



THE
DANCE

AND THE
DIRGE

THE PAIN AND PLEASURE OF
PRAYER AND FASTING

JONATHAN FRIZ & MATTHEW LILLEY

© 2023 Mathew Lilley and Jonathan Friz

All rights reserved. The material contained in this PDF cannot be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations in critical articles and reviews.

For more information and permission, write to:
inscribepress@gmail.com

Enjoying Prayer

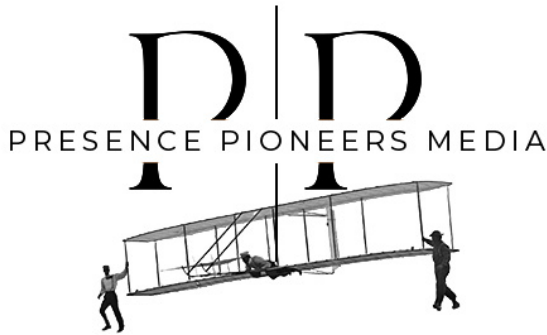
ISBN 978-1-951611-56-9 (print)
978-1-951611-57-6 (e-book)
(also available as an audiobook)

10 Days

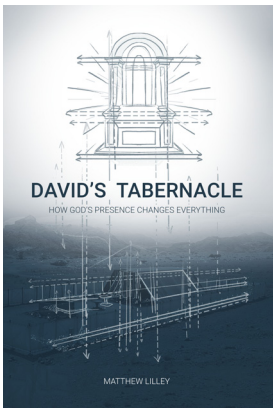
ISBN 978-1-951611-54-5 (print)
978-1-951611-55-2 (e-book)
(audiobook coming soon)

David's Tabernacle

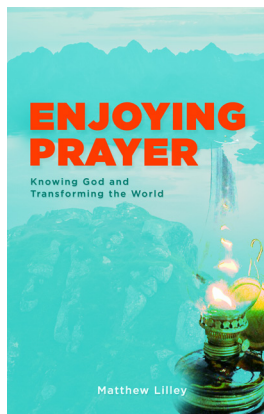
ISBN 978-1-951611-22-4 (print)
978-1-951611-23-1 (e-book)
(also available as an audiobook)



Titles from Presence Pioneers Media



David's Tabernacle
Matthew Lilley



Enjoying Prayer
Matthew Lilley



10 Days
Jonathan Friz

Available wherever you buy books or at
<http://media.presencepioneers.org>

To get updates and discounts on future book releases visit

<http://media.presencepioneers.org>

Introduction

'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

Matthew 11:17

AS JESUS SPOKE TO THE CROWDS, he described the ministries of him and his cousin John as a “dance” and a “dirge.” The ministry of John the Baptist was like a funeral song. He was an unusual prophet who lived in the desert, fasted, and called Israel to repentance. The earthly ministry of Jesus was more like a wedding song. He ate meals with sinners and was apparently so fun at parties that they called him a glutton and a drunkard.

This dichotomy only makes sense to us when we recognize the tension of this current age. The kingdom of God is both now and not yet. It is here, and it is coming. Jesus has inaugurated the restoration of all things, but He has not yet consummated it. He has come — born to a virgin, fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross, resurrected on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father. And He is coming again — to reign from Jerusalem, to eradicate all evil from the earth, to usher in the fullness of God’s kingdom and to make all things new.

As prayer ministry leaders for many years, Jonathan and I have experienced both the dance and the dirge of

prayer and fasting. As intercessors we constantly live in this tension of what we already have in Christ and what we know is yet to come.

We have tasted the pleasure of prayer. We are saved by God's grace. We have the Spirit of God inside of us and can experience God's amazing presence right now. The Father loves us. God is moving. Miracles are happening. Lives are being changed. So we rejoice, we sing and we pray with faith for historic revival!

Yet we have also tasted the pain of prayer. The world is still broken. Injustice and sin run rampant. Many people groups have yet to be reached with the Gospel. The enemy rages against God's purposes. And above all, Jesus is not with us here. So we mourn, we fast and cry out for the return of our Bridegroom Jesus.

As Jonathan and I discussed the writing of our latest books, we realized God was inviting us to move forward together in sharing these two projects with the body of Christ at the same time. Jonathan's book, *10 Days: The Unlikely Story of a Global Movement Mourning for the Return of Jesus* has the word "mourning" in the subtitle and points to the "dirge" of prayer. My book, *Enjoying Prayer: Knowing God and Transforming the World* is literally about joy and the "dance" of prayer. Yet both books contain elements of both, because these two facets of prayer are inseparable.

For this ebook, we have included chapter eleven from *10 Days* titled "Transforming Revival Comes to America." From *Enjoying Prayer* we have also included chapter eleven titled "Fasting: Hunger for God Through Prayer." You'll also find chapter thirteen, titled "The Rest of Mankind," from my 2021 book *David's Tabernacle*.

