

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

47- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 27  
Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy- Part 10

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Church April 02, 2023

## **Matthew 6:1-24**

**1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.**

**2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,**

**4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.**

**8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

**9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.**

**10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.**

**11 'Give us this day our daily bread.**

**12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'**

**14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

**15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

**16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face**

**18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

**20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;**

**21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

**22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.**

**23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

**24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.**

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now we are zeroing in on the Passage where Jesus talked about Fasting- so, let's read verses 16-18 again:

**16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face**

**18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

Now last time I told you that these three verses cause us to ask several Questions like:

- *What* is "Fasting"?
- *How* and *When* should Believers Fast?
- *Why* did Jesus teach this?

... and I also told you that it is completely out of place to *solely* use Old Testament Reasons and Logic as a Foundation for a New Testament Practice like Fasting. But the Reality is that besides the four Gospel Records- the New Testament is almost completely silent about Fasting. And that has to be explained because this is what has caused a number of people in the modern Church to teach that Fasting is a 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Practice that has been *fulfilled* in the Life; Ministry; Death; and Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ and IS now obsolete.

These people teach that New Covenant Believers are to primarily Rejoice and Celebrate and Rest- because Jesus has accomplished ALL that needed to be done; and the Fighting and Agony and Struggle against Sin has already been won by the Person and finished Work of our Lord- which has made Fasting obsolete.

Now I agree that many of the Reasons put forth by those who fast today are based primarily in the Old Testament- *especially* Passages like **Isaiah 58**. And I agree that many of those Reasons ARE obsolete- precisely because while it is true that the Prophet spoke infallibly- it is also true that he spoke BEFORE Jesus came and died and rose again.

But I also agree that Passages like **Luke 5:33-39** give us a Reason to Fast today- that is based entirely on the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus. So, let's read that Passage again together:

**33** And they said to Him, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the *disciples* of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink."

**34** And Jesus said to them, "**You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?**

**35** "**But *the* days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.**"

**36** And He was also telling them a parable: "**No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.**

**37** "**And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.**

**38** "**But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.**

**39** "**And no one, after drinking old *wine* wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good *enough*.'**"

Now the BEST Way to understand this Passage- like any Passage- is to go through it- *expositionally*- and "take out of" the Passage what God the Holy Spirit

through Dr. Luke put into it. And our *first* Step is to arrive at the correct Context of *why* Jesus said what He said- by looking at the *preceding* Passage of **Luke 5:27-32** that reads like this:

**27** After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, **"Follow Me."**

**28** And he left everything behind, and got up and *began* to follow Him.

**29** And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other *people* who were reclining *at the table* with them.

**30** The Pharisees and their scribes *began* grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"

**31** And Jesus answered and said to them, **"It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick."**

**32** **"I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."**

So, it is when the *first* Condemnation by the Pharisees was rejected by Jesus (**Luke 5:30**), that these Self-righteous Hypocrites rebuked Jesus the *second* time by saying,

**... The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the *disciples* of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink. (Luke 5:33)**

Now it is true that, in Context- the main Point of this entire setting and Jesus' Comments is NOT about Fasting per se- but about the great Distinction between the Old and the New Covenants- and- even *more specifically*- between the hypocritical Religiosity of the Pharisees and the Actions of the true disciples of the Lord.

But it is also true that the Subject at hand is "Eating and *not* Eating" (Fasting) and *why*. And the main Point of *that* Part of the Issue is what Jesus said in verses 34&35:

**34** And Jesus said to them, **"You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?"**

**35** **"But *the* days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."**

Now we need to understand that the Pharisees didn't care one whit about the disciples of John- they were simply *using* them as a Means to condemn Jesus and all that He taught. So, we must *separate* the disciples of John (who were very Sincere) and the Pharisees (who were not) from *that* Perspective.

But as we correctly do that- we must then join those two Groups back together from *another* Perspective- that the Reason behind *why* the disciples of John fasted and the supposed reason *why* the Pharisees fasted was the *same*. In other words- the Logic behind *why* the disciples of John were fasting and the logic of *why* the Pharisees fasted was identical- even if it is true that the Pharisees were Hypocrites; and the others were not.

So, back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century- if you asked a disciple of John why he fasted; and you asked a Pharisee why he fasted- they would both give you the *same* Answer. And part of the Reason both of them fasted was so that God would send the Messiah. So, because that is true- we must understand that the Reason behind *why* the “**attendants of the Bridegroom**” would fast *after* Jesus went back into Heaven was *different* from *both* of those other Groups.

So, the first thing we must understand about New Testament Fasting is that it is entirely *unique* from Old Testament Fasting. So, let's break this down. When the Pharisees made the Accusation:

**... The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the *disciples* of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink. (Luke 5:33)**

... they were doing so with the Intent to say that Jesus and His followers were not “*of God*” because they were NOT following the traditional Old Testament Design for Fasting- that had been practiced among the Jews since the Days of Moses.

