



WEEKLY SERMON

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Pastor David Miklas

Message: Prayer

Phone: 717-715-3317

E-mail: pastormiklas@aol.com

Text: Isaiah 58:1-12, Matthew 17:14-21

In this Devotional cover letter let's have a little chat about **PRAYER**. No solid growth can take place in the Christian life unless there is prayer growth. No prayer growth occurs until we realize that effective prayer is hard work, and we are willing to work hard.

It has been well said, "**All of our failures are prayer failures.**" I cannot emphasize enough the importance of making God active in all phases of our life. Partnering with God begins with obedience to God in the matters of prayer, consistent Bible reading, soul winning, and regular church attendance. We will never include God in the greater capacity of our life until we develop a prayer life with Him.

God said in James 5:16, "... **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**" The words of this verse signify energetic supplication. Many Christians talk about prayer as though they are experts at it. The truth is, we tease about prayer, teach about prayer, and preach about prayer, but until we develop a vital prayer life, we will be spiritually powerless Christians.

Many people display mottos in their office or in their home that read "**Prayer changes things.**" **WRONG!** Many Christians anxiously pray "**God, I've got to have some things changed by You!**" God is not interested in changing the things of this world. God is interested in changing the people who are in the world.

Prayer does not change things; prayer changes people!

The whole meaning of prayer is that we may know God. How are you getting along with God? How is your prayer life doing? Do you have an "It" for which to pray? How many hours have you prayed about "It" this past week? Does God need to change you before He changes your circumstances of prayer? Remember this:

A prayer-less church is a power-less church; And by the same token, a prayer-less Christian is a power-less Christian.

Every problem in the Christian life is a prayer problem. When a believer shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When a believer stops reading or studying the Bible the devil laughs. When a believer stops praying, the devil shouts for joy.

You need a **prayer life**, not a prayer time. But when you have a prayer time you will have a **prayer life**. Prayer is not visiting with God; a **prayer life** is living with God.

Now let's have a Message from God – to You – For Today:

I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the **SFGTD** (something for God to do) box. All situations will be resolved, but in My time, not yours. Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now.

Should you find yourself stuck in traffic; don't despair. There are people in this world for whom driving is an unheard-of privilege.

Should you have a bad day at work; think of the man who has been out of work for years.

Should you despair over a relationship gone bad; think of the person who has never known what it's like to love and be loved in return.

Should you grieve the passing of another weekend; think of the woman in dire straits, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week to feed her children.

Should your car break down, leaving you miles away from assistance, think of the paraplegic who would love the opportunity to take that walk.

Should you notice a new gray hair in the mirror; think of the cancer patient in chemo who wishes she had hair to examine.

Should you find yourself at a loss and pondering what life is all about, and asking what is my purpose? Be thankful. There are those who didn't live long enough to get the opportunity.

Should you find yourself the victim of other people's bitterness, ignorance, smallness or insecurities; remember, things could be worse. You could be one of them!

After a terrible tragedy someone said this: **“Love builds bridges; hate digs chasms.”** In Titus 1:4b we read, **“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”** Only those who have received the limitless grace of God can extend limitless grace to others. If you have been wronged, build a bridge of grace. Let the grace you have received from God be the measure of grace you give.

In His Amazing Grace,
Pastor David Miklas

“God’s Source of Spiritual Power- Prayer and Fasting”

INTRODUCTION: The story is told of two Northwest lumberjacks.

An older man well-seasoned in the skill of chopping trees.

A younger man, with a chip on his shoulder out to prove a point.

One day the younger man challenged the older man to a tree chopping contest. The one who chopped the most trees by the end of the day would be the winner.

The day arrived, and the younger man who was out to prove a point went at it with a vengeance all day long; chopping away, chopping one tree after another for 8 hours. The older more mature man would chop away for an hour, than he would take a break for 15 minutes.

