

June Teaching Theme: The Sermon on the Mount

讲员 Speaker: Pastor William R Horne

题目 Topic: Prayer and Fasting

经文 Scripture: Matthew 6:5-18

Monthly Theme: We are on week 9 of 15 in our series walking through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. The "Sermon on the Mount" is a comprehensive sketch of Jesus' moral and ethical vision, forming a manifesto by which the Jesus community should live. Matthew opens up this section with Jesus "**going up on a mountainside,**" presenting Jesus as a New Moses figure, bringing the Torah to its fulfillment. Throughout this series, Jesus' words will often challenge the very way we think about God, ourselves, and others. Let's accept that challenge over the next four months. This week, we examined 6:5-18, where Jesus reveals the true nature of Christian prayer and fasting.

八月 **August** - 登山寶訓系列 **The Sermon on the Mount Series**

August 1st - 禱告與禁食 Prayer & Fasting (馬太福音 Matthew 6:5-18)

August 8th – 上帝還是金錢? God or Money? (馬太福音 Matthew 6:19-24)

August 15th – 缺乏還是富足? Scarcity or Abundance? (馬太福音 Matthew 6:25-34)

August 22nd – 論斷與偽善 Judgment & Hypocrisy (馬太福音 Matthew 7:1-6)

August 29th – 慷慨的上帝與黃金法則 The Generous God & The Golden Rule (馬太福音 Matthew 7:7-12)

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#)

Sermon Slides (see email attachment)

Primary Claim: King Jesus is inviting us into his Upside-Down Kingdom where the King hears his people and can be trusted to work for their good. Foundational to the Christian life is the practice of rightly-intended prayer and fasting.

Discussion Questions (Pastor William R. Horne):

- (1) Read Matthew 6:1-18 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize Jesus teaching here?
- (2) Re-read Matthew 6:1, 6:5, & 6:16. Jesus makes it clear that God cares about the motivations and intentions behind our actions. In what ways are we tempted to do "religious practice" to be seen by others?
- (3) Re-read Matthew 6:7-8. What are some ways we try to manipulate God? In what ways are we tempted to view the Christian life as a system of Karma?
- (4) What motivations do we have when we practice fasting? What are some reasons we do not practice fasting? How do these compare to the practice of fasting in Scripture? (See Notes)
- (5) Re-read Matthew 6:9-15. How does each line of the Lord's Prayer speak to you? In what ways does this prayer (and prayer in general) reorient us towards the way of God?

- (6) Encourage your cell group to participate in the prayer challenge. 在八月份, 開始一種每日三次的專注禱告習慣—早晨、中午、晚上 For August, adopt the habit of focused prayer three times a day - morning, noon, and night. 每天早上、中午和晚上, 暫停我們的手邊工作, 祈禱「主禱文」, 然後再為其他個人事項來禱告 At morning, noon, and night pause your day pray “the Lord’s Prayer” and then go to your personal prayers.

Important Notes (Pastor William R. Horne):

Notes on Q2: The hypocrites, as Jesus calls them, strategically pray in public spaces to be perceived as pious by others. Their intent and motivations in prayer are not pure but an effort of religious self-promotion. Hypocrites are not concerned with honoring God or being in an authentic relationship with Him but with gaining the recognition and praise of others. God will not reward these people, but their reward will only be the fleeting recognition they chase.

Some other questions for us to ask:

- What are our motivations in our religious practices and good deeds?
- Do we serve because we want a good reputation? Do we give in order to be recognized by others?
- Does our private prayer life match our public prayer life, or are we putting on a spiritual front for others to see?

Notes on Q3: Some use long-winded prayers to impress others, and some use long-winded prayers to manipulate God into answering them. Here Jesus is not concerned so much with the length of our prayers but with our attempts to manipulate God. The theology of the pagans involved a god who can be manipulated; thus, they thought if they used more words, the gods would hear them and answer. Jesus, however, teaches us that God cannot be manipulated, and he already knows what we need and can be trusted. And though most of us would affirm this theologically, we often live as people trying to manipulate God and operate out of a lack of trust in him. I remember during my teenage years, if something bad would happen to me during the day, my first thought was, “did I do my devotions this morning?” Underlying that thought is the idea that if I do enough good things, then God will do good things for me - an attempt to manipulate God. *Karma, however, is not Christian theology but Pagan theology - we have a God who hears us and can be trusted to work for our good.*

Notes on Q4: Unfortunately, the most popular understanding of Christian fasting in church circles matches this pagan theology more than Christian. Most people think that we practice fasting to gain some benefit - like spiritual growth, getting rid of sins, better health, or a better chance that God answers our prayers. However, fasting to gain or acquire something is not found in the Bible - that is simply another attempt at manipulating God.

Fasting, in the Bible, is most often a **response of lament** to something worth grieving.

In the Scriptures, we see people fast in three major categories of lament:

- (1) The People of God fasted in preparation for the Day of Atonement - that is, fasting as a lament of individual and community sin.
- (2) The People of God fasted in spontaneous response to grief-worthy events like death, the threat of war, and the like.