All three of these books are available from [Presence Pioneers Media](http://media.presencepioneers.org) at <http://media.presencepioneers.org> and are filled with stories, Bible teaching, and practical application to help you enter into “the dance and the dirge” of prayer, fasting, and worship. We hope these sample chapters encourage your heart to pursue God’s presence and kingdom like never before.

Matthew Lilley
Founder, Presence Pioneers

From *10 Days*



10 DAYS

THE UNLIKELY STORY
OF A GLOBAL MOVEMENT
MOURNING FOR THE
RETURN OF JESUS

JONATHAN FRIZ

Transforming Revival in the USA (2007-2008)

BACK AT YALE

DURING THE SUMMER OF 2007, I once again traveled to Yale for the Institute of Campus Revival and Awakening. In 2006, George Otis Jr. had shared amazing stories of transforming revival from the island nation of Fiji. Bodies were healed, the dead were raised, towns were transformed; even the earth and water were healed through the simple power of prayer, fasting, and repentance in this remote nation.

George had shared about the Healing the Land team who were instrumental in this move of God. This year, Savi, the Fijian leader of the Healing the Land team was a keynote speaker. Rhonda Hughey, an American who had been working closely with the native Fijians, shared as well.

Savi and Rhonda were eyewitnesses of what I was longing to see. As they shared their methodology, I was surprised to learn just how similar their strategy was to the vision of 10 Days.

Rhonda and Savi shared how the Healing the Land team operated.

The tribal chief would invite them into a town or village. Often, but not always, this would happen because of an insoluble problem the village was facing. The chief would “stop everything” in the town for seven to ten days. There was a call to fasting along with three daily times of extended prayer. Meanwhile, repentance happened both in the larger meetings and house-to-house, with the Healing the Land team leading villagers to reconcile with neighbors, to repent of sin, and to (literally) get rid of idols. Over and over, the Healing the Land team witnessed a moment when “God came to town,” often around seven days into the process. When “God came to town,” there would be a sign in the natural world to confirm what was happening spiritually. Most often, the natural sign would be rain. After this, the spiritual atmosphere would shift. Miracles, signs, and wonders would become commonplace, the dead would be raised, and the land would be healed, with miracles affecting soil fertility, the health of the water, and plant and animal life taking place in villages.

My jaw was on the floor. The strategy of the Fijians, stopping everything for a period of seven-to-ten days to pray and repent, was almost identical to what God had shown me for 10 Days. However, if I was right, God wanted to see this exact thing happen all over the world, at the same time, and in an annual, repeatable way. Could it be that 10 Days was God’s plan for people around the world to experience the same type of transforming revival that was impacting Fijian villages, but on an annual basis?

I continued to dream with God—what if a Fijian-style transforming revival started touching down in multiple,

large cities at the same time? What if western cities had the same experiences with God's power as remote Fijian villages—what if “God came to town” in New York City, or Washington, D.C.?

The Fijians continued to stretch my sense of what was possible, filling my heart with a hunger to see what they were describing happen in the United States. I also realized what we were up against. In a tribal culture, people obey the leader. The chief could shut down a village and lead people into prayer. How could we see that happen in the highly individualistic western nations? How was it possible for cities to shut down for prayer and repentance? At the very least, it would take the engagement of political and business leaders, as well as the church. Most likely, it would take some kind of external crisis as well.

The impossible dreams of God were stirring in my heart.

10 DAYS PENTECOST 2008

In the fall of 2007, Cassi and I did the Ten Days of Awe on our own. For some reason, God didn't lead me to do anything larger. It was becoming clear to me that the fall 10 Days, while a much bigger part of God's plan, was taking longer to mature than the 10 Days Pentecost. While I was eager for the vision to come forth, I also had a new-found patience. He would make everything beautiful in His time. My job was simply to be a steward of the vision He had entrusted me with, and not quit. I continued to watch and wait, trusting Him to do what He showed me in the fullness of time.

In 2008, we headed back to Northfield for a second spring 10 Days. Our event in 2007 completely changed my life. Because of this, I wanted as many of my classmates

as possible to have a similar experience. While there were many wonderful things about our seminary experience, the biggest thing missing was a dynamic, face-to-face encounter with the God we spent so much time studying.

I also knew my classmates—no seminary student would ever do 10 Days unless I could make it available for course credit. And so, after hours of work with the administration, we were able to offer 10 Days of Prayer as an elective for course credit at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

As we began 10 Days 2008, everything was completely different. The incredible experience of John 17 unity that unexpectedly landed the year before was now inexplicably absent. In fact, there were several disagreements. Some people didn't like the worship music; others had theological questions about what was happening.

"The Bible says people should not pray in tongues together without interpretation."

"When that girl sings, she sounds like Jesus is her boyfriend."

"Some of these people are doing weird things—what if it's demonic?"

Many of my seminary friends were struggling with the same issues I had in 2007 and were letting me know about it. But it was more than that. In 2007, it had been difficult for people to think or talk about anything other than the Lord. Somehow, even though we were praying a lot, things still felt, well, rather normal.

