

21 DAYS

OF PRAYER & FASTING

Preparing our Hearts for the Resurrection

What Jesus accomplished for the world on Resurrection Sunday gives us all the opportunity to receive eternal life when we believe in his finished work on the cross. And the Resurrection gives us purpose in the here and now, too. This year, we don't want to just remember Jesus' sacrifice on one Sunday - We want to set apart the 21 days leading up to Easter to prepare our hearts to celebrate our new life in Christ. Join our Ovid family for 21 days of prayer and fasting, March 22nd - April 11th.

Fasting is simply voluntarily setting aside the important things in your life and focusing on something even more important: Jesus, and his vision for your life. Fasting is abstaining from eating or drinking for an extended period of time . . . But "eating" and "drinking" can represent so much more. What we "consume" in our bodies, our minds, our spirits and our emotions can distract us from our relationship with God. Where are you leaning on things other than God to get you through your day? When we "have to have" anything every day and we are unwilling to give it up, we are likely relying on that "thing" to sustain us instead of depending fully on God.

Fasting is our way of reclaiming those areas of our lives and devoting our attention to God instead. A season of fasting is the perfect time to set aside anything that's holding you back or standing in the way of seeing God more clearly.

Methods of Fasting

As a church family, we're focusing on three methods of fasting this season. You can pick one to practice for all 21 days, or do a different one each of the three weeks of the fast.

1. Follow the "Daniel Fast," a diet of fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains.
2. Give up one or two meals a day, and devote those meal times to prayer. Eat normally at the other meals.
3. Fast from a non-food item you find yourself dependent on (ex: all screen time - TV, social media, recreational use of cell phones, video games).

During these 21 days, take time to worship God in a deeper way, to pray like never before. Write down the things that God is putting on your heart, and watch what God does!

Sunday, March 22nd

Today I fasted from _____

For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. - 2 Corinthians 1:5

We don't like to think about suffering...but without the suffering of Jesus, we would have no Easter to celebrate. The beauty of Christ's suffering is he never did anything wrong - he suffered because he did everything the Father told him to, and it made people uncomfortable. When we suffer for doing the right thing or attempt to love like Jesus, we share in his suffering - and his comfort. Christ drew near to humanity to suffer on our behalf, and as we suffer he draws near to us too.

Father, help us to live in this world like Jesus and to count it all joy no matter what happens. Thank you, God, for being the one who draws near to us in our brokenness and suffering. Increase our awareness of your closeness.

Monday, March 23rd

Today I fasted from _____

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. - 2 Corinthians 2:14

When Roman generals returned victorious from battle, they would lead a parade through the city streets, and the whole ceremony was marked by the perfume of incense and oils and flower petals crushed under the horses' hooves. When we become a fragrance signifying the hope of eternal life in Christ to those who reject Jesus, that makes us a "bad smell." But to those who are searching for true life, we are the aroma of hope.

Jesus, make us more like yourself, so others would have no doubt how you transform lives. Help us live without fear of what other people will think, devoting ourselves to you. Help us bring hope and light into a dying world, so many will come to know you.

Tuesday, March 24th

Today I fasted from _____

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. - 2 Corinthians 3:18

God chose to reveal himself to us by taking on human flesh. That means Jesus himself is the perfect union of God and man, and when we put our faith in him, he makes us one with God too. Before Jesus, the only people who could come anywhere near God's presence had to enter behind a veil in the temple. In Christ, the Spirit of God dwells in us, and he is continually remaking us into the image of Christ. So we don't have to rush the process...we can trust God to transform us.

Father, help us trust your process in us. Continue to show us more of who you are, and as you do so, show us more of who you've created and called us to be. Transform us, and lead us.

Wednesday, March 25th

Today I fasted from _____

We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. - 2 Corinthians 4:18

The Saturday of the first Easter weekend must have been a day where all hope felt lost for the disciples. The Savior they'd put their hope in had just died a humiliating death on a cross - and they didn't yet know the grave would give way to an empty tomb. When our lives feel like that Saturday - when we're in the middle of a story of suffering and haven't seen the coming light yet—we can trust that God raised Jesus from the dead and is redeeming us too. So we can look for that “which is unseen” but also God's purposes and glory in the here and now.

Father, you are good. Teach us to expect to see your goodness and to watch your purposes in all things, even the most painful moments of our lives. We trust you - help us trust you more.

Thursday, March 26th

Today I fasted from _____

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. - 2 Corinthians 5:18

Reconciliation is the restoring of our relationship with God. We've never known how to save ourselves, but God took it upon himself to redeem us in Jesus Christ. As a result of knowing him, he's given us the honor and responsibility of participating in his redemption for others too. When we walk with Jesus, we experience what it's like to have a restored relationship not only with God, but with ourselves and others. And that's something where we can walk alongside others too, as they experience healed relationships in a way they never have before.

