

Sermon Discussion Guide

Sacred Practices: Fasting

Matthew 9:14-15, 6:16-18, 4:1-4; John 3:31-35; Mark 14:24-25

October 19 & 20, 2019

Part 1: Pray

Every time we study God's word, we should ask God to give us the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts, teach us and mold us into who he created us to be. Ask God to reveal his truth to transform you through your discussion time.

Part 2: Read the Text

Read the passage(s) from the sermon and take note of its truths about God, who we are as his people and what's required to follow him.

Part 3: Reflect on the Sermon

Introduction

1. What were your perceptions of fasting before this sermon? Have you ever fasted? Is it a part of your Christian life?
2. In our culture we are formed by excess, convenience and options. Where do you see these things in the world and how are they forming you?

Fasting: Purpose

1. The primary purpose of fasting is to cause us to ache for Jesus. We are giving up something good to experience something great. Discuss what this means and how it is true?

2. Fasting is also an opportunity to focus on God and discover what controls us. How is this true for you? What, other than God, have you felt has control over you? (This includes, mainly, good things.)
3. Take time to discuss whether you hunger for God or if you just hunger for his gifts?

Fasting: Practice.

1. The practice of fasting should be just that - a regular part of our lives, not an optional part of our lives. What is the biblical evidence of this? What is the significance of fasting being one of the first actions in Jesus' ministry?
2. Jesus taught a lot about fasting in private, not making it public activity. Why is this important?
3. Adam said that Jesus commands our fasting be *private* as an expression of resting from our *public* righteousness before others. In other words, fasting is a chance to focus on God's love and grace for us instead of pining after the approval of others. Reflect on this wonderful insight.

Fasting: Person

1. If fasting is an opportunity to long for home, why is remembering the person and work of Jesus so important in our fasting? (Hint: You don't have much of a home to long for if you don't know the one who is waiting for you.)
2. When Jesus says that he, "will not drink from the cup" until he is reunited with us, he is fasting until then. What does this mean and why is it so significant?
3. Adam explained that communion is a open-ended, ongoing meal that we enjoy until heaven. It is a meal that expresses the hope of our fasting. How might this change how you see and understand communion?

Part 4: Summarize the Message

How would you summarize the sermon to someone who has never heard it? What are your two or three key takeaways from the message and your discussion?

How does this sermon change your perspective on God? Your own heart? And/or, how to follow him?