

Prayer and Fasting at the Beginning of May 2018

Again, today, you may want to fast from some routine part of your life that by avoiding that behavior you can focus more on your relationship with God in prayer.

Fasting is a way to discipline our minds and bodies to help us focus on God and his Word. You may want to fast from food, social media, or something that the Lord has been leading you to set aside for a day or two. Ask the Lord if there is anything that is keeping you from hearing his voice.

You can always find resources on prayer and fasting on the Intown.org website under Worship and Prayer.

As you spend some time alone with God, we suggest this pattern for your worship and study.

A New Heaven and A New Earth

Greet the God of Heaven and Earth, the God of Good, Better and Best!

As you come to the Lord for restoration and hope today, remember that you are encountering the one who holds the future of all time and eternity in His hands. Regardless of how you are experiencing life today, open your heart to the Lord of all and receive love and redeeming grace. Your future is secure. Breathe in that security and peace.

God's guidance for today is anchored in an eternity of reward and completeness.

As you read this passage from the final book of the Bible, take time to see the picture being described for us. See what the Holy God has to say about those who worship Him and those who oppose Him.

Revelation to John 21:1-8

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral,

sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

It took me a couple of readings of these two paragraphs to begin to grasp what John was seeing. I'd encourage you to read it as many times as you'd like.

Reflect upon the role of God as our Savior

What does John see revealed?

How do you account for the metaphors of a new heaven and new earth, a holy city like a bride adorned for her husband?

What is promised about God's dwelling place and relationships? What can we expect God to do for us?

How does the hope of comfort and the end of mourning and crying make you feel? What do you want to say to the Lord?

What about the voice of making all things new? There is such finality and purpose in these declarations.

What are you most grateful for and excited about in Jesus's words? What does the Voice promise for the faithless and idolaters?

Take some time to soak in all of these promises and this picture. Record your reflections.

Go Forward in love

As we've been hearing from Jimmy Agan and our pastor's preaching the past few weeks, we are living in a "middle time." We need to be assured of what is coming in the days ahead. There is a plan and God's eternal love story has a "happily ever after" ending.

If you feel that your mind and heart have been changed through this series of sermons and this reflection, please record the change and give thanks to God for making you a part of His story.

As you go forward, know that there is eternal love waiting for you. Pray for all who made service commitments at our picnic yesterday and ask the Spirit of God to empower and encourage all of us to share the Gospel with those in need.