Jesus, thank you for restoring our relationship with you. Please transform our hearts in the way we see ourselves and one another, and give us eyes to see those around us who need help trusting you through your reconciling work in our lives.

Friday, March 27th

Today I fasted from _____

Hear me, my God, as I voice my complaint; protect my life from the threat of the enemy. - Psalm 64:1

Our God delights to hear our prayers, even when we're unhappy. When we feel the pressure of the enemy - temptation to sin, discouragement, lies about who we are - God promises to help us and protect us. And because God is eternal, so are his promises.

Lord, there are many things that burden us. Help us say “no” to temptation today. Encourage us in the places we feel like giving up. Protect us from the enemy who seeks to kill, steal and destroy. We trust you, Jesus.

Saturday, March 28th

Today I fasted from _____

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. - 2 Corinthians 7:1

We give ourselves to Jesus when we believe him for salvation, but we have to continue to give ourselves to him every day going forward too. As we walk with Jesus, we won't make perfect decisions. But we can consciously choose to grow in holiness by doing what we know is right - in the big and small things.

Jesus, thank you for saving us. We want to live the way you ask us to. Would you increase our desire for holiness in even the smallest decisions we make? Give us wisdom about how we should walk with you in everything we do, and reveal any ways we're not doing that now. We love you.

Sunday, March 29th

Today I fasted from _____

You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples. - Psalm 77:14

Sometimes our circumstances overwhelm us because it feels impossible that our situations will ever change for the better. But Jesus reminds us the best is always yet to come. When we feel the weight of the world on our shoulders, and discouragement starts to settle into our bones, we have to remember who God is; the God who works wonders, the God who does impossible things every day, Hope in his character is what will sustain us through anything we encounter in life.

God, you are the God who does wonders. Thank you for the ways you've blessed and rescued us in the past! We trust you with today and with the future. No matter what happens, we believe that you are good and a giver of good.

Monday, March 30th

Today I fasted from _____

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. - 2 Corinthians 9:7

God is a God of self-giving love. His love is the kind that turns outward toward other people, never curving inward upon itself. His love makes him the most generous person in existence - he gave us his own Son! As he transforms us and conforms us to his image, we are able to walk in self-giving love as well. That's how we give cheerfully, not from a sense of obligation.

Father, you gave us Jesus out of your selfless love. Would you teach us how to give of our time and resources with a heart like yours? Produce in us the fruit of generosity.

Tuesday, March 31st

Today I fasted from _____

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. - 2 Corinthians 10:3

Walking with Jesus isn't easy, and we face opposition daily from the enemy of our souls and sometimes from the world around us. Even our own minds can feel like our enemy sometimes. Anytime we come under attack for our faith in Jesus we fight back with the truth found in God's Word, by praying in the Spirit and by surrounding ourselves with other godly people. We have to bring even our thoughts under submission to Jesus.

Spirit, give us eyes to see what is from you and what is not. Help us identify the lies we believe and the voices we're listening to that don't come from you. We cast out fear, anxiety and rebelliousness in Jesus' name. Help us walk in obedience, Lord.

Wednesday, April 1st

Today I fasted from _____

Besides the other things, what comes upon me daily; my deep concern for all the churches. - 2 Corinthians 11:28

Jesus never saved us for isolation, but for adoption into his family. All around the world, we have brothers and sisters in Christ who speak different languages and have different cultural practices for their faith, but we are one in Christ, just as we are with our local churches. Paul had a deep concern for his brothers and sisters, even when he wasn't physically present with them, and as we follow Jesus, we should share that concern for others as well.

Lord, increase our concern for your people in other parts of the world. Grow in us the same sense of justice and compassion you yourself have. Help us come up with practical ways to pray for and support our brothers and sisters internationally.

Thursday, April 2nd

Today I fasted from _____

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. - 2 Corinthians 12:9

God has uniquely crafted our strengths and our weaknesses, both with the purpose of demonstrating his glory. Our weaknesses are not something we have to be ashamed of, but an opportunity to depend more deeply on the Lord.

Father, show us our weaknesses and our strengths in the way you see them—as opportunities for your glory. Help us depend on you in the specific ways we feel weak today. Meet us in our lack, and show your glory to others though our lives.

Friday, April 3rd

Today I fasted from _____

For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. — 2 Corinthians 13:4

Although the Lord crafts our weaknesses specifically for us, he also gives us full access to his power. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead dwells within us by the presence of the Holy Spirit, when we're walking with God. And our God is never desperate; nothing is too big for him.

Lord, there are many things in life that feel "too big." But none of it is too big for you. Help us to lean on your power and trust your work in us, especially in the things that inspire fear within us.