At the end of the day the older man had chopped down 1/3 more trees than the younger man. Upon that earthshaking revelation the younger man with his ego now deflated asked, why? The older man explained, I would chop for an hour then I would take a break for 15 minutes to "**sharpen my ax.**"

And therein lays the secret to our spiritual life. I believe too many of us are like the younger man going at it with all we got, failing to take the time out to tune up, failing to take the time to sharpen our spiritual axes. The time out to tune up I am referring to would be times of prayer. Few subjects evoke a greater sense of guilt in the hearts of believers than when we begin to talk about prayer.

We know that we ought to pray and need to pray.

Yet the vast majority of us know that we don't pray.

And even greater numbers of us don't FAST and PRAY.

In our generation we have forgotten the subject of **PRAYER and FASTING**. I am sure there is much more preaching about prayer than is practiced, and when it comes to the matter of fasting with prayer most present day Christians either know little about it or have never practiced it.

I believe there are some victories in the Christian life and some answers to prayer that are impossible without **PRAYER and FASTING**. I believe if we are going to see **REVIVAL**, we have to learn to **PRAY and FAST**.

In this message let me call your attention to **FOUR** points.

FIRST: What is a "Fast?"

To Fast means to abstain from food for a time, to give self - more to prayer, meditation and study of the Word of God.

A normal FAST is a total refrain from solid food.

An absolute FAST is a total refrain from food and liquid.

To Fast may also mean to withdraw one's self from pleasure for a season. We leave the things of the world food, sleep, and activities to, as Matthew 6:15 tell us, "**enter into our closet**" to pray.

Someone said, "**Prayer is the grasping of the INVISIBLE. Fasting is the letting go of the VISIBLE. As we Fast, we withdraw ourselves from the physical appetite, letting go of the VISIBLE. As we pray we are grasping the INVISIBLE. In other words, Prayer and Fasting is letting go of the VISIBLE Food and Sleep, and spending time with God, which is the INVISIBLE.**"

Fasting is a means of saying "God I want you to know my very strong feeling in this matter."

Fasting says, "God I want you to know I'm very serious about this."

Fasting is to praying what UNDERLINING or an EXCLAMATION MARK might convey in writing.

Fasting is turning the volume up.

SECOND: Fasting and Prayer was practiced in the lives of the Saints of God in both the Old and New Testament.

Exodus 34:28 - Moses fasted 40 days and nights when he went up to Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments.

I Kings 19:8 - After Elijah's great victory over the 400 false prophets of Baal, he went 40 days and nights without food.

Judges 20:26-28 - The nation of Israel needed God's direction, they fasted and wept for God's direction.

II Samuel 12:13-23 - David fasted and prayed over his sin about the child that was sick.

Nehemiah 1:2-4 - Nehemiah fasted because of a burden for the work of God. Nehemiah was saying, God, I want you to know how serious I am about this matter.

Esther 4:3 - Israel fasted for God's deliverance. Remember, a decree had gone out that all the Jews were to be destroyed. An impossible situation (yes, they were facing an impossible situation) however, God answered through Prayer and Fasting.

Daniel 9:3-4 - Daniel fasted and repented for Himself and the people. As a result, God gave Daniel that great prophecy about Israel's 70 weeks found in Daniel 9:24-27.

Luke 2:27 Anna served God in the temple through prayer and fasting.

Matthew 4:2 - Our Lord went on a 40 day fast.

In Acts 13:1-3 we read,

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

Here the church did not sit down to a hastily called meeting and vote a decision. They prayed and fasted for God's direction concerning Paul and Barnabas.

We have become so bogged down with committee meetings, worship services, and quick decision meetings.

Where is the prayer and fasting time?

Where is the all-night prayer meeting to beg for God's direction?

E.M. Bounds in his book, "**Power through Prayer**" said,

"What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use, men mighty in prayers. The Holy Spirit does not flow through METHODS, but through MEN. He does not come on MACHINERY, but on men. He does not ANOINT plans, but men of prayer."

