

Podcast Episode 83: Fasting

Today, Denver addresses the question: What is the proper way to fast?

But first from the Old Covenants, Isaiah 20:7 RE:

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God. They ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God. Why have we fasted, say they, and you see not? Why have we afflicted our soul and you take no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure and exact all your labors. Behold, you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. You shall not fast as you do this day to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to remove the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him, and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then shall you call and the Lord shall answer, you shall cry and he shall say, Here I am. If you take away from your midst the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity, and if you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall your light rise in obscurity and your darkness be as the noonday. And the Lord shall guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and make fat your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of you shall build the old waste places. You shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath — from doing your pleasure on my holy day — and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, and shall honor him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then shall you delight yourself in the Lord. And I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the

earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

DENVER: When it's talking about this— They would invoke a ceremony inside the Kirtland temple to actually wash feet, but it is a symbol of the cleansing and the abandonment of sin. Do you want to have clean feet? We can wash all your feet, but it is not going to take any greater effect upon you than what you already received in the LDS temple. If you want your feet clean, walk in the paths of righteousness and stay in there:

That I may make you clean; [See, that is the cleanliness we seek for.] That I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation; that I may fulfil (the) promise, this great and last promise, which I have made unto you, when I will. Also, I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth. (D&C 88:74-76; see also T&C 86:13-14 RE)

You know, *let your food be prepared with singleness of heart that your fasting may be...* (D&C 59:13; see also T&C 46:13 RE). You can fast more effectively by shutting off the things of this world, and tuning in the things of God, than you can by simply going hungry. Some people go hungry and they get grouchy. They don't get closer to the Lord, they get more irritating to their neighbor. (Comment from Stephanie Snuffer: "It is called 'hangry'." Audience laughing.)

God is in everything. He's absolutely everywhere. It is necessary for you to pay attention to that, in order to open yourself up to that, because the process of revelation— In the East, what people would do to try and get a revelation would be to ponder, to meditate, and to open themselves up. In the West, what we would do to get a revelation is to fast and pray, and offer to God commitments of 50 different things if He—

Please, please, please, *please...* Please, please, please, *please*, just this one time, just... Oh, please, please, ever so much— This, and I'll do that. I'll do that, and I'll agree to do this. And okay, what am I not doing and why... What else could... I didn't wear a white shirt to sacrament last hour. I'll *always* wear a white shirt every time I go... I believe they ask for dads to volunteer to bless the sacrament with their sons, but I know it's something I need to do... I'm gonna bless the sacrament... And there's a list of 50 things. I think... I think I can, I think I can, I think I can...

And God's up there saying, "Hey, I put the answer to the prayer right there—it's in the front yard, ya know."

Oh, ooooh! I gotta bake some bread...and go make some bread and take it to the neighbor and welcome him to the neighborhood... And this next door neighbor who's got this attitude problem, I'll go over and tell them how wonderful sacrament meeting is... I'll get it done, I'll get it done, I'll get it done... Give me the revelation, will ya! [audience laughter]

And the revelation was sitting right in your front yard, waiting for you to come out and to notice.

And we look upon those things and we keep ourselves distracted from, disconnected with, and incapable of opening ourselves up to the revelation which God, at all points, is offering to us. *The world is filled with revelation.* And our problem is that the manner, in which we choose to go about asking for and opening ourselves up to it, is so limited in scope, so poor in quality, so alien to the teachings of Christ, that it doesn't matter that the Lord is shouting at us—all around. We simply won't pay any attention or give any heed to what it is that He has been offering all along.