Saturday, April 4th

Today I fasted from _____

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." - Matthew 1:22-23

Long before Jesus was born, the prophets told us that God promised a Savior. Several hundred of years later, God sent Jesus to save the world. No matter how long it takes, God always keeps his promises. We can't lean on our own understanding when his promises seem unbelievable or difficult.

Lord, you keep your promises. We know this to be true, but it's still hard to wait sometimes. Thank you for understanding us when we grow weary. In your compassion, would you show us your goodness in a fresh way today? Help us wait in hope on you for the fulfillment of the promises you've given us.

Sunday, April 5th

Today I fasted from _____

For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness. - Psalm 9:4

We say it all the time: "Life isn't fair." But God has given authority to Jesus to judge the world, and he is a just and righteous judge. When we encounter injustice in our own lives, rather than take matters into our own hands, we can trust God to act on our behalf - to vindicate us where we need it, and to carry out justice. He's the only perfect judge of what that should look like for each of us.

Jesus, thank you for taking up our cause and judging righteously on our behalf. Help us not to try to control things on our own, but to trust in you with the process.

Monday, April 6th

Today I fasted from _____

And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." -Matthew 3:17

The Father is delighted by His Son, which makes his sacrifice on the cross for our sins that much more astounding. This is about the value that communicates to us! And as if that wasn't enough, when we put our trust in Jesus, the Father sees us the same way he sees his Son: pure, righteous, whole, complete, fully accepted, and fully loved.

Father, the way you see us changes everything and totally transforms the places we get our own self-worth and value. It's hard to live up to that sometimes, so please help us see ourselves the way you do. Help us walk in the confidence that comes from being your children.

Tuesday, April 7th

Today I fasted from _____

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." - Matthew 4:3

Jesus knows what it's like to live in our skin, even to face temptation to sin. When Satan tempted Jesus, he came with an accusation. He said, "If you are the Son of God," as if Jesus wasn't who he said he was. When Satan tempts us, he does the same thing: he questions who we are and who God is. God's voice never sounds like an accusation; he doesn't speak to us that way. So when we hear the voice that accuses us, we know it's not God, and it's not true. We can choose to trust what God says about us instead.

Jesus, thank you for redefining who we are and giving us a security that never changes. Show us where we're listening to the voice of the enemy instead of your voice of truth. Help us walk by your Spirit today.

Wednesday, April 8th

Today I fasted from _____

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. - Matthew 5:44

Jesus turns the world's logic on its head. What seems logical to us is to reject those who hurt us, but that is opposite of how Jesus wants us to live. While we were still enemies of God, he demonstrated his love for us by sending us Jesus. That's our calling too as his followers. This doesn't mean we reconcile with everyone who's ever hurt us, but we do need to choose to forgive them and act toward them in whatever way love dictates.

Father, give us wisdom in all our relationships. Help us love those who have set themselves against us. Help us do good to those who have hurt us. Bring people to mind we need to pray for. We entrust ourselves to you and to your care.

Thursday, April 9th

Today I fasted from _____

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. - Matthew 6:33

Desire is a huge part of being human. We all have things we truly need and desperately want, and when we don't have immediate access to them, it's a scary thing. Jesus showed us the heart of the Father, he is a good God who delights to give to his children. Not only does he promise to meet our practical needs, but he loves to give us good gifts as well. So all we have to do is seek intimacy with Jesus, and the rest will find us there.

Jesus, it's hard to wait for the things we need and want, but we want to know you first and foremost. Would you continue to show us more of who you are? Please meet our needs and give us the desires of our hearts. We trust you.

Friday, April 10th

Today I fasted from _____

Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. - Psalm 31:5

On the cross, Jesus prayed similar words to the Psalmist. It's a statement of huge trust to commit your spirit to God - it's trusting him with the core of who you are. Surrendering always feels scary because we don't know what we'll have to give up. But willingly submitting ourselves to Jesus is the safest place we could ever be. He's the God who rescues and redeems us, and he's the God of all joy.

Father, today we choose to surrender all of who we are to you. You are the God of truth, who has redeemed us. Protect us and stand guard over us as we commit ourselves to you.

Saturday, April 11th

Today I fasted from _____

And behold, a leper came and worshipped Him saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. - Matthew 8:23

Jesus' response to the man with leprosy shows us two amazing things about his character: First, he is willing to answer our cries! When the man asks for healing, Jesus doesn't bat an eye; he just reassures him of his own desire and willingness to heal him. Second, Jesus' healing isn't just a physical remedy for the man's disease. He says, "Be clean!" And shockingly, Jesus reaches out a hand...and touches this man who probably hadn't been touched by another human being for years. To a man deprived of human contact, Jesus does what no one else had been willing to do - he heals: physically, emotionally, spiritually. He draws near.

Jesus, thank you for being willing to answer our prayers. Help us believe in your willingness, and help us be the kind of people who draw near to others too. Show us how we can demonstrate your compassion and nearness to those who need to know your love.