Frustrated with our inability to break into a deeper experience of God's presence, we tried a new approach. We invited everyone into three days of fasting, from

Sunday night to Wednesday night. We also pulled back on some of our worship led evening sessions and had prayer for three nights that highlighted other kinds of prayer: Scripture, intercession, and silence. On Tuesday night, we had a corporate prayer meeting of about forty people sitting in utter silence for an hour and a half. You could hear empty stomachs gurgling as the minutes ticked slowly by.

LABOR PAINS

On the morning of Wednesday, the seventh day, I was attending to the mundane realities of leading an event, welcoming new families, solving problems, being a host. Our gathering was significantly larger this year. 24/7 prayer was ascending night and day. Good things were happening.

And yet, having tasted John 17 unity in 2007 and realizing we were coming up so short of it, I was restless inside. I needed to get away.

I found a room where I could be alone with God and turned on some worship music, lifting my complaint to the Lord.

“God, if we can’t see John 17 unity happen with a group of people who are doing nothing but praying for 10 Days, how will we ever see it happen in the entire church?” I asked.

It wasn’t an accusation against God, it was the cry of a desperate heart.

As I cried out to God, I began sobbing and groaning heavily. Waves of tears and groans would come steadily

every four to five minutes, last for several minutes, and then lift, and then come again.

A few months earlier, my wife had given birth to our second child, a beautiful little girl named Sabbath. As I was recovering from one of these waves of weeping and groaning in prayer, I had a realization—

“I’m in labor!”

While it struck me as strange for a man to be in labor, no sooner had I realized what was happening than a new wave of weeping and groaning hit me.

After about forty-five minutes, the experience lifted. I felt like a wrung-out sponge. As I found out over the next days, several other people in our group were experiencing labor pains in other parts of the building on the same day.

THE OUTPOURING

Early in the afternoon, on a beautiful spring day, three of us were talking on the yard near the prayer room. Enjoying warm sunshine in a beautiful place with great friends was almost as good as being in worship.

As we continued chatting, we heard a shout from the prayer room. Someone blew a trumpet. Two of us looked at each other—we could both sense it. Something was happening spiritually and we needed to be there right away.

As we entered the room, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit had already begun. We gathered in a circle, holding hands, as the power and presence of God was poured out on us. Several people began spontaneously speaking in tongues for the first time. God was releasing other gifts as well. The presence of God was strong. This was the

beginning of what I had prayed for that morning—God was responding.

WHEN GOD COMES TO TOWN

That evening would be unlike anything I had ever experienced. As the worship began, one of the young men, Josiah Armstrong, stood up with a word from the Lord.

Josiah prophesied, “I see a cloud the size of a man’s hand.”

He was referencing the cloud Elijah’s servant saw after Elijah prayed seven times for rain in 1 Kings 18. In the passage, the cloud was the sign that rain was on the way. At that point, we had prayed seven complete days.

He continued, “God is going to send rain in the natural tonight as a sign of what He’s doing in the Spirit.”

To this day, I don’t understand what happened next, but as soon as Josiah said these words, the entire room smelled like rain. As everyone in the room breathed in the scent of rain at the same time, there was a collective, audible gasp.

“What is happening?” I wondered.

I rushed outside to check for rain. All the stars were visible with not a cloud in the sky.

After the outpouring that afternoon and now Josiah’s word, we continued late into the night with corporate prayer and worship, followed by ministry to one another in small groups.

Well after midnight, I found myself headed to bed, exhausted but satisfied—what a day! I entered my apartment quietly without turning on any lights, being careful not to wake our children. As I walked in the dark

towards my bed, feeling my way forward with my hands, through the open window I heard the sound of a gentle rain just beginning to fall.

And then it hit me—God had come to town.

What the Fijians had described happening over and over in their villages, we were now experiencing right here in the United States. After seven days, God's presence had come flooding in. And just like in Fiji, He had confirmed the spiritual reality of His coming with a natural sign—the rain of Heaven had come.

OVERFLOW

The next three days were wild.

The power of God was evident everywhere and many amazing things were happening. The main thing I remember was the intensity of God's presence. At times, I would be overwhelmed by it. I'd have to retreat to my room and take a nap. When I woke up, I would jump back in the river. I felt like a child on Christmas morning.

Some who had been resistant were now in a different state of mind. Instead of questioning the theological validity of different practices, they had different questions.

"How do you explain what we all witnessed last night?" they asked. "We all just saw a powerful sign. But what does it mean?"

Not sure how to answer, immediately Acts 4 came to mind. In that chapter, the apostles gather for prayer and then an outpouring of the Holy Spirit takes place. The outpouring is accompanied by a physical sign in the natural world—in that case, it was an earthquake that shook the room.

“What we experienced last night is similar to that,” I explained. “God did something spiritually and gave us an accompanying sign in the natural world. For the apostles, it was shaking. For us it was rain.”

That seemed to make sense to everyone.

NORTHFIELD CALLING

Something else was happening in this outpouring. God was speaking to many of us about what He wanted to do at this incredibly beautiful, entirely empty campus. He was showing us a new vision: He wanted to give Northfield back to His people and make it a center for John 17 unity, a meeting place where the different parts of the church could come together. As we prayed, God revealed vision of a multi-ministry center with a house of prayer, a four year college, local farming, and a training center for missionaries to be sent around the world in the spirit of the Student Volunteers.