I would challenge those who are in church leadership to **PRAY and FAST** on a regular basis. At the same time why don't those of you who don't have a ministry take a day or two a month and fast and pray for this ministry or for a family need. I believe you will begin to see a dynamic change for the Glory of God.

"I believe in prayer. I believe God answers prayer. But I also believe there are some kinds of petitions that God will not answer unless you and I fast while we pray. "

THIRD: In Isaiah 58:1-12 we read of **God's True Fast.**

In **verses 1-5** we have the Counterfeit Fast.

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. (2) Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. (3) 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. (4) 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. (5) Is it such a fast that I have spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?”

This is the fast of the hypocrite. These are the people who fast for selfish motives, or to impress someone else with their "spiritually."

In **verses 6-7** we read of **God's Chosen Fast**.

“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? (7) Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”

Here we identify six things of God's chosen fast.

- a. **"loose the bands of wickedness"** – Here we are to Pray and Fast over those who are unsaved. If you have a burden to win someone to Jesus Christ, than why don't you fast and pray?
- b. **"undo the heavy burdens"** - Here we are to Pray and Fast, that you might have power to help, encourage, bless, and relieve the heavy burdens--of sickness, sorrow, home problems, financial problems, troubles, worries of people about you. These are right reasons for fasting.
- c. **"let the oppressed go free"** - This no doubt refers to the many who today are demon oppressed, and some who are demon possessed. Fast and Pray for their deliverance.
- d. **"and that ye break every yoke"** - People need to be set free from the yoke of worldliness, compromise, habits of besetting sins and the binding forces of the evil one. Surely the Lord is pleased, when He sees a child of God on his knees, praying and fasting for power to help others breaking the yoke that drains them of spiritual power.
- e. **"bread for the hungry"** - This has to do with giving the staples of life, such as bread to the hungry, and then reaching them with the gospel.
- f. **"the naked, that thou cover him"** - We are to help the poor, and the needy physically. This is the "chosen Fast of the Lord."

In **verses 8-12** we have the blessed **Results of True Fasting**.

“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. (9) Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; (10) And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: (11) And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. (12) And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.”

FOURTH: In Matthew 17:1-21, we have an illustration of an impossible situation and the Lord's challenge to **FAST and PRAY**.

In **verses 1-13** we read of Peter, James and John on the Mt. of Transfiguration where Jesus meet Elijah and Moses. There our Lord received His glorified body and was transfigured into the same kind of body He was going to have after His resurrection from the dead.

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, (2) And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (3) And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. (4) Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. (5) While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (6) And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. (7) And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. (8) And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. (9) 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. (10) And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? (11) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. (12) 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. (13) Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.”

In verses 14-21 we move from the Mountain of glory to the valley of need. Here we read,

“And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, (15) Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. (16) And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. (17) Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. (18) And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. (19) Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? (20) 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. (21) Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”

A distraught father had brought his demonized son to the nine disciples, begging them to deliver him; but they could not.

The father in this story like all of us at one time or another had reached the end of the rope. The Father had brought the son to Jesus and in the Mark 9:24 account cried out with tears, **"Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."** I don't know about you, but I know that there have been times when I have had to identify with that statement, **"Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."**

Question, are you facing some unbelievable problem? You have come to the absolute end. There is nothing you can do - ZERO. What is God saying to us?

The Lord's first response was one of sorrow. Notice again verse 17, **“O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.”** Their unbelief and spiritual perversity were a burden to Him.

The nine disciples should have been able to cast out the demon. Jesus had given them this power and authority in Matthew 10:1, 8. But somehow they had lost their power! These disciples couldn't help these people. Here were disciples who had been with the Lord.

**They had walked with the Lord.
They had talked with the Lord.
They had fellowshiped with the Lord.
They were in His company day after day.**

However, unbelief had robbed them of their ability. When they asked Jesus the cause of their failure, he told them:

In verse 17 they had lacked faith,
In verse 21 they had lacked prayer,
In verse 21 they had lacked fasting.

