

Fasting

Part 16

¹⁴When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. ¹⁶“What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. ¹⁷A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.” ¹⁹“O unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” ²⁰So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. ²¹Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. ²²“It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” ²³“If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for him who believes.” ²⁴Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” ²⁵When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” ²⁶The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. ²⁸After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” ²⁹He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer (Some manuscripts prayer and fasting.)” (Mark 9:14-29)

The above passage speaks about a demon possessed boy whom his father brought to the disciples of Jesus for deliverance but they were not able to do so. So the father came to the Lord Jesus and begged him to drive the demon out from his son. Jesus did so, He rebuked the evil spirit; He said, “You deaf and mute spirit,” “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. After the deliverance of the boy and after Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” Jesus answered them, “This kind can come out only by prayer (Some manuscripts it is mentioned this kind can come out only by prayer and fasting.)

Prayer and fasting is very important and essential for deliverance. Before we engage in deliverance of those who are demon possessed we need to prepare ourselves by prayer and fasting. We should not take it lightly when it comes to deal with demons and doing deliverance to those who are possessed. We should work as a team, group of disciples who are fully committed to the Lord, and His word and ways to achieve deliverance. Before we get involved in any deliverance we need to prepare ourselves ahead of time with good preparation, including, good period of prayer and good period of fasting to draw near to God and ask help from the Lord to aid us to drive out demons.

As we do mission work and evangelize and reaching out the lost and new areas and people with the gospel we need to do all that through prayer and fasting, and we must be aware that Satan and the power of darkness will be opposing that to hinder us from doing God’s will and God’s work.

Let us read **Acts 13:1-5** that speak about the importance of prayer and fasting in the mission work: **“¹ In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon**

called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” The Holy Spirit led the prophets and the teachers in Antioch church to go into worship, prayer and fasting. And as the church responded to the leading of the Holy Spirit, they worshipped and fasted to the Lord, the Holy Spirit moved to the next development stage in the life of the church when He said, **“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”** The Holy Spirit initiated the mission work in the church of Antioch enabling the church to reach new areas with the gospel of Jesus. They fasted to ask the Lord to have more of Him in their lives. Truly the Holy Spirit chose Saul (Paul) and Barnabas to reach large and new areas with the gospel of Jesus, and planned well their first missionary journey.

Paul and Barnabas, **“The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.” (Acts 13:4)** The Holy Spirit took them and led them to the places that they need to reach, **“When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper. ⁶They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. ⁹Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, ¹⁰“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? ¹¹Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.” (Acts 13:5-12)** The first obstacle that they faced was the work of the devil that manifested through the opposition of **Elymas the sorcerer** who opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit pronounced God’s judgment on him. The prayer and fasting that the church engaged with enabled them to counteract the power of darkness and penetrate and reach new people with the gospel.

The same for us today, we need to draw near to God and commit our lives and cause unto Him to use us as instrument of righteousness to bring the gospel of Jesus to areas that not yet hear of Jesus and to people who need to be delivered. Prayer and fasting will do to us the following:

- 1- New mission field and new missionary journey to be started.
- 2- New workers to be called and set apart for the new work of God.
- 3- New areas and territories controlled by Satan and his children who are sorcerer, false prophets and false teachers, will be defeated and judged by the Lord.
- 4- New souls to believe in the gospel and to come into the kingdom of God.

My Dear and Beloved: The Lord is calling us as a church to be Holy and submit ourselves, through prayer and fasting, fully unto Him to be an instrument of righteousness as we pray.
My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died for my sins on the cross and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. In prayer and fasting I put myself into your hand to use me in a new mission work and field for your glory. Give me the strength, the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to do that, this is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.