God also made it clear to me that our calling to Northfield and New England would be long-term.

We had been praying for God to revive an empty campus for two years. Now, I started to see to God was calling me not only to pray, but also to be part of the answer to my own prayers. Somehow, I was going to be part of this new ministry center at Northfield.

CONCLUSIONS

As in 2007, 10 Days in 2008 was a completely life-changing experience. To this day, the outpouring of 2008 is one of the most powerful encounters with God I have ever had. It was as though God’s Kingdom had violently

invaded earth—it was almost too much for my human frame to handle.

Through this experience, I learned how each 10 Days experience is different because God is always doing something new. While this one started off more slowly, and I was initially disappointed, it ended up being even more powerful than 10 Days in 2007.

When facing opposition, don't be offended, but love your fellow believers, and trust in God. My friends who initially questioned what was happening later encountered the love and power of God.

I experienced first-hand how 10 Days is a strategy for transforming revival. The kinds of things that were happening in Fiji and around the world were also available in the West. Amazingly, 10 Days was nearly identical to the strategy of the Fijians. While they were leading the way and had far more experience, we had now seen the same thing happen in the USA.

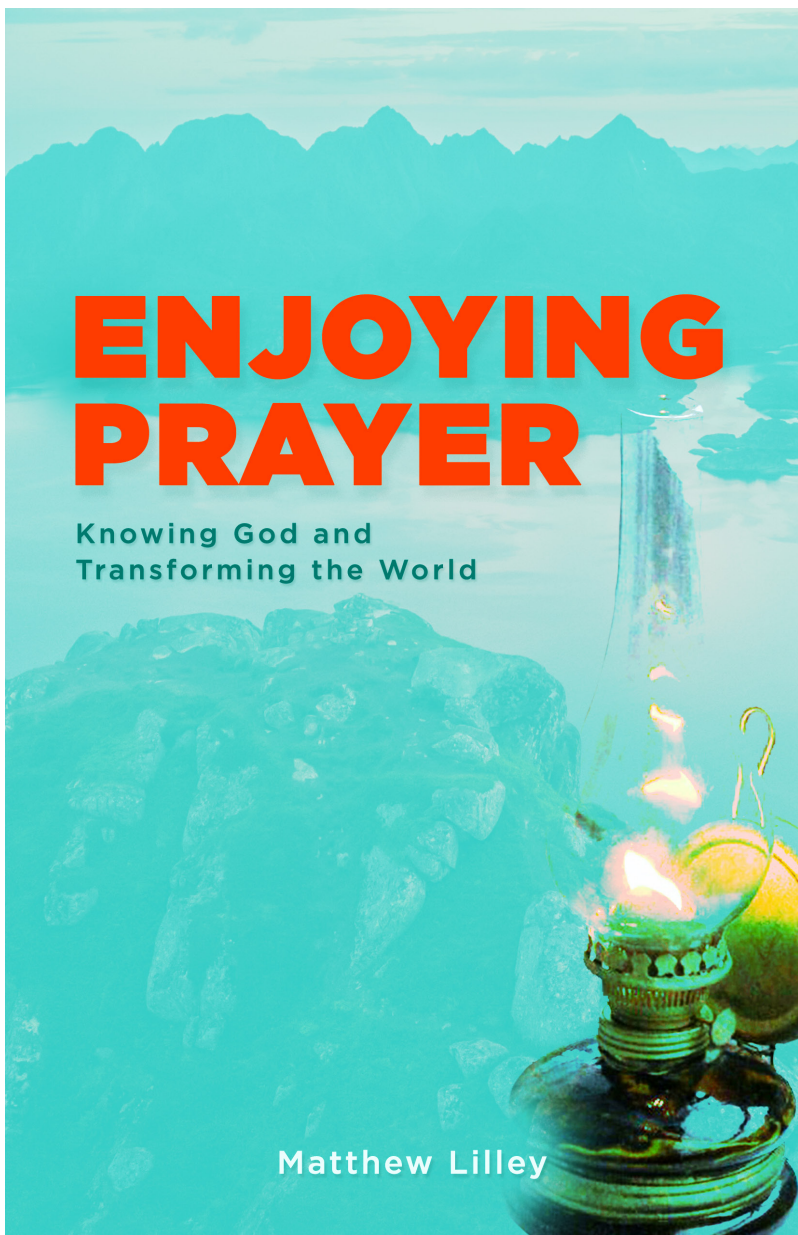
On a personal note, in 2008 it became clear to Cassi and me that God was calling us to Western Massachusetts, Northfield, and New England. Somehow, we were going to be part of the revival of D.L. Moody's legacy. God had poured out His Spirit on us with fresh faith so that somehow the impossible dreams of His heart seemed extraordinarily simple. Nothing is impossible for God.