(3) The People of God fasted as lament and response to injustice as in Isaiah 58. The prophet connects true fasting to doing justice, caring for the poor, and providing food for the hungry.

Christian Fasting, then, is an act that enters the grief of God over things such as sin and death, forming us into people who grieve the things God grieves and weep over the things God weeps.

Secondarily, fasting at its best in church history has become a **spiritual practice of self-denial**. In our current cultural context, we have been trained in self-indulgence and endless consumerism - so much so that self-denial is seen as a bad thing. However, self-denial is key to the Christian life, as Jesus tells us, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

To train ourselves in self-denial through fasting does two things:

- (1) It prepares us for denying ourselves when it comes to sin and selfishness creeping up in our life.
- (2) It exposes the ways we have become slaves to our comforts - turning them into addictive drugs we use compulsively to console ourselves.

Notes on Q5: Jesus first grounds Christian prayer in a correct theology of God. God is good, holy, just and does not need to be manipulated because he is trustworthy. Out of this theology, he empowers his followers to confidently approach God (see Hebrews 4:16). Prayer for Jesus and his followers then becomes not an act of informing God of our needs but an entering into the very presence of God, where we are transformed. Jesus then gifts us with what we call the "Lord's Prayer" that we pray regularly and informs the rest of our prayer life. The Lord's Prayer reorders our desires to the way God and the Kingdom

Sermon Summary (Elder Yin):

祷告和禁食

Pastor Will

8/1/21

"「你们祷告的时候，不可像那假冒为善的人，爱站在会堂里和十字路口上祷告，故意叫人看见。我实在告诉你们，他们已经得了他们的赏赐。你祷告的时候，要进你的内屋，关上门，祷告你在暗中的父；你父在暗中察看，必然报答你。你们祷告，不可像外邦人，用许多重复话，他们以为话多了必蒙垂听。你们不可效法他们；因为你们没有祈求以先，你们所需用的，你们的父早已知道了。所以，你们祷告要这样说：我们在天上的父：愿人都尊你的名为圣。愿你的国降临；愿你的旨意行在地上，如同行在天上。我们日用的饮食，今日赐给我们。免我们的债，如同我们免了人的债。不叫我们遇见试探；救我们脱离凶恶。因为国度、权柄、荣耀，全是你的，直到永远。阿们！「你们饶恕人的过犯，你们的天父也必饶恕你们的过犯；你们不饶恕人的过犯，你们的天父也必不饶恕你们的过犯。」「你们禁食的时候，不可像那假冒为善的人，脸上带着愁容；因为他们把脸弄得难看，故意叫人看出他们是禁食。我实在告诉你们，他们已经得了他们的赏赐。你禁食的时候，要梳头洗脸，不叫人看出你禁食来，只叫你暗中的父看见；你父在暗中察看，必然报答你。」"

马太福音 6:5-18

祷告和禁食是基督教会的基础。但许多教会不是很重视。禁食祷告很少教导。在洪牧师大学时，尝到了禁食祷告的大能。仪式有时觉得不重要，其实也不能忽视，宗教礼仪也是。动机很重要。祷告是基础。但祷告和属灵动机相关。

论点，耶稣邀进祂的国度，祂听见祂的子民的声音，我们信靠耶稣祂能帮助我们，耶稣能改变我们的行为。教我们正确祷告禁食的方法。

纲要

一，错用禁食祷告，

耶稣让我们看到我禁食祷告的动机是什么

A, 为让人看见

我们动机，太6：1，不是为了让人看见。太6：5，不要看假貌伪善之人。不是为荣神而是得人称赞，不能得神赏赐。当时太6：16同样祷告也是同样。伪装的，有意让人看见，我们要禁食的动机是什么。是得好名声？让人看见？神重视我们的动机。6:7太。不要重复的话，神知我们的需要。什么是我们的动机？我们自己的生命是否和外面所做的相称。

B, 为要操纵神

有人为祷告来操纵神。在祷告中多说些，就象异教人那样，长篇的祷告，觉得越多话神就越喜欢。有种思想就是如我多做些多讲些，也许神会多给我们。Karma是异教的概念，越多做好事，神会对你好，更多祝福。有时禁食的动机成为得更多的益处。如果禁食祷告，灵命就会成长，神会听我们的祷告。是否因果关系是能改变上帝。这不是圣经原则。神其实不会被操纵。