And that Reality forced everyone to ask, “*Why?*” Because either Jesus (and His followers) were sinning because they did NOT follow the Old Testament Pattern for Fasting- OR Jesus had Divine Authority that allowed Him to completely *ignore* the established Old Testament Pattern. In other words, if Jesus was merely a Rabbi or a Teacher- then He SHOULD have gladly submitted to the Pattern for Fasting established by the Old Testament. But if Jesus was God Almighty in human Flesh- He SHOULD NOT follow that *inferior* Pattern precisely because He *personally* was bringing in a *superior* Pattern that would forever *replace* the first Pattern.

And this Reality was true concerning *many* other Commandments that God gave under the 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant like:

- Animal Sacrifices
- Temple Worship

- The Requirement of physical Circumcision
- The false Emphasis by the Pharisees on Ethnicity; Bloodline; and Genealogy
- The Manner of “Keeping the Sabbath” that the Pharisees taught

... which is why Jesus NEVER submitted to any of these Old Testament Commandments and did NOT require His disciples to do so, either.

So, if Jesus were nothing but a Prophet or a Jewish Leader- He would have been sinning by NOT participating in these Aspects that were COMMANDED by God Himself through Moses. But because Jesus was God; and because Jesus was brining in the *final, full, and completed* Revelation of God in the New Covenant- Jesus would have been sinning if He HAD participated in these things. This illustrates the absolute UNIQUENESS of Jesus and His earthly Ministry.

And that means that the real Issue at stake here- was NOT Fasting- but Jesus’ Deity; His Office as Messiah; and Who He is. And so, Jesus answers this false Accusation with a “*Word Picture*” that was designed to do two things:

1. Refute the Accusation
2. Confirm Who He is

**34 And Jesus said to them, "You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?"**

**35 "But *the* days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."**

So, by identifying Himself here as, the “*Bridegroom*”- Jesus was establishing that He is God. And as God- He was *categorically* stating that He was also the “*Husband*” to Israel (**Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 31:32**). And while we might not pick this up so easily in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- the Jews of that day certainly understood it- because God was *always* likened to the “*Husband*” to His chosen people. So, by establishing this Association, Jesus is teaching two very important Things:

1. Fasting was primarily associated with Mourning under the Old Covenant. It was an expression of “*broken- Heartedness*” and “*Desperation*”- usually over some Sin; or some Danger; or some deeply longed for Blessing. So, Fasting was something that Old Testaments saints did when things were not going the Way they wanted them to.

2. The long-awaited Messiah (Jesus) had come. And Jesus said His Coming was like the Coming of a Bridegroom to His Wedding Feast. And His Coming was to be *Celebrated*- not Mourned.

Now all that the Jews understood about the “*Bridegroom*” was the vague Generalities of inspired Prophecies like:

### **Isaiah 62:5**

**For *as* a young man marries a virgin, *So* your sons will marry you; And *as* the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, *So* your God will rejoice over you.**

### **Hosea 2:19&20**

**19 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion,**

**20 And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord.**

And now here- the Son of God- the Messiah- the redeeming “Angel” (Genesis 48:15&16); the longed hoped for “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6) and “Ruler in Israel” (Micah 5:2), had come. And He claims to be the “Bridegroom”- the “Husband” of His people- Who will bring in a new and infinitely *superior* Covenant for His new people- who will become the “true” Israel or the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16).

### **Romans 2:25-29**

**25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.**

**26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?**

**27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?**

**28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.**

**29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.**

### **Galatians 6:15&16**

**For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.**



**And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.**

And John the Baptist had *initially* recognized this- even though he later doubted after he was arrested. And when John's disciples asked him about Who Jesus was- he responded:

**John 3:28-36**

**28 "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'**

**29 "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.**

**30 "He must increase, but I must decrease.**

**31 "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.**

**32 "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.**

**33 "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to *this*, that God is true.**

**34 "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.**

**35 "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.**

**36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."**

... and if you had ears to hear- you understood what John was saying here- God Almighty- the One Who betrothed Israel to Himself in Covenant Love- had finally come!

And this Event is so stunning; so glorious; and so unexpected in this Form- that Jesus said you simply *cannot* Fast now- in fact- you *must not* Fast! The Event of the Incarnation is much too Happy; and too spectacularly Exhilarating to Mourn. So, Jesus is saying that Him Coming to the earth as the Messiah and Israel's Bridegroom was so infinitely MORE important than any personal situation that a genuine Believer might have- that it completely *overwhelms* any personal Tragedy; any personal Disappointment; and any personal spiritual Goal- to the degree- that it would actually be *wrong* (sinful) for a Believer to Fast while He was on the earth.