From *Enjoying Prayer*

ENJOYING PRAYER

Knowing God and
Transforming the World

Matthew Lilley



Fasting: Hunger for God Through Prayer

IT WAS THE DAY OF A CITYWIDE, outdoor prayer event called Day Seven. Our small worship ministry had spent the spring traveling to various youth groups and churches to host worship and revival nights for students. The culmination of our trip was a big night of worship and prayer at the amphitheater of our Town Common — the biggest park in our city. In the days leading up to the event, our team kept an eye on the weather forecast. It called for rain. After several months of planning and preparation, we would be devastated to have our gathering canceled due to bad weather. We decided to continue with the event in faith, praying that the rain would hold off and the clouds would clear.

We named the event Day Seven because we called for seven days of fasting and prayer leading up to the gathering. Our theme was the story of Joshua at Jericho. We were praying for the metaphorical “walls” to fall down around our city as we united in prayer, worship, fasting, and obedience. I had never fasted for seven days, but I figured this was a good time to start. I was in my early twenties, and I did not trust myself to have enough self-control to

avoid food for seven days. But I knew the accountability of doing it with others would help me stay faithful.

Our team arrived at the park on the seventh day to unload gear and set everything up. Dark clouds were looming. We were all fasting, hungry, and exhausted. But we were also full of faith, expectant and desperate for God to do something in our lives and city. Throughout the afternoon set up and sound check, rain fell off and on. We had tents and tarps to cover everything the best we could. Intercessors walked around on site, doing their best to pray away the rain.

When it was time for worship to begin, the crowd gathered and the rain stopped. In fact, right above the park the clouds parted and the blue sky was visible. Miraculously, God provided a physical and spiritual “open heaven” for our night of prayer. We were ecstatic to see God move in a way that seemed like the kind of thing you only read in Bible stories. The sea parted for Moses. Jesus walked on water. Elijah called fire from heaven. Joshua saw the sun stand still. And we saw clouds part, in the middle of a storm, so that we could gather the students of our city together to worship and pray for revival. Later that night, I found a video of the weather radar, and you could clearly see the storms moving towards Greenville and splitting right over us during that time. Needless to say, this was an eye-opening experience for me regarding the power of prayer and fasting.

THE NEGLECTED DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

I am convinced that fasting is one of the neglected keys for awakening a lukewarm western church and keeping our hearts hungry for God even in the midst of our prosperity. I

believe a fasting and praying people will be who God uses to give birth to the revival He longs to release. As we near the return of Christ, the Bride's desire for Christ and His kingdom will grow in intensity.¹ The Holy Spirit will fan the flame and release grace to the body of Christ to fast and pray like never before.

Fasting is like a nitro boost for your prayer life. I once heard someone say that fasting and prayer go together like peanut butter and jelly (the irony of comparing fasting to a food is not lost on me). Fasting and prayer are paired together throughout the Bible because they are a powerful combination to awaken your heart and increase the potency of your prayers. Fasting may not seem enjoyable — while you're in the moment. But the rewards are great. In our Christian walk, sometimes the deepest joys come after doing the hardest things.

FASTING REGULARLY IS NORMAL CHRISTIANITY

Most Christians do not think about fasting as a normal Christian discipline, but it will become normal again. As we will see, fasting is not just a special event. Yes, there are times to come together for seasons of focused fasting and prayer during a crisis. But God desires a people who fast and pray as a lifestyle.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is Jesus's foundational teaching on the kingdom of God. This was essentially his Christianity 101 class. In this broader teaching, Jesus considered fasting a normal part of what it meant to be a follower of God. He included fasting along with other accepted Christian disciplines such as prayer and doing good deeds.²

1 Matthew 9:15

2 Matthew 6:1-18

In this passage Jesus confronted the hypocrisy and legalism of the Jewish people in that day and age.

He began by correcting their approach to giving:

“when you give to the needy...” Matthew 6:2

He then offers a correction to hypocritical prayer:

“when you pray...” Matthew 6:5

Jesus’s assumption here is that followers of God are going to be giving and praying. He does not even need to encourage them to do it. He was simply correcting their approach. After teaching on giving and prayer, he gives his third correction:

“when you fast...” Matthew 6:16

Jesus did not make fasting an option for His followers. He assumed we would be doing it — *when you fast, not if you fast*. Giving, prayer, and fasting are some of the basic practices of Jesus’ foundational teaching about being in the kingdom of God. And Jesus’s early followers heeded his instruction.

The Church at Antioch “ministered to the Lord and fasted” in Acts 13:2. As I mentioned before, the original word used in that verse about Antioch for ministry is the Greek word where we get the English word liturgy. In other words, their ministry to the Lord with worship, prayer, and fasting was their regular practice. Historical sources such as the Didache indicate that the early Church continued the practice of devout Jews to fast two days per week.³

It is easy to see the contrast between the early Church and modern western evangelicalism. In our day, those who fast and pray even sparingly are considered radical

Christians. Many believers have never heard a sermon on fasting. Many have never tried fasting as a way to worship and pursue God. And even fewer practice it as a regular spiritual discipline like the early church. Yet Jesus indicated that it should be just as normal as prayer or giving. No one believes that Christians should only give or pray sporadically. Most Christians rightly believe that we should pray daily and regularly give to those in need. Jesus teaches us that fasting should be a regular Christian activity too.

