



## Counting the Fifty Days to Shavuot: A Special Season of Fasting/Consecration

<sup>8</sup>*I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ...I count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...<sup>10</sup>that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings...<sup>12</sup>Not that I...am already perfected [attained]; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me [fullness of his destiny] ...<sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God...(Phil. 3:8-14)*

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Counting of the Fifty Days:** we're in the season of counting the fifty days from Firstfruits to Shavuot
1. Typically testings increase during this season.
- B. Forty Days of Fasting/Consecration:** Different leaders in the Body have invited folks to join in on forty days of fasting. Mike Bickle and IHOP-KC invited folks to join with them from March 1-April 9. Lou Engle has called whoever wants to join in a forty day season of fasting leading up to Shavuot.
1. Initially Upset: Initially I was mad when I found out about this opportunity; but after I sat with it and prayed, then I felt that this was something I was to be a part of. You don't have to be excited about this invitation to prayer/consecration.
  2. Why Fast? It's a season of significant challenges and we need Yah's help. Fasting is a way of humbling ourselves and positioning ourselves before Him and asking for His help. We are largely running out of smart, earthly solutions. I am also greatly conscious of the drift in my own heart and of my need for greater intimacy and connection to His will and ways.

### II. FASTING PRAYER THEMES

<sup>19</sup>*Yeshua said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the groom is with them, can they? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup>But the time will come the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day." Mark 2:19*

- A. Main Prayer Theme: Holy Spirit Outpouring:** the primary prayer during this season is for the outpouring of the Spirit—first in our own hearts to refresh, sustain, and empower us; and then for His Spirit to poured out in a way that brings the lost to be saved, the sick to be healed, and the demonized/oppressed to be delivered.
1. The Water of God's Spirit Personally: I want and need God's living water to flow into my heart. I need the flourishing which will only come through His divine activity in me.
    - a. The most important relationship with Yah is our personal relationship with Him.
    - b. He loves me, I love Him, therefore I'm a success.
  2. God to Pour Out His Spirit Corporately: we want to continue to contend and pray for this outpouring that will touch others.
    - a. God used Balaam's jackass: it's important that we don't see this coming outpouring to be our primary validation and encouragement. That validation is to come from our own secret history with Him.
- <sup>21</sup>*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' <sup>23</sup>Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!'" Matthew 7:21-23*
- B. Subtheme 1: Overcoming Lukewarmness (The Laodicean Church [Revelation 3:14-22])**
1. I Was Shocked: to feel that this represented where I was.

a. there are pockets of lukewarmness in my heart. I need His help to free me from this lukewarmness.

2. *Love was the Motivation* for God to give these words of rebuke.

3. *God wants to Touch the Lukewarm Church*: His greatest promises were given to this most messed up congregation.

### C. Subtheme 2: Staying Faithful in the Midst of Difficulty (The Nations are Raging [Psalm 2])

<sup>1</sup>*Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers conspire together against YHWH and his Anointed One <sup>3</sup>“Let’s tear off their chains and throw their ropes off of us.”* Psalm 2:1-3

1. *The Global Powers are Raging*: they are attempting to throw off God’s loving restraints that He has given us through His Word.

2. *A Believer Before a Patriot*: Our nation’s democracy and freedom isn’t to be our primary pursuit. Yah and His kingdom are to be that primary pursuit. Where we have gotten this focus out of kilter then we need to repent and make necessary adjustments.

a. An Iranian Believer: “Whenever ease, affluence, and power is given to the church, the church has disease and lethargy. I’d rather have millions of people come to Jesus than have freedom or democracy.” (from the excellent film *Sheep Among Wolves Volume 2* found at <https://www.faistudios.org/?sapurl=LytqYmY2L2xiL21pLytmbmhqYnpjP2JyYW5kaW5nPX RydWUmZW1iZWQ9dHJ1ZQ==>)

b. For the Iranian Believer, lethargy and indifference was a greater threat than persecution.

