

Fasting

Part 17

Further example of fasting we can read in the bible is about King David. His life was full of challenges that he needed to face and to overcome. David faced these struggles through prayer and fasting.

David in *Psalms 35: 11-14* said ***“¹¹ Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about. ¹² They repay me evil for good and leave my soul forlorn. ¹³ Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, ¹⁴ I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother.”*** David was fasting for the people who were around him. He was so honest with God that he even was praying and fasting for people who did not repay him good for all his prayer and fasting for them.

In *Psalms 69:1-12* David said ***“^d Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. ² I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. ³ I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God. ⁴ Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal. ⁵ You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you. ⁶ May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me, O Lord, the LORD Almighty; may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me, O God of Israel. ⁷ For I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face. ⁸ I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother’s sons; ⁹ for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me. ¹⁰ When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn; ¹¹ when I put on sackcloth, people make sport of me. ¹² Those who sit at the gate mock me, and I am the song of the drunkards.”*** He was enduring suffering, hardship and insult for the sake of the house of God and the work of God. He was facing all that pressure but he was humbling himself and continued to do the work of God through prayer and fasting. He was

diligent in fasting even he said about that the following, ***“²⁴ My knees give way from fasting; my body is thin and gaunt.”*** (*Psalms 109:24*)

David even fasted when he heard the news of the death of Saul his enemy, ***“¹¹ Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. ¹² They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.”*** (*2Samuel 1:11-12*) He was grieving that the army of the LORD got harmed by the enemy.

David fasted when he repented from his sin of adultery that he committed with Bathsheba. The Lord exposed what David did through his prophet Nathan whom the Lord sent and confronted David and rebuked him for his sin. David said, ***“I have sinned against the LORD.”*** (*2Samuel 12:13*) And ***“Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. ¹⁴ But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die. ¹⁵ After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and he became ill. ¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. ¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. David’s servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, “While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate.” ¹⁹ David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. “Is the child dead?” he asked. “Yes,” they replied, “he is dead.” ²⁰ Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.”*** (*2Samuel 12:13-20*)

David served God's purpose in His own generation by the will of God. And one of the things that he is known with is that he passed through many struggles and overcome through prayer and fasting. In the same way you can take his example and apply that in your life and service unto God.

Another example of fasting we can read is in the book of Jonah:

When Jonah disobeyed God and went by ship to Tarshish, the Lord sent a strong wind against the ship and forced the men to throw Jonah into the sea in order for the wind and the sea to calm down. After that the Lord prepared a big fish that swallowed Jonah. And he stayed in the belly of the big fish three days and three nights. Sure he was fasting during that time for no food is there in the belly of the big fish. And truly he repented as he cried to God and prayed to Him, *"² He said: In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. ³ You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. ⁴ I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' ⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. ⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God. ⁷ "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. ⁸ "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. ⁹ But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD." (Jonah 2:2-9)* Truly Jonah repented as he promised God that what he vowed he will do well, *"What I have vowed I will make good."* Therefore God relieved him as we can read here, *"¹⁰ And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land." (Jonah 2:10)* The same for you, if you had disobeyed God and did not do what he asked you to do, then you need to repent, pray and fast to the Lord and commit your life to Him again to do what He asked you to do, so you will be relieved.

In the book of Jonah we can read also how the people of Nineveh got repented when they heard the message of God from the mouth of Jonah. After he reached there, *"⁴ On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned."⁵ The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. ⁶ When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened." (Jonah 3:4-10)* What we learn from the above story, whatever people are ruthless and hard in heart God can change them, therefore we still need to preach the message to them. The people of Nineveh were cruel people, yet they repented on Jonah preaching. And they showed their genuine repentance by fasting.

My Dear and Beloved: God's word teaching us new things every day and directs us how God wants us to live our lives. Prayer and fasting is one of the great and powerful instruments, and that of various purposes. The Lord had put that in our hands to use to face various life struggles and hardships. Take heed from the above message and apply it in your life as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the death on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord guide me with your Holy Spirit to the things that you want me to do for you. Lord as I pray and fast I trust that you will speak to me clearly and will direct me with your Holy Spirit and word, in Jesus name Amen.*