

Matthew 9:14-15 (ESV)

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”

*And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*

When Jesus Christ walked on the earth, His disciples lived in a unique period of grace. The very presence of the Son of God was physically among them. Whenever they faced sickness, He healed. When there was lack, He multiplied bread and fish to feed thousands (Matthew 14:19-21). Whenever fear gripped them, His presence brought immediate peace—as when He calmed the storm (Mark 4:39).

But Jesus foretold a coming shift. He said the time would come when \*“the bridegroom will be taken away”—\*a prophetic reference to His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. After

this, His followers would enter a new season—a season of fasting and prayer.

### Why Fasting and Prayer Became Essential

After Christ ascended, His physical presence was no longer with them, yet His mission continued. The disciples now needed to walk in the same power He carried. To do this, they examined His life closely and discovered something crucial: Jesus often withdrew for extended periods to fast and pray (Luke 5:16; Matthew 4:2).

Prayer was the lifeline of His ministry, and fasting sharpened His focus and dependence on the Father. If the sinless Son of God relied so deeply on prayer and fasting, how much more should we, in our weakness, do the same?

### The Weakness of the Flesh

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus exposed the human struggle in prayer:

Mark 14:37-38 (NKJV)

Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

The disciples' spirit desired to obey, but their flesh failed them. This is true for us today: spiritual battles are lost or won in prayer. Without fasting and prayer, the flesh will dominate and lead us into temptation.

### Transformation Through Prayer and Fasting

After Jesus' ascension, the same disciples who once slept in prayer became powerful men of intercession and fasting. In Acts 10, Peter fasted until he became hungry and fell into a trance—and God gave him a vision that opened the gospel to the Gentiles:

Acts 10:9-11 (ESV)

Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened...

This demonstrates how fasting positions us to hear God's voice and receive divine direction.

### Spiritual Breakthrough Requires Fasting

Jesus Himself taught that certain spiritual breakthroughs require fasting:

Matthew 17:21 (KJV)

Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

This statement followed His disciples' failure to cast out a demon. The lesson is clear—some spiritual battles cannot be won by prayer alone; fasting must accompany it. Fasting humbles us

(Psalm 35:13), crucifies the flesh (Galatians 5:24), and sharpens our spiritual discernment.

### Why We Must Fast Today

We live in the very days Jesus prophesied—the time after the Bridegroom was taken away. We await His return, and until then, fasting and prayer are vital disciplines for every believer. Through them:

We draw nearer to God (James 4:8).

We receive power to overcome temptation and sin (Matthew 26:41).

We gain spiritual clarity and guidance (Acts 13:2-3).

We prepare for Christ's return (Revelation 19:7).

Fasting is not about earning God's favor—it is about aligning our hearts with Him, humbling ourselves, and making room for His Spirit to work powerfully in and through us.

## A Call to Action

Beloved, do you desire a deeper encounter with God? Fast and pray.

Do you long for greater anointing and victory in spiritual warfare? Fast and pray.

Do you seek wisdom and direction in life? Fast and pray.

These are days of preparation. The Bridegroom is coming soon. May we, the Church, rise in fasting and prayer to be found ready when He returns.

Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus!

These Are Times for Fasting and Prayer

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