3. *Suffering and Challenges will Increase* – we need tougher skin and softer hearts– must grow in understanding that there will be greater coming suffering for the sake of the Gospel.

*“Then they will hand you over to be persecuted, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations (ethnos) because of my name.* Matthew 24:9

a. Difficulty is ahead of us: We may have a season of respite on our nation, but Matthew 24:9 is still ahead of us.

i. I like to fit in; I don’t like to be hated

ii. He’s telling us these things so we aren’t suckerpunched and we can prepare for these times

b. YHWH will pour out His Spirit: because the good news of the kingdom will go to all nations (ethnic groups)

*This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.* Matthew 24:14

c. A great falling away (apostasy)

*Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day (the coming of Yeshua) will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.* 2 Thessalonians 2:3

i. The great falling away will occur in large part because of not anticipating the distress and persecution that comes our way because of our identification with Yeshua.

<sup>16</sup>*And others are like seed sown on rocky ground. When they hear the word, immediately they receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup>But they have no root; they are short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away.* Mark 4:16-17

ii. One teacher describes it as though we are currently swimming against a 1 mph current but that that current will incrementally increase. We need to develop our spiritual muscles now as we anticipate a greater adversarial current.

4. *Pleasures in the Midst of Suffering for Yeshua*: For Moses, the riches of suffering with Christ were better than that which he gave up—namely, the treasures of Egypt.

<sup>24</sup>*By faith, when he grew up, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, <sup>25</sup>choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to enjoy sin’s fleeting pleasure. <sup>26</sup>He regarded*

**abuse suffered for Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for his eyes were fixed on the reward.** Hebrews 11:24-26

- a. Yeshua went low and suffered before His exaltation...we will too.
- b. We need to realign our expectations and anticipate suffering for the sake of identifying with Yeshua and proclaiming the Gospel.

**D. Subtheme 3: Standing Strong with the Israeli People** (Israel Identification [Isaiah 19])

1. We want to stand with God's covenant people Israel.
2. By God's grace we will be among a group of people who will sacrificially suffer for and identify with Israel.
3. "The church" has a terrible past history of not only not standing with the Jewish people but actively persecuting them.

### III. A SEASON OF CONSECRATION

*My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "YHWH, I am coming."*  
Psalm 27:8

**A. Called to Weakness Before Him:** Would you sit with Me in a season of consecration, submit to weakness, and let Me do a work in you to prepare you for the days to come?

1. Called to Go Low: I know from past seasons that this doesn't look like awesome, exciting, or wonderful.
2. Removing the Props: we are starving out the things that I've gone to for stimulation to keep me from being in the quiet with You.
  - a. the Broncos
  - b. the political hacks that I identify with
  - c. the internet surfing
  - d. reaching for our phone instinctively or when bored
3. Weakness More Than Hunger: I'm weak because of not having the food to lean on.
  - a. I want to go low and humble myself before You because I'm way weaker than I thought. I want to lean on You and ask for Your help more readily in the midst of my weakness.
4. A Spirit of Passivity/Lethargy: I identify much too much with this. I often want to be given anything to help pacify and anesthetize me from my nondesirable, uncomfortable reality.
  - a. dullness & boredom: will this assessment bother me enough to make necessary changes?

**B. Revelation 3:14-22**

*<sup>14</sup>"Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea: Thus says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the originator of God's creation: <sup>15</sup>I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup>So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup>For you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,' and you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup>I advise you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see. <sup>19</sup>As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup>See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup>"To the one who conquers I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup>"Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."*

1. Buying Gold Refined in the Fire: gold is good, costly and valuable; I want to buy YHWH's gold
  - a. His gold is free but requires us to come to Him, listen to Him, and talk to Him  
*1*"Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the water; and you without silver, come, buy, and eat!  
*Come, buy wine and milk without silver and without cost!*  
*2*Why do you spend silver on what is not food, and your wages on what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and you will enjoy the choicest of foods.