BLOG POST from August 11, 2015, "answer to an email:"

I know of no way to receive light and truth from heaven but by patient, obedient, and disciplined living by everything God has said, commanded, or instructed. It is as the Lord told His disciples, some things are not overcome "but by fasting and prayer." A haphazard inquiry from a proud and hard-hearted soul will not likely receive an answer from the same Lord who spent entire nights alone in solitary prayer. Our Lord's prayers were so private that His own disciples needed to ask Him to teach them how to pray, because He did not display it for them to learn from by overhearing. He went alone, apart, and in private, and then prayed for hours, oftentimes overnight. This was Christ. This was He who is "more intelligent than them all." Yet people expect they can ask in haste about something that shatters their paradigm and, in their pride, expect to have everything they always believed be ratified to their satisfaction, and what annoys them to be denounced. Until the heart is broken and willing to accept the sad news that they are wrong, and God is going to correct them, they are not likely to get an answer other than—they are right. In fact, they've been right all along. Answers from a meek and lowly Lord come with the greatest accuracy to the meek and lowly inquirer. There are but few of those living.

DENVER: Look, go to D&C section 88. I want to read this and take a slightly different view of it. Beginning at verse 119 of Doctrine and Covenants section 88:

Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God;

That your incomings may be in the name of the Lord; that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord; that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High.

Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings. Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.

See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to (your) bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.

And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.

Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. Behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you unto myself. Amen. (D&C 88:199-126; See also T&C 86:29-30 RE)

Think of this as a description of you as husband, you as wife, and your children. And make your house *this* house. Make this your family—a family of prayer, a family of fasting, a family of faith, a family of learning—therefore a family of glory, which will bring about a family of order; and therefore, a house of God.

Turn to Luke chapter 18, because there the Lord pretty much tells you how it is He evaluates whether someone has purified themselves before Him. This is a story that the Lord makes up, in chapter 18 of Luke, telling a parable to those who trusted in themselves—that they were righteous. Beginning at verse 10:

Two men went into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:10-14; see also Luke 10:7 RE)

God can *only exalt the meek*, because only the meek can be trusted. This is what it means to sanctify yourself. Our idea of purity and Christ's idea are entirely based on different criteria. Why is meekness required *of a God, by a God*? What would happen if God Himself were not patient, willing to suffer abuse, and be rejected? What would happen if God were egotistical? What would happen if God did not return blessings for cursings? What would happen if God were not exactly what He preached in the Sermon on the Mount? What if God did not bless those who spitefully used and abused Him? What would happen if God did not submit Himself to fall into the hands of wicked men, to be despised and rejected? And then to be killed in shame: hanging naked on a cross in full view of the world, while people spit upon Him, and while they mocked Him, and they ridiculed Him, saying, "If you really are what you say you are, come down from the cross, *then* we will believe."

Woe unto all those who say, "If you really are who you say you are..." when the voice of God is sounding in their ears. *They* would have rejected the Lord as well. *They* would have crucified the Lord as well. They are not His sheep because they do not hear His voice. If they were His sheep, they would hear His voice.

But these people who have been separated from our common fare, there could not be a happier people than among *all* the children of God because, you know what? There comes a point when you have separated yourself from the crap, that your capacity to incorporate more and more truth and light allows you to say, "Well, this is more interesting than that was anyway." There's something more engaging about truth and light, and there's something more fascinating about the things of eternity than there is about any of this stuff.

We are all weak, we are all vulnerable, we are all carbon-based mud piles at the moment. And this carbon-based pile of mud around which my spirit has been wrapped into—it gets tired, it has appetites, it has weaknesses. But the reason why they threw fasting in there was to subordinate that body, and to teach it that the spirit is something that ought to be in control. There comes a point at which, if you've allowed the spirit to have its way, you'll find that the things that are fascinating to this pile of mud that you walk around in are far less interesting than the things of the spirit. And whatever principle of intelligence you attain to in this life is going to rise with you, and if it does, then you're going to have so much the advantage in the world to come. And why is that? Because in the world to come, the crap that's here has no utility, it has no value. It's here to test you, it's here to try you, and it's here to give you an opportunity to overcome it. But it's not here for you to revel in—it's for you to dig yourself out from.