The easiest way to embrace a fasted lifestyle is to fast weekly. I suggest you start with skipping lunch one day each week and using that time for prayer and Bible reading. This simple step is a powerful way to begin your journey into regular fasting. It's important that you spend time with the Lord when you would normally eat. You are not just trying to skip meals. You want to draw closer to God.

As it becomes more normal to skip a meal, you can move towards two meals. My preference is to skip breakfast and lunch. I eat dinner one evening and then fast until dinner on the next night. This allows me to fast for about twenty-four hours each week. You can experiment with what works best for you. Perhaps you will want to build up to fasting for two days each week like the early church and other Christians throughout history.

FASTING ACCESSES WHAT JESUS DIED TO GIVE

"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." Genesis 15:1

The greatest reward the Father gives those who fast is Himself. God is the reward. He is the One who ultimately satisfies our souls. When Jesus discouraged hypocritical prayer and fasting in Matthew 6, he drew a line between those who found their reward in people's approval and those who found their reward from the Father's approval.

And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18

Jesus says to fast "in secret" before God Himself. Fasting should be an expression of your hunger for God, your desire to love God, and your willingness to obey Him. Fasting should be Godward. The prophetess Anna "worshiped [or served] God with fasting."⁴ Fasting is an expression of your worship and ministry to the Lord, along with praise and prayer.

Fasting "in secret" does not mean that you cannot let anyone know that you are fasting. It does mean you should be discrete and avoid drawing unnecessary attention to yourself. Jesus was primarily dealing with motivations and principles more than setting rigid rules. The motive for why you are fasting is the important issue to Jesus.

Fasting to please men is not true, biblical fasting. If you're fasting to seem super spiritual to others or to try to earn God's love, or to punish yourself for your sins, then

you're missing the point. God's grace is a free gift. Jesus died and rose again to set you free from sin and restore you to a right relationship with God. Fasting doesn't earn what Jesus already paid for on the cross. When you put your faith in Christ, you are clothed in His righteousness. It is not your merit through fasting or anything else that justifies you before God. It is what He has already done for you.

In light of the gospel, fasting falls into the category of activities that Bible teachers call "means of grace." There are certain biblical ways that God chooses to release his grace and power to His people. Prayer, Bible reading, baptism, church, serving others, communion, etc. can all be seen as means of grace. It's not that doing these things *earns* God's grace. It's that doing these things *accesses* His grace. A child opening a gift isn't earning the gift by the act of unwrapping. It is just the only proper way to accept the free gift. You have to (get to!) unwrap it to receive it. Fasting and other spiritual disciplines are how you unwrap the gift of God's grace and power in your life.

FASTING EXPRESSES AND CULTIVATES HUNGER FOR JESUS

In God's providence there is a link between our physical hunger and our spiritual hunger. When you obey Jesus's invitation to fast and pray, you begin to awaken deep hunger in your heart for God. And that hunger makes you want to fast, which makes you hungrier for Him. Fasting both expresses and cultivates spiritual hunger. That perpetual longing — carried in the hearts of those who embrace a fasted lifestyle — is actually a normal heart posture for Christians. The betrothed Bride of Christ is to be lovesick for Jesus.

The reality is that you have limited capacity, and it is only as you empty yourself through fasting and prayer that you can be filled with God and experience true satisfaction. You can only be deeply satisfied if you first awaken deep hunger. C.S. Lewis says,

“It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”⁵

In one sense fasting “satisfies” you as you experience more of God’s presence, revelation from Scripture, a joy in prayer, and a sense of deep intimacy with the Lord. In another sense, fasting makes you unsatisfied. As the old song says, “the more I find You, the more I want You.”⁶ This is the cry of a lovesick Bride.

“To have found God and still to pursue Him is the soul’s paradox of love.” AW Tozer⁷

The tension of the “already” and “not yet” of God’s presence creates a yearning inside of believers. As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit with us, yet we long for the physical return of Jesus and the consummation of His kingdom. The Spirit is the down payment — the “guarantee of our inheritance”⁸ — but we want the full payment. The Holy Spirit is like an engagement ring, and

5 *The Weight of Glory*, CS Lewis

6 *The More I Seek You* by Zach Neese

7 *The Pursuit of God* by AW Tozer

8 Ephesians 1:13-14

we are anticipating the ceremony. Like a bride awaiting her wedding day, we cannot wait for Jesus to descend to Earth and culminate what He began in His first coming.

Jesus knew that we would feel that tension and he describes it as “mourning.” The fasting Bride aches for more of Jesus. Here’s what He says about this:

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. Matthew 9:14-15

In the context of this passage, the Pharisees criticized Jesus because his disciples did not fast. His rebuttal was that they would fast after he was “taken away from them.” Jesus’s point is this: when He was with His disciples in the flesh, there was no need to fast because they were satisfied with His presence. However, when He ascended to heaven, as He is now, Jesus predicted that His disciples would fast because they would hunger for His return, His presence, and His kingdom.