3Pay attention and come to Me; listen, so that you will live. Isaiah 55:1-3a

- b. Definition: “To exchange where we are spending our time and energy and begin to redirect our own resources of life to acquire that which has continuity in the age to come.” Isaac Bennett
  - c. How can I channel my time, resources, and my focus in a way to channel that in a scope that’s eternal?
  - d. He is so gracious: He responds to our cries when we open up and ask him to come and help us (even when we come before Him with impure motives). This should give us confidence to talk to Him in the midst of our mess.
  - e. Talk to Him – He is so gracious to help us, but He often waits for us to engage with Him and cry out to Him before helping us (James 4:2b).
2. Buying White Garments
  3. Applying Eye-Salve: Ask God for help in seeing things as He does.
    - a. Don’t try harder, see more clearly: if we see what David, Paul or other biblical saints saw, we will walk more like they did.
    - b. I don’t have a lot of energy to change my behavior, but I can position myself close to Him and ask Him to help me.
  4. Opening the Door and Fellowshiping with Him
  5. Only the Overcomers: This qualifier was given for each of the seven congregations described in Revelation 2 & 3. This is a key identifier in indicating that all of us as Believers will have to overcome things in our faith-walk with Yeshua.

### C. Action Items

1. Focused Attention: Give God our focused attention and remove the clutter.
  - a. He loves us: We are commanded to meditate on this reality and to grow in our understanding of God’s love for us. If we are growing in this realization, we will grow in our love towards Him and then to ourselves and others.

*“As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. **Remain in my love.**”* John 15:9

*I made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that **the love You have loved Me with may be in them and I may be in them.**”* John 17:26

*<sup>8</sup>The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup>Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. 1 John 4:8-11*
  - b. What are the things that are cluttering up our lives? What about removing these things specifically and intentionally in this season?
  - c. He lives within us and will help us.

*<sup>10</sup>If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. <sup>12</sup>So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— <sup>13</sup>for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”* Romans 8:10-15
2. Speak Simple Phrases to God until there is a shift in our emotions. He will change us as we talk to Him.
  - a. Helpful phrases
    - i. “Help Lord.”
    - ii. “I love You Lord.”

- iii. “Teach me how to buy gold from You refined in the fire.”
  - iv. Find your own phrases that have a “little Holy Spirit oil on them” and then repeat these phrases throughout the day.
  - v. Find phrases that work then stick with that phrase off and on throughout the day.
- b. Not about Bible knowledge but a conversation with a Person. The Bible is a tool to come to Him. Yeshua rebuked a number of scholars who knew the Bible really well but missed Him as the foundation and originator of the Bible’s focus.
- <sup>39</sup>You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. <sup>40</sup>But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life. John 5:39-40*
- c. Persevering: Sometimes when saying the phrases to the Lord you won’t feel anything and at times you actually begin to feel worse—stay at it and breakthroughs will come.
- i. “You don’t come as easy as some but I will watch and pray.” Kristene DiMarco
3. *Small Steps of Obedience*: obey the next small step that He is in front of you that He impresses on your heart.
- a. It’s really that simple
  - b. We can do this. It is not too difficult.

#### **D. Final Practicalities**

1. *Let the Social Media Go*: my strong encouragement is to fast from this. We really don’t need these props in this season as we focus on YHWH.
2. *Default to a Daniel Fast*: Have the Daniel fast (it’s really just a healthy diet) to be the basic default for this consecration time. The general guideline is only foods grown from seed and the only beverage being water. Here’s a website that can tell you more: <https://www.daniel-fast.com/daniel-fast-food-list/>
3. *Fasting Complaining/Negativity*: If the Israelites had trouble with grumbling/complaining during their 50 days to Shavuot, why not fast from this negativity. Mike Mason’s small fifty chapter book *Champagne for the Soul: Rediscovering God’s Gift of Joy* is a great resource to help with this.
4. *Press On*: Let’s not grow passive or shrink back, but let’s press toward the goal of the high calling of the upward call of God (Philippians 3:8-14). We can do this together! Let’s pray for and encourage each other on the journey.