The Lord tells a story in Mark—this is Mark chapter 9. Beginning at verse 17, there's this fellow who comes to Christ and says,

Master, I have brought thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; [The spirit overtakes him, he foams at the mouth, and gnashes his teeth.] I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out...they could not. (And Christ says,) O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? ...they brought (the boy) unto him...he saw him, straightway the spirit (tore) him...he fell on the ground...wallowed foaming...he asked his father, How long (has it been) since this came (into) him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it (casteth) him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on (him)...help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth...straightway the father of the child cried out, [cried out,] and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief [help thou mine unbelief]. (Mark 9:17-24; see also Mark 5:8-9 RE)

You don't need more of what you already have. Why are you here? Well, most of you. Some have come only to criticize and gather information. Some of you in the hardness of your heart are going to come to the point where, in the day of judgment, you will look back on this moment and realize, "I damned myself by the hardness of my heart and the bitterness of my soul, because I came to judge a man whose heart was right before God, and mine was not." Your heart will be broken in that day.

But look at *this* man whose heart was broken on *this* day. He cried out, "*Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*" "I have a desire, I have a willingness, but it is so fragile! It is so frail that I don't think it's enough!" *That's* not the problem. Cry out! Ask Him!

Remember His disciples who had been following Him, His disciples who were His faithful followers— His disciples couldn't fix this boy. And they had given up everything to come and follow Him. Jesus healed him. After the incident, the disciples came to Him and said, "Why could we not cast him out?" Christ answered them, *This kind can come forth by nothing, but...prayer and fasting* (Mark 9:29; see also Mark 5:11 RE).

Why do you have to be afflicted by prayer and fasting, if you're a follower of the Lord, in order to get to the point that you can accomplish this? Because *you* don't fall prostrate, crying out with tears. If this man, in this condition, can say, "*I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*" If this man can do this and have the Lord, on his behalf, work a miracle, *you too* can believe enough, *you too* can accomplish what you desire, *you too* can come to Him.

Matthew covers the same incident. But in Matthew he picks up— This is Matthew chapter 17, beginning at verse 19:

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? ...Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind (come) not out but by prayer and fasting. (Matthew 17:19-21; see also Matthew 9:7 RE)

Look, at the end of the day, Peter did not hold any greater or different authority when he came back from a mission and said, “We couldn’t cast out any devils. We’re bringing this person to you, Lord. Whatever it was you gave us, whatever that ordination thing was, it’s just not working.” And then Christ said, “Well, this kind come not out except by fasting and prayer.” Meaning that there is a work to be done to subordinate the body, in order to give the strength to your faith, necessary to achieve something.

Peter had absolutely no different ordination than when he entered the temple following the Lord’s resurrection, and said, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I unto you. In the name of Jesus Christ, arise, take up your bed and walk.” (See Acts 3:1-7; see also Acts 2:1 RE.) What Peter had, that was different, was faith. His ordination amounted to no power, but his faith in Christ healed the sick.

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The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- Denver’s comments during an assembly on “Missionary Work” in Eden, Utah on July 2, 2016;
- Denver’s talk given at the Chiasmus Conference in American Fork, Utah on September 18, 2010;
- Denver's blog post of August 11, 2015, entitled "answer to an email:";
- Denver’s *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #9 entitled “Marriage and Family,” given in St. George, Utah on July 26, 2014;
- Denver’s *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #8 entitled “A Broken Heart,” given in Las Vegas, Nevada on July 25, 2014;
- His talk given at the “Zion Symposium” in Provo, Utah on February 23rd, 2008; and
- His conference talk entitled “The Doctrine of Christ”, given in Boise, Idaho on September 11, 2016.

Today's podcast addresses important questions about Fasting, but is only an introduction to ideas that listeners of any denomination may find important and relevant. These topics are more fully addressed in Denver's blog, including but not limited to these entries:

[Last Week's Comments, May 19, 2012](#)

[3rd Nephi 13:16-18, October 21, 2010](#)

[Sacrifice, July 1, 2018](#)

[3rd Nephi 12:6, October 5, 2010](#)

[3rd Nephi 20:12, September 15, 2010](#)