二，正确的禁食祷告

是舍己哀叹的操练。在圣经中有三种情况看见禁食祷告。

A, 为什么要禁食，在圣经里禁食为哀叹的表现。

1, 为自己和社区赎罪

2, 为死亡战争哀痛的反应

3, 为不公正的反应，赛58，禁食祷告让我们和神成约，和神一致。

B, 舍己的操练，

基督徒放下自己是好事。耶稣教导门徒要舍己。天天扛起自己的十字架。禁食进了神的悲伤。

-预备自己

-显示自己现在的生活方式，我们都喜欢舒适区。我们常成为物质享受的奴仆。不让自己沉浸在物质中，

C, 基督徒的禁食祷告。能帮助我们进入与神的同在，告诉神我们的需求。并被上帝改变行为。对神更加信靠。来4:6

祷告不是单单给神提供信息，而是进入与神同在，祷告能改变我们。

主祷文

9, 我们在天上的父，是我们的父。尊名为圣。是不是为自己的名荣耀。神荣耀自己的名。祂建立了最高的标准，祂一定会行祂为我们所立的约，以至于被称颂。

10, 愿国降临，还没有全面来，没进入我们的全部。有一天，天和地能完全的相连。祷告神进了每一个角落每一个人。

11, 今日的生活, 信如果靠神会为我们每天负责, 不为明天忧虑。

12, 饶恕是基督教的主题。得神饶一定要先饶恕人, 基督徒不是报仇。饶恕不是忘记, 而是放弃报仇的权利。和合重要需二方参加。但饶恕一方就可。

祷告主要为我们的心思意附合神的心思意念。

13, 试探, 神是好的不会使我们试探我们雅各书 1 : 13-14。我们被自己的罪所引诱。苦难中神会拯救, 哥前10:13。神信实的, 祂总给我们预备一条出路。

三, 挑战

学习从新让我们的思想意识和神的思想一致。我们的盼望和神的期望相应。

早期基督徒一天把自己手上的事暂停三次, 用来祷告。我们在8月是不是也可尝试一下? 3X一天, 读主祷文, 祷告, 和神常常的对话。

晚餐到晚餐间隔时间的祷告可以建议。

Prayer & Fasting

Pastor Will Horne

Matthew 6:5-18

Prayers 10:45-10:59

1. thanksgiving to God
2. Pray for Delta variant; pray for the flood in Henan,China;

#9/15 on the Sermon on the Mt

Prayer & fasting are the foundation of Christian church

However these repetitive religious practices seem superficial to many of the traditional church setting; and fasting is seldom taught.

When at college and seminary time, pastor Will found the power and the richness of fasting and group prayer.

Last week we learned about Jesus's teaching to his disciples on the spiritual training of generosity of giving, today about prayer & fasting

Primary claim:

King Jesus invites us to His upside-down kingdom, He hears his people, we can trust Him to work for good. Practice the rightly-intended prayer and fasting

Road map:

- 1) Misuse of prayer & fasting
 - A. Jesus exposes our intentions
 - B. Attempt to manipulate God
- 2) True nature of P & F
- 3) Challenge

6:1 beware of practice, in order to be seen, no reward from God

Their intention was to be seen (in giving), same intention also in prayer and fasting

6:5 Jesus called these people hypocrites

They didn't care about to grow and to give glory to God, being authentic w God, but be praised by people

6:16 disfigure their face when fasting, intent to be seen and praised

Their fasting was not to focus on God

What is our motivation w religious act and good deed?

Is our private life match our public appearance ?

Key is our intention!

6:7-8 Manipulate God

Babbling like pagans, lengthy prayers

Jesus doesn't care the length of our prayers

God can't be manipulated because He knows before we even ask

Karma is pagan theology, that is if you do good deed, God would be good for you, give you benefits

If we fasting, we may grow spiritually, and God will listen to our prayers.

This is not biblical

2) True nature of Christian fasting

an exercise in self-denial and in lament

In the Bible, fasting is a response of lament, in 3 categories

1) lament of individual and community sin

2) grief events: like death, war

3) over injustice: like in Isaiah 58

Fasting let us get into agreement with God

Spiritual practice of self-denial

is not a bad thing

Jesus calls his disciples to deny themselves, take up the cross daily to follow me. Self-denial

1) prepares us

2) exposes the ways of current life style, we are slaves of our comfort

Prayer is an act of reorientation toward king Jesus

Approach God w confidence

Heb4:16

Prayer is not simply an act of informing of our need to God, but enter into the presence of God, prayers transform us

The Lord's Prayer:

1) God the father: His relationship to us, a loving father we can depend on, God is not a far-away landlord

Honor, treat w highest respect

God honor His own name, He will act His own way, in order to be honored

2)one day heaven and earth will be united, renewed, permeate every inch of the kingdom

Now we are not there yet, today still in the process of transformation

3)give us today the daily bread. Concerning our daily life from God's grand theme of universe

Not worry about tomorrow

So free us to be generous to others

4)forgiveness

Train daily,

I have been forgiven, therefore I should forgive. No room for Christian to hate, stop the vicious cycle of revenge

Willingly give up our right

Reconciliation takes two parties, but forgiveness only needs one side

5)deliver us from testing and trials

God is absolutely kind, don't tempt us with evil thoughts

James1:13-14 we drag away from our own evil desire and enticed to sin

We trust God will deliver us when we suffering

1 cor 10:13b God is faithful. He provided a way out

3)Reorient our thoughts to Jesus's way

Pastor Will gives a Congregational challenge

Early Christians paused three times daily, set aside time for prayers

Can we do these in the month of August?

Three times daily, read the Lord's Prayer

Talk with God frequently

If you want to explore different fasting options, talk w pastor Will

Intermittent fasting, skip dinner every other day