

Prelude to the Latter Rain



Fasting (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'm going to continue and complete the theme we've been studying this week, the theme of "Fasting."

Yesterday I shared with you the measureless power that is released by prayer and fasting when practiced with right motives and in accordance with the principles of Scripture. The power thus released can change not merely individuals or families but even whole cities or nations or civilizations. I gave two historical, biblical examples of this: the city of Nineveh in the time of Jonah and the Jews in the Persian Empire in the time of Esther. In each of those cases, the course of history was radically and permanently changed when a group of people humbled themselves before God by prayer and fasting.

However, we should not look on this kind of history making demonstration of God's power as something confined to the past records of history. I believe that it is possible for us today by the same means of prayer and fasting to call forth an intervention of God in history no less powerful and dramatic than those recorded in the Bible. I believe that this is both a desperate need and a glorious possibility. In fact, I believe that God is waiting for us to do this.

For an understanding of what God expects from us in this way, I'm going to turn to the prophet Joel. Joel gives us a brief but comprehensive overview of God's purposes for His people in these last days. Joel opens with a scene of total disaster and desolation. I'll read just a few verses from Joel 1:8-12. As you listen I think you'll agree you couldn't have a more desperate and hopeless situation than that described at the opening of the book of Joel.

> "Wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth.
> The grain offering and the libation are cut off from the house of the Lord.
> The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord.
> The field is ruined, the land mourns, for the grain is ruined.

> The new wine dries up, fresh oil fails.
> Be ashamed, O farmers, Wail, O vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field is destroyed.
> The vine dries up, and the fig tree fails; the pomegranate, the palm also, and the apple tree, all the trees of the field dry up.
> Indeed, rejoicing dries up from the sons of men."

Wherever you see, there's nothing but desolation and blight and hopelessness, mourning and a total absence of joy. That's the situation. But God then reveals His appointed remedy in the same prophet, Joel, in various verses that follow. Joel 1:13–14, this is what God instructs His people to do:

> "Gird yourselves with sackcloth, and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar! Come, spend the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God, for the grain offering and the libation are withheld from the house of your God."

Now listen carefully:

> "Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord."

What is God's remedy in one simple phrase? Consecrate a fast and then seek God with desperate prayer. "Consecrate" means set apart a time for God where you'll fast.

God's call is repeated in Joel 2:12:

> "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning…"

Again, the basic requirement is fasting. A little further on in chapter 2, verses 15–17:

> "Blow a trumpet in Zion [that's a public proclamation to all of God's people], consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber."

All people are to give themselves to seeking God without reservation. All normal daily occupations are temporarily set aside.

> "Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'Spare Thy People, O Lord, and do not make Thine inheritance a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'"

Now let's look at God's promised response to the prayer and fasting of His people. It's given in Joel 2:23–29:

> "So rejoice, O sons of Zion, and be glad in the Lord your God; for He has given you the early rain for your vindication.
> And He has poured down for you the rain, the early and latter rain as before.
> And the threshing floors will be full of grain, and the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.
> 'Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust, my great army which I sent among you.
> And you shall have plenty to eat and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; then My people will never be put to shame.
> Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is no other; and My people will never be put to shame.
> And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.
> And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.'"

We see that in response to prayer and fasting by His people, God says, "I will come to your help. I'll change the whole situation. I'll take away the dearth and the blight. I'll supply all your need. There'll be an abundance. There'll be an overflow. You'll no longer be a reproach amongst the nations. But you'll be able to lift up your heads and people will say, 'Look what God has done for them.'"

In particular, God promises that He will send His people their desperately needed rain, the former and the latter rain. And

then, as a kind of spiritual application of the rain, He says, "I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind."

Now I want to turn to the New Testament for a moment and read the words of the apostle Peter to the crowd that had assembled on the Day of Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit came down. Acts 2:16–18, Peter says this:

> "...this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: [He links this to the prophecy of Joel.] 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy.'"

