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DISARMING PRINCIPALITIES & POWERS THROUGH FASTING & PRAYER

Jesus Christ began His ministry only after He had fasted forty days. His fasting prepared and empowered Him to disarm principalities and powers until He totally defeated Satan at the cross.

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Col 2:15)

Jesus came to achieve this victory as man because man had lost their God-given authority when they were deceived by Satan and disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden.

To be successful in His mission to redeem the world, He had to first deal with Satan, the cause of mankind's problems. People do not realise that the visible world is controlled by the invisible. That is why the problems in the world today cannot be solved humanly.

God wants us to be a blessing to the nations. What better way to bless the nations than to **pray against the works of darkness** and the forces that can destroy nations?

If only God's people knew how truly wicked the enemy is, how evil their intentions are. People are not aware of the enemy's tactics because they are a **spiritual** enemy and

cannot be seen in the natural. The Bible clearly warns us, however, that we should not underestimate the enemy's power.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph 6:12)

Jesus did not underestimate the enemy's power although He has full authority over the power of the enemy.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31-32)

Jesus had to pray for Peter, not to stop the attack of Satan but to soften the blow so that Peter would be stronger afterwards.

The enemy will always try to frustrate God's plan and His work. The classic example is when God wanted to create in the environment of Eden an obedient people who would enjoy the fullness of His blessing. Yet right in the Garden of Eden, Satan came to sabotage God's perfect plan. God's plan for every individual, family, church, town, city, nation and the world is for good but in the natural, many things go against us whenever we want to do His will.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to do the will of the Father. He said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

The work of Jesus, the purpose for which He came, was to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8b). He was so powerful in casting out demons and evil spirits and bringing healing and deliverance to the people because He had prepared Himself for the ministry.

How did He prepare Himself? Through forty days of fasting and prayer.

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. (Luke 4:1-2)

The fact that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil implies that the temptation was not unexpected but rather, it was necessary.

Even before the cross, Jesus as the Son of Man overcame the temptations that Adam and Eve succumbed to. This gave Him the power (as man) to deny Himself and eventually go to the cross to totally defeat Satan.

Both Adams, the first Adam and the last Adam, were tempted. The first Adam fell into temptation resulting in sin and death for the whole of the human race. The last Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, defeated Satan through fasting and with the written word of God.

The temptations they faced were similar. Appealing to the lust of the flesh, both were tempted to eat. Appealing to the lust of the eyes, Adam and Eve looked at the forbidden fruit; Jesus was shown the kingdoms of the world. Appealing to the pride of life, Adam and Eve were tempted to be like God; Jesus was tempted to exhibit His sonship (1 John 2:16; Luke 4:1-12).

The first Adam lost the authority and right to rule by eating. Jesus won it back by fasting. Fasting brought Jesus into direct confrontation with the powers of darkness and gave Him the power to defeat the enemy, to overcome all the temptations that Satan hurled at Him.

Jesus came to do the will of the Father. He fasted to show that it is the will of the Father for us to fast. **Whenever we fast and pray, we engage in spiritual warfare.** That is when deliverance takes place and we confront the powers of darkness

that try to stop us from doing God's will.

Jesus' whole lifestyle and ministry was one completely led of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because He began His ministry with fasting and prayer. **He showed us how to completely subdue the flesh to let the spirit man reign.**

Although fasting is so important and powerful, many struggle and find it difficult to fast. Why? Because the flesh always wants to be pampered. We are so used to living by the dictates of our flesh that even after being born again, instead of denying the flesh through fasting and prayer, we still allow the flesh to rule.

Jesus is returning soon. It is time to ruthlessly subdue our flesh. What better way than through fasting?

God is a loving Father and He wants to bless us richly. In fact, before we ask, He already knows what we need. On the first day Daniel started to fast and pray, God had already answered. But the enemy stood in the way.

During the war against the terrorists in Afghanistan, for example, millions of dollars were spent to send food to the Afghan people but it did not all reach them. Why? Because the enemy intercepted and took it for themselves. God is ever willing to give to us but we have an enemy who wants to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

It is the same thing in the area of healing.

When the father of an epileptic boy complained to Jesus that the disciples could not cure the boy, Jesus cast the demon out and the boy was cured.

The disciples wanted to know why they could not cure the boy. After all, Jesus had already given them power to cast out demons and to heal all kinds of sickness and diseases (Matt 10:1, 7-8).

Jesus told them “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (Matt 17:21).

Jesus dealt at once with the power that was causing the boy severe suffering. In the natural, the boy was seen as being epileptic but actually, he was being attacked by the demon.

No wonder so many Christians today are suffering all types of sicknesses and diseases. Instead of looking at the unseen (the spiritual), they are looking at the seen (natural). We must learn to discern and deal with such situations instead of following the world’s way. When we continue to suffer, it could well mean that we are not fasting and praying enough.