

Fasting and Prayer

8-11-2024

Esther 4: 12-16

¹² When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, ¹³ he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. ¹⁴ For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

When God calls us to prayer and fasting. He always does so for our benefit. The scriptures point out at least seven benefits to prayer and fasting.

1. Our attitudes, feelings, and thoughts get sifted, pruned, and purified so that God might entrust us with a greater ministry. By fasting and praying, we become more disciplined toward the things of the father. We give him the opportunity to cut away from us those things that will slow us down, do us in or keep us from his plans and purposes
2. We are able to discern more clearly the will of God for our lives. Fasting clears our spiritual eyes and ears so we can accurately discern what God desires to reveal to us.
3. We are confronted with our sins and shortcomings so we might confess them to God, receive forgiveness for them, and walk in greater righteousness. Many times we break stubborn and sinful habits when we fast and pray. Fasting and praying cleanses us and purifies us from the errors that have kept us entangled in sin and folly.
4. We experience a release of supernatural power. Genuine prayer and fasting result in spiritual growth, including a renewed outpouring of supernatural power. Certain problems and situations cannot be resolved apart from fasting and praying.
5. We can influence national issues and concerns through our prayers. As we fast and pray for our nation God will move. He will pour out his spirit in his ways and in his timing. we can count on that.
6. We can build up God's people. Prayer is the Generator of the church. It gives power to its ministers. It propels outreach to the lost. It creates a climate in which evangelistic efforts succeed.
7. Our minds are sharpened. When we fast and pray we begin to understand the scriptures as never before. We become sensitive to God's timing and direction, with an increased awareness and ability to discern. We've become keenly aware of what God desires to do and accomplish, not only in our lives but also in the lives of those around us.

So I know this is a short lesson and maybe an odd one to have as we prepare for a big luncheon. But I wanted to make copies for each of you so that you can go through this on your own. I want you to consider which one of the above needs attention from you. And then fast and pray over those things according to what is revealed to you. I would encourage all of us to fast and pray for our nation for sure. And I understand that we're looking for a continued time of grace or maybe a revival, but God's will will be done no matter what.