Fasting is for times of Yearning and Longing and Hungering after God. But how could *anybody* even think about any of that while God in human Flesh literally stood before them? So, there is ONLY one Reason *why* the Pharisees and the others *continued* to Fast- even though Immanuel was there- their Fast proved beyond any Doubt that they categorically denied Who Jesus is! In other words, by continuing to Fast while Jesus was there- these men were sinning horribly against God because they were rejecting that Jesus was the long- awaited Messiah!

And this tells us that not all Fasts are of God. Some Fasts represent a godly and holy Longing for God. And God will honor those Fasts. But other Fasts are designed to do nothing but *reject* God's Will and God's Way. And God Himself will *damn* those Fasts and those who are fasting for that Reason.

So, after thousands of years of Praying and Hoping and Looking for the Messiah- He is now here! And yet those religious Hypocrites *continue* to Fast as though nothing Important has happened. So, what Jesus is saying here by using the word, "**cannot**" in verse 34 is that the Pharisees were *Evil* in their hearts for fasting now- because by engaging in this ongoing Longing for the Messiah to come- they were denying that He was already here! And that means that the Absence of Fasting on the part of Jesus' disciples was correct and proper- because it was a Witness to the Fact that God Himself was now "*with them*" (Immanu-el).

So, one of the most sacred Aspects of 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Life- Fasting- had now been turned into a "*shaking of the fist*" in God's Face; a wicked Sin by those religious Hypocrites- because by Fasting as Jesus stood before them- they were rejecting Who Jesus was!

Now if Jesus had stopped talking at that Point- then those people who suggest that the New Covenant precludes all Fasting would be correct. But Jesus did *not* stop talking at that Point. He went on to say,

**But *the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.* (Luke 5:35)**

... and this is the Key for us today as it pertains to Fasting. Jesus said,

**... then they will fast in those days.**

... so, what did He mean by that? What are the "**those Days**" in which believers are supposed to fast?

Some within the modern Church have suggested that Jesus was only referring to the "three Days" between His Death on the Cross and His

Resurrection. Those people suggest that the “Bridegroom” was “**taken away from them**” in Death and then “given back” three Days later- in a glorious State. And it was during those days (3) that the disciples were supposed to fast.

And these people go on to teach that *after* that one time when Jesus was “**taken away from them**” Fasting would be eternally *excluded* from Believers because Jesus had said in **John 16:22-28**:

**22 "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one *will* take your joy away from you.**

**23 "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.**

**24 "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.**

**25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.**

**26 "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf;**

**27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.**

**28 "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father."**

These people suggest that having our Joy made “full” and mourning over some spiritual Issue through Fasting are mutually exclusive. In other words- the long, protracted “*Church Age*” (Last Days/Last Time/Millennial) would begin immediately AFTER the Resurrection. And during that “Age”- there would be indescribable Joy among Christ’s disciples because of His finished Work- thus there would be no Reason to Fast.

So, is that true? Does this mean that Fasting is now excluded? Is Jesus prophesying that the Need for Fasting under the New Covenant would exist for only three days? No! And it is “No!- for at least two Reasons:

1. The early Church in the Bible fasted
2. Fasting has been part of historic Christianity

## 1. The Early Church in the Bible Fasted

First of all- according to the “*Diary of the Early Church*” (**The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**)- the Church fasted.

### The Acts 13:1-3

**1** Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

**2** While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

**3** Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

### The Acts 14:23

When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

These Events recorded here by Dr. Luke are Inspired; and thus they are also Infallible and Inerrant. And they occurred long *after* the Resurrection and the Installation of the New Covenant. And this tells us that the earliest believers did *not* think that Jesus taught that Fasting would be “done away” and become Obsolete after the Resurrection of Jesus.

## 2. Fasting has been a Part of Historic Christianity

There is a *second* Reason- that holds *less* Weight- but that nonetheless should be considered. And that is the indisputable historical Fact that Fasting has been part and parcel to the very fabric of the Christian Church throughout its 2,000 year history.

Now I say that this second reason holds less Weight- *not* because it can be disputed- because it can't. Devout believers have, in fact, fasted since the very *beginnings* of the Church Age continuing on to this present day. But I say that this Argument holds less Weight simply because what the various people of the Church have or have not done *may* have been in Error- even though they thought it was Correct.

We must always believe and teach that the historical Actions of Believers- *however sincere they may be*- are *not* Infallible. But because Fasting is woven in with over two Millennia of recorded Acts of Christianity shows that the “orthodox

Understanding” of *all* the major Leaders throughout *all* of Church History is that they didn’t think that Fasting had been done away either- even though they may have been in Error. And it is simply beyond the “Realm of Possibility” (as well as “Statistical Probability”) that *all* the Leaders throughout all the various “Ages” of the Christian Church would *all* be wrong about something like this. So, to that degree- this fact holds *some* Weight.

