

# Humble & Hungry

Pastor Andrew Nemeth

March 8, 2020

## Fasting

We fasted last month. It was way harder than I expected; but also God's grace was in it and on it. And it was really great. The prayer calls throughout the day were encouraging and it feels overall that the prayer and fasting time was good individually and corporately.

## Breakthrough

- ✓ During that time I very clearly heard the Lord say, *"2020 is a year of Breakthrough. It's also a year of fasting and the two aren't disconnected."*
- ✓ Our breakthrough this year will come from fasting. Breakthrough in our businesses, in our jobs, and in our relationships.
- ✓ But fasting won't cause breakthrough because it forces God's hand or twists His arm. Fasting will bring breakthrough because it humbles us and puts our eyes on The LORD.

## My Fasting Experience

- ✓ I love food. I rarely go more than a few hours without eating. I've got snacks in my desk, I've got bars in my backpack, I bring smoothies with me to services, and there's emergency rations in my car. And on special dates, Luna and I spend a lot of time picking out *where* to eat. Food isn't just fuel, it's something to be experienced and enjoyed.
- ✓ So when the church calls a fast I think, "I'll fast social media"; or "I'll fast an hour of sleep each day and spend that time with God," but this year the Lord really pressed on my heart to give up food.
- ✓ And as I've talked with Holy Spirit about it, I've come to realize it's not because *"that's the thing that will hurt to give up the most,"* I used to think that way. I used to think that God wanted our fasting to really hurt. Like he got pleasure from our pain somehow. But that's not it at all. God loves us.
- ✓ And as a loving Father he could see that I thought it was food that sustained me and gave me joy, even more so than God.
- ✓ **Deuteronomy 8:3 NLT** *'Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.'*
- ✓ And that's exactly what happened during my fasting this year. Within four hours I'm humbled and hungry realizing that this body is weak. I'm also apologizing to my daughter and asking my wife to forgive me.

## Fasting as a Form of Humility

- ✓ Fasting reminds me of my dependence on God. It reminds me of how much I need Him, and helps me refocus on Him and not myself. Which as we've been learning. Is a fantastic form of humility.
- ✓ Recognizing our frailty, and remembering God's omnipotence and omniscience.

- ✓ **Side-story:** A man was fasting and finding himself irritable and angry with people. He asked God about it. “God,” he said, “why do I get so irritable and angry when I fast?” and God told him, “It’s not that you become irritable or angry when you fast; it’s that irritability and anger are already in your heart; and when you fast they’re exposed.” OUCH. (see **Jeremiah 17:9** - The heart is deceitful)

## A Year Marked by Fasting

So, if the year is going to be marked by Fasting, I thought I better learn how to do this better. And who better to learn Prayer & Fasting from other than the IHOP people.

## Bridegroom Fast from IHOP

- ✓ **Matthew 9:14-15 NLT** 'One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?” Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.’
- ✓ The first Monday-Wednesday of the month.

## Tithing

- ✓ One of my favorite things about it is it gives the first fruit of our time to God. It tithe’s our month in a way.
- ✓ I’m a huge proponent of the tithe.
- ✓ I know many will argue against it and say, “That’s old covenant, we don’t live under the law”; which is true.
- ✓ But I believe that it’s a fantastic litmus test for generosity.
- ✓ In the same way that The 10 Commandments are a great test for right living, the 10% generosity rule is a great test to see if you’re living generously.
- ✓ My family is a huge advocate for living generously. We’ve seen God work some fantastic miracles in our finances when we trust Him with them entirely.

## Humility

- ✓ So this monthly fasting is an incredible way to re-center us in humility.
- ✓ Because humility is one of those funny things that is sort of self-contradicting.
- ✓ The moment you think, “Yeah, I don’t need to do that, I’m humble enough,” you begin to sound prideful.

## Plunging Toilets

The Bible uses the act and image of foot-washing to demonstrate humility, servant leadership, and the act of going low. But that’s not a super common thing in today’s culture. Shoes, roads, and floors are very different than they were 2,000 years ago. But I’ve found that God and I have a running joke that he uses to remind me of those same virtues.