God has prepared a worldwide outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon His people, the church, for these last days. It's God's answer to the desperate needs and pressures of this time: to all the satanic, ungodly forces that are coming against God's people from so many areas; to the blight and the dearth in the church of God. God does not intend to leave His people helpless or at the mercy of all these evil pressures and forces. God has a provision; He has made a promise that He will pour out His Spirit, that He'll come to the help of His people on that supernatural level that we've been speaking about. But He says, "The condition is that you have to seek Me with prayer and fasting, unitedly, collectively."

Notice the promise in Joel 2:28:

> "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind..."

"After this." After what? After we've met God's conditions stated three times: "consecrate a fast, call a solemn assembly, seek Me, come together with prayer and fasting and I will be faithful to My commitment to you." God says, "I will come to you in the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit. I'll change the whole situation. Instead of being fearful and defeated, you'll become strong and effective. Instead of sneering at you, the world will stand back in awe and amazement when it sees how God has come to the help of His people."

In this matter of calling God's people to prayer and fasting, the message of Joel places a special responsibility upon the spiritual leaders of God's people. Three classes of persons are singled out more than once for special mention. They are the priests, the ministers and the elders. For instance, in Joel 1:13–14:

> "Gird yourselves with sackcloth, and lament, O priests; Wail, O ministers of the altar!"

And, in the next verse:

> "Proclaim a solemn assembly; gather the elders..."

There the emphasis is on the priests, the ministers, and the elders. And again in Joel 2:16–17:

> "Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders. [Verse 17:] Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the porch and the altar..."

There's a desperate need for men of God, in leadership, to lead God's people back to this pattern of collective prayer and fasting to seek God's intervention on behalf of His people.

I believe this applies to the nation in which we live. I believe we need to see again the truth of that familiar verse in 2 Chronicles 7:14:

> "...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

I believe that's a message for us in these days. God is telling us once again He'll intervene on a nationwide scale; He'll not merely show Himself strong on behalf of individuals or families but in behalf of cities and communities and whole nations. That's the kind of intervention He speaks about there. But He requires His people to meet His conditions. The first condition is "if My people will humble themselves." We've seen in the course of our studies this week that that means collective, united fasting and praying. That was the appointed way for God's people to humble themselves before Him from the Day of Atonement onwards. And I believe God's ordinance hasn't changed. He's waiting for leaders who will lead God's people in united prayer and fasting.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week we'll be looking at another important theme of Scripture.

My special offer this week is particularly suited to my theme. It's my book, How to Fast Successfully. This book gives the

scriptural basis for fasting. It also explains the simple, practical rules you need to follow in order to get the maximum benefit from fasting, both spiritually and physically. Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program



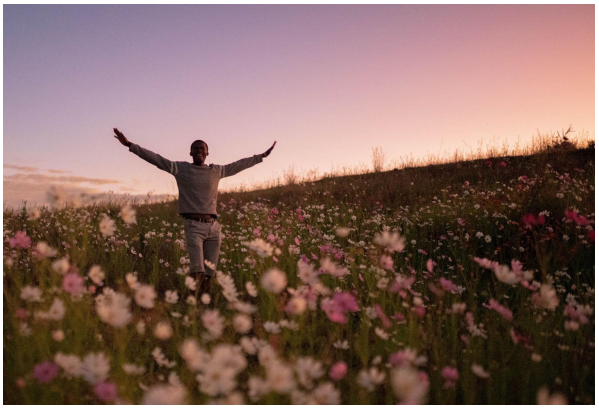
Transcript: TS-R066-105-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



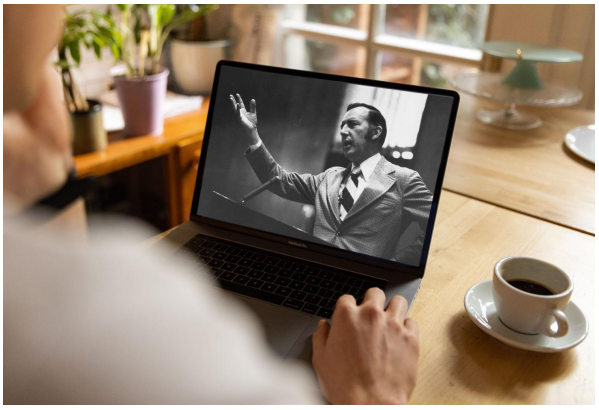
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries