount:

*"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:1)*

*"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:5-6)*

Malachi 3:1 and 4:5 and 6 are references symbolically to John the Baptist who came "spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:17)

But, they also refer literally to Elijah who will probably be one of the witnesses during the Tribulation Period (Revelation 11:3 – 13).

Read the text from Luke 9:37 – 42

This account of Scripture is a perfect example of why we need to compare Scripture with Scripture.

Mark's gospel sheds a little more light on the passage:

*"And when he came to [his] disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to [him] saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things [are] possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, [Thou] dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And [the spirit] cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose."* (Mark 9:14-27)

1. Mark's gospel alerts us to the presence of the Scribes. These religious leaders never helped to solve problems, but they were always lurking about seeking to point out problems. In the context of this story, there was a man who had a son in a very bad way, and the disciples, though they tried could not help him. I am sure the Scribes were capitalizing on this apparent failure of Jesus' disciples.
2. Mark also tells us that this devil-possessed person had been plagued with this problem for a long time ("of a child").
3. Mark also informs us that this devil would cause to boy to throw himself into fire and into water – notice – "to destroy him."
4. Mark also informs us that the man struggled in his faith – "help thou mine unbelief." If we would be perfectly honest with ourselves, we would all have to admit that this spiritual condition is where we all find ourselves, especially when our faith is tested with a severe trial.
5. Mark also informs of the father's tears. No father (or mother for that matter) wants to see his child suffering, and this was his only child. He was desperate for help. His son did not need a religious argument between the disciples and the Scribes, he needed help.

What happens next is also not recorded by Luke, but is given to us by Matthew and Mark:

*"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of*

*mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."* (Matthew 17:19-21)

The modern versions of the Bible often either remove the verses about fasting (from Matthew), or remove the word, "fasting," (from Mark) and limit it to just prayer. (Note – the NIV, ESV, NLT, CSB all remove it). I believe it was a mistake to take it out, and I believe the King James is 100% correct. There are times, especially during these big problems, when we need to fast.

Satan doesn't like it when we preach on fasting, because it is the one tool in our spiritual toolbox that grants a victory over him.

Fasting is an integral part of the Christian life, and a very important weapon in our spiritual arsenal against the wicked one.

### Quotes

"Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; **fasting** is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. **Fasting** helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." (Andrew Murray)

"The purpose of **fasting** is to loosen to some degree the ties which bind us to the world of material things and our surroundings as a whole, in order that we may concentrate all our spiritual powers upon the unseen and eternal things." (Ole Holesby)

"In Shansi I found Chinese Christians who were accustomed to spend time in **fasting** and prayer. They recognized that this fasting, which so many dislike, which requires faith in God, since it makes one feel weak and poorly, is really a Divinely appointed means of grace. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to our work is our own imagined strength; and in fasting we learn what poor, weak creatures we are-dependent on a meal of meat for the little strength which we are so apt to lean upon." (Hudson Taylor)

### Examples of Fasting in the Bible

**Moses** – Deuteronomy 9:9, 18; Exodus 24:18; 34:28

*"When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water:"* (Deuteronomy 9:9)

**David** – Psalm 35:13; 69:10

*"But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom."* (Psalms 35:13)

**Elijah** – 1 Kings 1:1 – 8

*"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And*

*when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." (1 Kings 19:1-8)*

**Daniel** – Daniel 10:2 – 3

*"In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled." (Daniel 10:2-3)*

**Esther** – Esther 4:13 – 17

*"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16 KJV)*

**Ezra** – Ezra 8:21 – 23

*"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us." (Ezra 8:21-23)*

**John's Disciples** – Matthew 9:14

*"Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" (Matthew 9:14)*

**Anna** – Luke 2:37

*"And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." (Luke 2:37)*

**Cornelius** – Acts 10:30

*"And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing," (Acts 10:30)*

**Paul** – Acts 9:8 – 9; 2 Corinthians 11:27; also 2 Corinthians 6:5)

*"And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." (Acts 9:8-9)*

*"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Corinthians 11:27)*

**The Church at Antioch** – Acts 13: 1 - 3

*"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:1-3)*

**Jesus** – Matthew 4:1 - 2

*"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred." (Matthew 4:1-2)*

Illustrate – Our forefathers in America recognized the importance of seeking God through fasting:

George Washington proclaimed February 19 to be a national day of fasting.

Abraham Lincoln also proclaimed a day of fasting on April 30, 1863.

### **Illustration**

In Scripture we see several purposes for fasting. It's part of the discipline of self-control; it's a way of sharing that we depend on God alone and draw all our strength and resources from him; it's a way of focusing totally on him when seeking his guidance and help, and of showing that you really are in earnest in your quest; it's also, at times, an expression of sorrow and deep repentance, something that a person or community will do in order to acknowledge failure before God and seek his mercy.