Now notice the element of faith in verse 20, "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." I like the scripture that tells us about the limitless power of God, "All things are possible."

In Jeremiah 32:26-27 we read, "Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, (27) Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" Someone explained it this way, "No, nothing, absolutely nothing for you, Lord is extraordinary." What a statement of promise.

In Romans 8:37 we read, "... we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

In Philippians 4:13 we read, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

In Luke 1:37 we read, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

Perhaps you are thinking, Pastor, you don't know my situation. That is true, perhaps, I don't know all there is to know about your situation. But all you and I need to know is **WITH THE LORD** nothing is too difficult for Him. "Nothing is impossible with God."

That includes your business.
That includes your marriage.
That includes your health .
That includes your family.
That includes your ministry.
That includes healing strained relationships with people.
That includes habits you have.
That includes insurmountable spiritual impossibilities.

Notice again verse 20 "if ye have faith". The "if" is your part. I believe the reasons miracles do not happen is not God's fault, rather it is your fault.

This is still the age of miracles.

This is still the age where God can and will answer that impossible situation.

This is still the age where God will answer and show us great and mighty things.

The power of God is for all of us who believe. The power of God is not something that was. It's not something that has happened. It is for us today. The scriptures say "Faith as a grain of Mustard seed."

God will honor even a little faith. Why? Because **FAITH** is the **ONE ELEMENT** on which all divine power rests. If we believe, all things are possible.

I believe, we will never, never, ever know the sweet power and blessing of God, until we know at times the price of **Fasting and Praying**.

Far too many of us run from one service or social to another. We fuss, gripe, complain, and fume, but we have no power. The power is there, but our faith is too weak to use it. **UNBELIEF** gives power to the world and the devil, whereas **TRUE FAITH IN GOD** can cause "the walls of Jericho" to crumble. Again notice verse 20-21 read

"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. (21) Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Was this an impossible situation, yes? Remember we said, "Fasting is a means of saying, **GOD I WANT YOU TO KNOW MY VERY STRONG FEELING IN THIS MATTER.**"

FASTING, in the spiritual sense is losing sight of self. **FASTING** means self-denial. **PRAYER** is communion with God, and when we are praying and communing with Him, we are not thinking of self or fulfilling selfish desires.

I sincerely believe if we are going to see the

**POWER OF GOD,
REVIVAL COME,
THE HARD CASE SAVED, and
SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL HAPPEN,**

There is going to have to be people **FASTING** and **PRAYING**.

I believe, if the Church would **PRAY and FAST**, claiming Jeremiah 33:3 "**Call unto me and I will answer thee and show you GREAT and MIGHT things which thou knoweth not,**" God would do something for us that would surprise even the strongest faith in this building today. I am talking about the answers to the impossible situations, such as:

- I have an unsaved child.
- I have an unsaved Husband, Mother, Father, relative.
- I have a difficult home situation.
- I have a difficult situation at work.
- I am a young person with habits that are not right.
- I have a health problem, what do I do?
- I have a financial problem, what do I do?
- I am seeking the Lord about a major decision.
- I am concerned about the welfare of a loved one.
- We need God's intervention here at our Church, what shall we do?

Think to yourself - Where in my life is an impossible situation? To me, it looks insurmountable and I don't have an answer to it, therefore my back is up against the wall.

Look, if you really mean business and want to turn the volume up, you are going to have to go home, and tell your family you love them, but you are going to pray and fast and beg God for an answer. Why? Because of verse 21.

May I challenge you today to begin to **PRAY and FAST**. How many of you would be willing to go the distance to pray and fast to claim the power and promise of God to do something that will probably surprise you, but will also give you cause to **PRAISE THE LORD?**

If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon, "**God's Source of Spiritual Power- Prayer and Fasting**" then right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, "...**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...**"
Romans 10:13, "**For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: "**I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.**"

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior let me know. Please send an e-mail to, pdmikBBM@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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