So, what did Jesus mean when He said,

**... *the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.***

He means that after His Resurrection- the Lord will return back to the Father in Heaven and take up His Ministry as our great Intercessor. And Jesus will remain there in that ongoing Ministry- until His Second Coming (the Church Age/Millennial). And it is during “*those days*”- when Jesus is with the Father- and interceding for us- that His disciples will fast. Another Way of understanding this is to say as long as we are in the “*Church Age*” or the “*Millennial Reign of Jesus*”- the disciples of Jesus SHOULD fast. The retired professor of New Testament Studies and Koine Greek at Westmount College, Robert H. Gundry got it right when he said,

“The entirety of the Church Age constitutes ‘those days’ that will come when the Bridegroom is taken away”<sup>1</sup>

And the strongest Reason for taking this View comes from the Fact that the only other place in the entire **Gospel of Matthew** where Jesus uses the term, “**Bridegroom**” is to refer to Himself coming back at the End of the “Church Age”<sup>2</sup>. In **Matthew 25:1-13**, Jesus portrays His Second Coming as the “arrival” of the Bridegroom:

**1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps**

**and went out to meet the bridegroom.**

**2 "Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.**

**3 "For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,**

**4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.**

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<sup>1</sup> Robert H Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982) p. 169

<sup>2</sup> Part of why I wanted to preach verse-by-verse through **Matthew** is so I could prove- using ONLY Scripture- that the “*thousand year reign of Jesus Christ*” (the Millennial) refers to a “long period of Time” (*more* than a literal 1,000 years) in between the Resurrection and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming- commonly called, the “*Church Age*”.

- 5 "Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and *began to sleep.*
- 6 "But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet *him.*'
- 7 "Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.
- 8 "The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'
- 9 "But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you *too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.*'
- 10 "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.
- 11 "Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'
- 12 "But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'
- 13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

So, Jesus clearly thinks of Himself as a “*Bridegroom*” Who is gone- not only for three days- but until He returns in the Second Coming. And these are the “**days**” our Lord has in mind when He said,

**... then they will fast.**

Arthur Wallis entitled the sixth chapter of his book, *God's Chosen Fast*, “The Time is Now”. And he said,

“Jesus is saying: ‘Now while I am here in your midst as the Bridegroom you cannot and should not fast. But I am not going to remain with you. There will come a time when I return to my Father in Heaven. And during that time (those days) you will fast.’ That time is now.”

Now those who oppose Fasting as a viable “Means of Grace” teach that the ongoing and indwelling Presence of God- the Holy Spirit- means that we are not alone. And so, God is with us in the third Person of the Trinity- God the Holy Spirit- Who is fully Deity- and Who now lives and dwells inside all genuine believers. So, because that is true- these people conclude that we have no reason to Fast today and should always Celebrate what God through Christ has already done- rather than mourn over some fault we have. So, is that a valid Argument? Does that Argument hold water?

It is true that Believers today may experience great Intimacy with God precisely because God the Holy Spirit dwells in us. And that lends Credibility to this View on Fasting. But when we consider that the New Testament promises an infinitely *greater* Intimacy than *anything* the Old Testament saint had- AND *anything* we may experience now- when we enjoy Christ *Personally* in Heaven. And *that* Experience over there will be so great and so glorious that it will make this Experience down here to pale by comparison.

So, in *that* sense- Christ is NOT with us (in Fullness)- but is still *away* from us. And that is precisely why the Apostle Paul wrote:

### **2Corinthians 5:6-8**

**6** Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord —

**7** for we walk by faith, not by sight —

**8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

... and ...

### **Philippians 1:21-24**

**21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

**22** But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

**23** But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better;

**24** yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

Paul said that it was “**preferable**” and “**very much better**” to physically be in Heaven in the actual Presence of Jesus than it was to live here on the earth as a saved person with God the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us. Now that doesn’t in any way *minimize* what we have been given now- it simply puts that glorious Experience in perspective with the far *greater* Experience of being in Christ’s literal Presence- when we will have NONE of the fleshly Filters and carnal Hindrances that we struggle with now.

The point being that- as far as Fasting is concerned- Jesus is still considered to be “away” from us- in *that* sense. And therefore the *Need* we have to Fast (and pray) along with the Need to Grieve and Mourn and Repent and Struggle and wage War is still with us.

In other words- in this Age- where we “walk by Faith and not by Sight”- there is an Ache inside every genuine Believer that Jesus is *not* here as fully; and as intimately; and as powerfully; and as gloriously; as we *want* Him to be. So, we hunger for more. And *that* is why we fast today- even with all that Jesus has done for us.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.