We are now in the day that Jesus foresaw. This is the time that we should be hungering for more of Him. Jesus makes it clear that the church will fast until He returns to earth again. Fasting is a way that we as the Bride of Christ anticipate, hasten,⁹ and prepare for the Lord’s return.¹⁰

9 2 Peter 3:12

10 Jesus seems to use the bride/bridegroom analogy specifically when it relates to His second coming. See Matthew 25:1-13 as well as references throughout the book of Revelation.

EMBRACING VOLUNTARY WEAKNESS AND DEPENDENCE

In a previous chapter I discussed the important relationship between prayer and faith. A lifestyle of ongoing prayer, Scripture meditation and fasting will allow you to walk in a measure of faith to see God's miraculous power released in your life and those within your influence. I believe the reason this happens is that fasting heightens awareness of your weakness and neediness before God.

When you become desperate and vulnerable, you have no choice but to lean into God for His supernatural strength. The truth is, you are always needy, but fasting exposes the reality of the ongoing situation in your soul. Fasting regularly allows you to stay in perpetual awareness of your dependence on His grace.

Jesus is the perfect example of this. As you recall, Jesus could cast the demon out of the boy, and he rebuked his disciples for a lack of faith. He said that some only come out by prayer and fasting.¹¹ Yet Jesus did not stop to call a fast or a prayer meeting. He was living a fasted and prayerful lifestyle. He was ready to act in faith when the need arose, and therefore miracles followed Him everywhere He went. God wants the same thing for you and me.

If you will begin to embrace rhythms of fasting in your life, I believe you will see an uptick of supernatural activity, miracles, dreams, visions, healings, and other gifts of the Spirit. You will become more attuned to the voice of God and more aware of His presence with you. In your weakness, God will be strong.¹²

11 See Chapter 8

12 2 Corinthians 12:10

THE POWER OF UNITED FASTING AND PRAYER

As churches and communities unite in prayer and fasting, we will see an even greater move of the Spirit in our cities and nations. Throughout Church history, united fasting and prayer preceded great revival, and the greatest move of God is yet to come. Derek Prince says,:

"Today, God's Spirit is being poured out in a measure... But as yet, we only see a small fraction of the total outpouring that the Bible clearly predicts. God is waiting for us to meet His requirements. It will take united prayer and fasting to precipitate the final fullness of the latter rain."¹³

Prince was reflecting on the call to united prayer and fasting in Joel 2. Joel was a prophetic voice to Israel in a season of national crisis. God spoke through the prophet to call His people to humble themselves, repent of their sins, fast and pray. He promised to pour out His Spirit and release His blessings if they would turn to Him with all their hearts. Are we in a crisis in our day and time? AW Tozer has said, *"The fall of man has created a perpetual crisis."¹⁴* Therefore, our perpetual response, until Christ returns, should be to fast and pray.

The prescription of united prayer and fasting laid out in Joel 2 was adopted in the Upper Room of Acts 2. As Jesus' disciples waited for the Holy Spirit in united prayer (and likely fasting) for ten days, they may have even reflected on the prophetic promises found there. Because when the day of Pentecost came, the Holy Spirit released fire upon the church, and Peter stood up to quote Joel to explain the phenomena.

13 *Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting*, page 129

14 *Tozer on Christian Leadership* by A.W. Tozer, copyright © 2001

For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2:15-21

What had been promised began that day. As God's people humbled themselves in prayer, God poured out His Holy Spirit. Tongues of fire manifested on the heads of the people. They spoke in unknown languages so that foreigners could understand the Gospel. The fearful walked in boldness and power. In short: revival had broken out.

But Peter wanted them to understand something: it happened for a reason. The promise of an outpouring of God's Spirit was a conditional promise. Only if God's people responded rightly would they see the miraculous power of God. 120 of Jesus's followers were in the upper room and prepared for what God wanted to do. We can assume that if they were not, then Pentecost, as we know it, would have been delayed.

The same call to humble, repentant prayer and fasting can be found in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

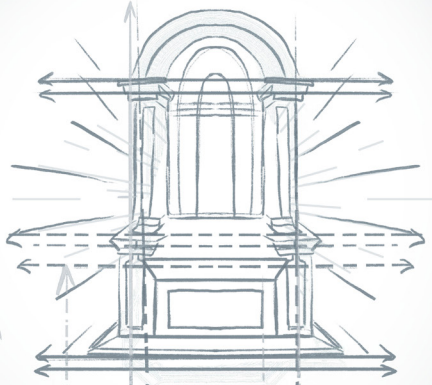
*If My people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, **then** I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

If we humble ourselves. If we pray. If we seek His face. If we turn from our sins. Then He will begin to move. This is something that God wants to do. He wants revival and awakening more than we do. But He can only move through vessels who have been humbled and purified in the furnace of fasting and prayer. When this verse says, "humble themselves," it could just as easily say "fast." In Psalm 69:10 David said, "I wept and humbled my soul with fasting." This humility, and the faith that comes with it, is vital for us to steward the amazing outpouring of God's Spirit that He wants to release in our lives and across the earth.