We tend to think of fasting as going without food. But we can fast from anything. If we love music and decide to miss a concert in order to spend time with God, that is fasting. It is helpful to think of the parallel of human friendship. When friends need to be together, they will cancel all other activities in order to make that possible. There's nothing magical about fasting. It's just one way of telling God that your priority at that moment is to be alone with him, sorting out whatever is necessary, and you have cancelled the meal, party, concert, or whatever else you had planned to do in order to fulfill that priority.

James Packer, [Your Father Loves You](#), Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986, p. 14.

### **Biblical Reasons for Fasting**

**Mourning** – 2 Samuel 1:1 – 12 – David proclaimed a fast as the people mourned for the death of King Saul.

## **Your Children (Serious Health Issue) – 2 Samuel 12:16**

*"David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth." (2 Samuel 12:16)*

Note – God did not grant David's request – the child died. Fasting is not a magic formula, and fasting does not force God's hand.

## **Big Problems – Esther 4:13 – 17**

We already quoted verse 16, but in this situation the entire race of Jewish people, including Queen Esther, and her uncle Mordecai were facing extinction because of the lies of a wicked counselor named Haman who convinced the king that the Jews were causing trouble in the kingdom.

## **Contrition and Repentance – Jonah 3:5 – 10**

*"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." (Jonah 3:5-10)*

Note – Ninevah repented of their wickedness and were spared by God, and they eventually were used of God to judge the people of Israel.

## **Ordaining Pastors, Missionaries, Deacons (wisdom for big decisions) – Acts 13:3**

*"And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:3)*

Note – Jesus went without sleep the night before He ordained the apostles.

## **The Holy Spirit's Leading – Matthew 4:1 – 2; Luke 1 – 4; Mark 1:12 - 13**

The Bible says that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Mark's gospel says that Jesus was driven into the wilderness where He fasted.

## **Corporate Confession of Sin (National Repentance) – Nehemiah 9:1 – 3; 1 Samuel 7:5 – 6; Joel 2:1, 12 - 13**

*"Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth*

*part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God."*  
(Nehemiah 9:1-3)

*"And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh."* (1 Samuel 7:5-6)

*"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; ... Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."* (Joel 2:1, 12-13)

**Victory Against the Strongholds** – Mark 9:14 – 29 (text verses)

*"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"* (2 Corinthians 10:4)

In our text, Satan had a strong grip on this man's son, and Jesus said, "this kind can forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

Addictions can be a stronghold

A besetting sin (anger, lust, gossip)

A lost or wayward child – these are all strongholds

A spiritual battle against blindness in a community

They are all things that we simply cannot do on our own. We have tried, but we have always failed. If God is going to grant the victory in these tough kinds of spiritual battles, we will have to face them with prayer and fasting.

Caution – Before you fast from food for any length of time, be sure that it is God that is leading you into it; and make sure that you are physically able to endure a lengthy fast. If you have certain physical conditions such as diabetes or low blood sugar, etc. you may want to only fast from certain foods, rather than not eat at all.

### **What Does Fasting Do?**

#### **1 It Reveals and Breaks the Power of the Flesh**

*"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"* (Isaiah 58:6)

*"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* (1 Corinthians 9:27)

*"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Galatians 5:16-17)\*

## **2 Fasting should deny the flesh of its pleasure:**

*"Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high." (Isaiah 58:3-4)*

Don't seek pleasure during a fast.

In private, it should not be business as usual.

In public, it should be business as usual. Your fasting should not glorify your flesh at all. Don't brag on the fact that you are fasting.

*"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:16-18)*

## **3 It Reveals How Serious You Are About Your Request**

When you are fasting, your soul is afflicted. You are in physical discomfort, and sometimes even in pain. When you are fasting, spend more time in prayer. Pray for God's help to endure the fast, and pray for the request that brought you to fast in the first place.

### **Types of Fasts**

#### **Food**

##### **Daniel**

*"I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled." (Daniel 10:3)*

Notice also that Daniel didn't anoint himself (bathe) for three weeks.

#### **Food (and Water)**

##### **Jonah**

*"And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:" (Jonah 3:7)*

##### **Esther**



"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16)

### **Moses, Elijah, and Jesus - famous examples dealt with this morning.**

#### **Intimacy**

*"And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives." (Exodus 19:14-15)*

*"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (1 Corinthians 7:5)*

#### **Sleep**

*"O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;" (Psalms 88:1-2)*

*"Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him." (Daniel 6:18)*

*"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12)*

*"Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God." (Joel 1:13)*

*"It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night." (1 Samuel 15:11)*

*"Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned." (Nehemiah 1:6)*

Also – Luke 2:36 – 37; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:5; 2 Timothy 1:3; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; Psalm 42:8; Psalm 88:1; Job 35:10; Psalm 16:; Isaiah 26:9

#### **Today**

Media fasts – television, music, facebook, twitter, computer browsing, needless text messaging, unnecessary cell phone usage. (These types of fasts reveal the power that the world has on you.)

Have a reason; Have a plan (Be realistic); Have a time limit (season)

# JESUS' MINISTRY IN PALESTINE

# Numbered events of Jesus' ministry

• City

▲ Mountain

0 10 20 Miles  
0 10 20 Kilometers

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