## Focusing on God

- ✓ Fasting isn’t just about denying ourselves (**Isa. 58:5-7**) or making ourselves feel bad. It’s also about re-focusing our attention on God. And not just our version of God; but the reality of God.
- ✓ And I say that because there are times where I begin to subconsciously give God human parameters.
- ✓ I’ll run into a problem and think, “This is a tough one. I’m not sure how we’re going to figure this out,” somehow lumping God into my solutionlessness.

- ✓ Last time I taught, I shared about reducing King Jesus to the position of an advisor. And I think, similarly, there are many times when I have to work to think about God rightly. I have to pray to the God of the Bible, not the God of my preference. I need to remember how powerful and infinite He is, and how I am now.

### Earthly Lenses

Last Wednesday night we talked with the youth about an aspect of this topic. One of our interns shared her testimony about how her relationship with her parents became the lens by which she saw her Heavenly Father. And so we talked with the students about how if their dad is stern, or a pushover; or if they're super close with their mom, or always fight with their mom; they can end up projecting those things onto our Heavenly Father.

### Remember by Bryan & Katie Torwalt

So when I heard a new song by Bryan & Katie Torwalt it really hit me hard.

And oh my soul	If You broke through the oceans
Remember who you're talking to	You can break through these chains
The only One who death bows to	If Your word made the mountains
That's the God who walks with you	It can move them all the same
And oh my soul	If death fell before You
You know that if He did it then	And it's still on its face
He can do it all again	Then the power that raised You
His power can still raise the dead	Is about to move again

Don't tell me that He's finished yet

Woah. You mix a couple of worship songs like that, with a timely fast, and some scripture like Job 38-41 & Isaiah 40 and you've got a strong "*Humble Cocktail*".

### Humility Demonstrated in Job and Isaiah

- ✓ Job 38-41 is God railing on Job. Question after question. Where were you when I hung the stars? Have you seen the storehouses for the hail and the snow? Did you put Leviathan in the ocean? He get's roasted. **Job 42:1-6 NLT** Then Job replied to the Lord: "I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?' It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me. You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.' I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance."
- ✓ **Isaiah 40:12-26 NLT** 'Who else has held the oceans in his hand? Who has measured off the heavens with his fingers? Who else knows the weight of the earth or has weighed the mountains and hills on a scale? Who is able to advise the Spirit of the Lord? Who knows enough to give him advice or teach him? Has the Lord ever needed anyone's advice? Does he need instruction about what is good? Did someone teach him what is right or show him the path of justice? No, for all the nations of the world are but a drop in the bucket. They are nothing more than dust on the scales. He picks up the whole earth as though it were a grain of sand. All the wood in Lebanon's forests and all Lebanon's animals would not be enough to make a burnt offering worthy of our God. The nations of the world are worth nothing to him. In his eyes they count for less than nothing— mere emptiness and froth. To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble him? Can he be compared to an idol formed in a mold, overlaid with gold, and decorated with silver chains? Or if people are too

poor for that, they might at least choose wood that won't decay and a skilled craftsman to carve an image that won't fall down! Haven't you heard? Don't you understand? Are you deaf to the words of God— the words he gave before the world began? Are you so ignorant? God sits above the circle of the earth. The people below seem like grasshoppers to him! He spreads out the heavens like a curtain and makes his tent from them. He judges the great people of the world and brings them all to nothing. They hardly get started, barely taking root, when he blows on them and they wither. The wind carries them off like chaff. "To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One. Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing.'

## Homework

- ✓ Homework 1: Read Job 38-42 and meditate on God's power.
- ✓ Homework 2: Ask Holy Spirit about how you can live out the Christian Discipline of Fasting. Ask Him how often, and what, and when and let him help you build that discipline. (see [Matthew 4:1-2 NLT](#))

## References

- ✓ [Jeremiah 17:9 NLT](#) "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"
- ✓ [Matthew 6:16](#) - Fasting in secret
  - ✓ [John 4:31-36](#) - I'm nourished by doing the will of God
  - ✓ [Acts 13:2-3](#) - Fasting, and then more fasting.
  - ✓ [Ezra 8:21-23](#) - A fast to seek a safe journey.
  - ✓ [1 Kings 21:27](#) - A fast to humble yourself.
  - ✓ *Celebration of Discipline* - Richard J. Foster
  - ✓ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-secret-benefit-of-fasting>