

WHY PRAY AND FAST?

#1 PRAYER SERIES

Introduction: 21 days of prayer and fasting in Australian Christian Churches

- In Matthew 6, Jesus listed 3 essentials for Christian living:
 - When you give.... 6:1-4
 - When you pray 6:5-15
 - When you fast6:16-18
- THEN He says: check where your treasure is (6:19-20)
 - What is our treasure?
 - Who is our treasurer?

Psalm 63:1-5 *Oh, God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your Name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*

- Genuine prayer gives worship and gets answers out of relationship with the Saviour.
- Fasting is a spiritual discipline that brings clarity and breakthrough.

ILLUSTRATION (1) – 3 cord principle¹

- Jesus, the sower & good soil:
 - 30, 60, 100 times what was planted (Matt 4:8, 20)
 - 30 times – giving
 - 60 times = giving + prayer
 - 100 times = giving + prayer + fasting

¹ Jentzen Franklin "Fasting" (Charisma House 2008)

ILLUSTRATION (2) – disciples' inability to heal boy with seizures

Matthew 17:20-21 *He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.*

- Circumstances can feed your thirst for God – or quench it.
- In the Bible, unique experiences occur around wells.

1. Wells of Encounter

BACKGROUND: Hagar and Ishmael Genesis 16

- Sarah mistreated Hagar because of her pregnancy
- Hagar fled to a spring in the desert
- Hagar knew the God of Abram

Genesis 16:7-8 *The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert' it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"*

- Spiritual encounter
- Where have you come from?
- Where are you going?

Genesis 16:9 *"Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her."*

- Go back – face it

Genesis 16:13 *she gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."*

- Her encounter with the Lord gave:
 - Revelation that God sees / knows her

- Strength to face the future.

2. Wells of Contention

Genesis 26:20-21 *But the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "the water is ours!" so, he named the well Esek (dispute), because they disputed with him.*

Then they dug another well, but they quarrelled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah (opposition)

- Arguments distract us
- Arguments can feed your thirst for God, to find an answer to the problem, or quench it as we operate in the flesh.
- Arguments can change our focus, so we don't see the big picture

James 1:6 *But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

- Expect God to speak.

3. Wells of Promise

Genesis 26:22 *He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarrelled over it. He named it Rehoboth (room) saying "Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land."*

- No one quarrelled
- Room to flourish



Genesis 25:23-25 *From there, he went up to Beersheba. That night the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants, for the sake of my servant Abraham.*

*Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord.
There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.*



- Beersheba
- The well of the oath
- The same Beersheba freed by the ANZACs 31 October, 1917.
 - Commentary of the day says that when the horses of the light brigade smelt the water, they went even faster as they charged the enemy.



John 7:37-38 *On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

Conclusion: Pray for our Nation

- TODAY – our nation, leadership and government
- MONDAY – Emergency services, Frontline workers, medical teams, Police and Military
- TUESDAY – Unity and healing across our land
- WEDNESDAY – spiritual awakening and revival across our land
- THURSDAY – Effects of covid and the vulnerable in our society
- FRIDAY – Those struggling with mental health
- SATURDAY – Justice, righteousness and freedom of faith