If you want to walk in faith, see miracles, and experience more of God's power and presence in your life, I urge you to embrace fasting and prayer. As you do, you will have faith to be used by God in powerful ways, and your prayers could even shift the future of nations. If you are struggling to see breakthroughs with your personal life, family members, cities, or nations, perhaps fasting and prayer is what we need to move the spiritual powers in the heavenlies and release God's purposes.

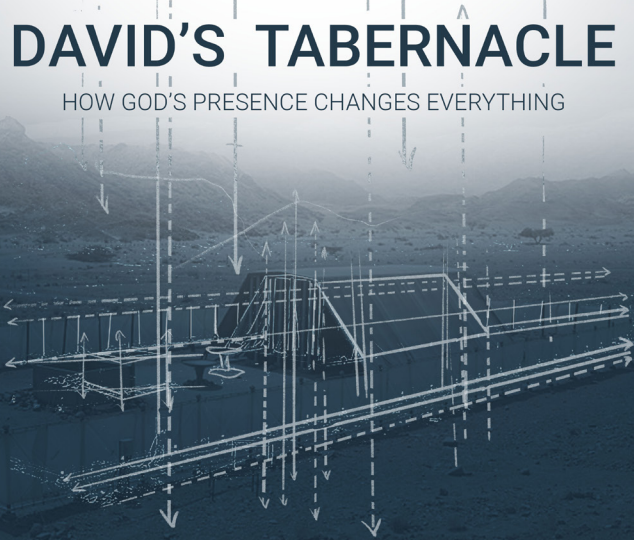
Note that fasting is not to be approached casually. It is not suitable for all people at all phases of life. Always consult your doctor and local church leadership for guidance before engaging in any kind of intense fasting. I do not have space in the book to provide a lot of practical tips or guidance on fasting in a healthy way. However, we have created a downloadable "Practical Suggestions for Fasting" document at enjoyingprayer.com. Please read through it before beginning your journey into fasting.

From *David's Tabernacle*



DAVID'S TABERNACLE

HOW GOD'S PRESENCE CHANGES EVERYTHING



MATTHEW LILLEY

The Rest of Mankind

*I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David... So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord
(Acts 15:16-17).*

I HAVE SPENT NEARLY TWENTY YEARS in leadership of various expressions of Davidic worship, and have experienced firsthand the connection between worship in the spirit of the tabernacle of David and the transformative impact on individual lives, as well as on cities and nations. When believers come together to host the presence of God with day-and-night, prophetic worship and prayer, it propels the advance of the kingdom of God in a region. I could give several examples of how this has played out in our ministry experience, but an example involving a literal tent seems most fitting.

WORSHIP HELPS TRANSFORM LIVES

There's something about a tent in particular that gives us a beautiful image of God's heart for the lost to come back home to Him. A tent is open and inviting—a vivid demonstration of the invitation found in the gospel of Christ. My journey of participating in tent gatherings began when we started to build relationships with similar prayer groups around North Carolina. In 2013, I was busy leading the Boiler Room when God told me to begin to

reach out to leaders of similar ministries in our state and region. God also spoke to me about David Bradshaw, who was organizing an effort in Virginia to connect prayer and worship groups there in partnership with one another (I'll come back to David in a minute).

One of the leaders I met in that season was Mike Thornton, who lived in Wilmington, NC. He was writing a book on revival history in eastern North Carolina and was feeling stirred about hosting tent revival gatherings. We brought our ministry efforts together in 2014 to host our first tent gathering that featured day and night worship and prayer in Dunn, NC. Dunn was a significant location during the Azusa Street revival of the early 1900s. The tent was dubbed "The Jesus Tent" and we partnered with Mike to host several tent gatherings from 2014 to 2017—primarily in eastern North Carolina. Each gathering featured day and night worship, prayer, and outreach. God moved powerfully every time! I could take a whole chapter to tell stories, but I want to highlight one.

We finally brought the Jesus Tent to our hometown in Greenville, NC in 2016. We hosted 100 hours of non-stop worship, gave away free meals, and ministered to the surrounding low-income neighborhood. One of our first nights, a young couple came from across the street to get free hot dogs at the tent. Someone from our ministry team started talking to them and quickly led them to the Lord. This couple lived in a house across the street from the tent.

The next day the outreach team visited their house, where they found a great-grandmother in her wheelchair. Multiple generations of her family lived in the same

small house with her. The team discovered that she was a praying believer who was longing for her family to be saved. She had been crying out to God for years. It turned out that ten or twelve people were home at that point, and they were invited into the room. After our team shared the gospel with them, the whole family got on their knees and accepted Christ! Years of sowing in prayer led to a bountiful harvest that day!

A few days later, they brought grandma over to the tent to enjoy the worship. While she was there, a local newspaper came to do a report on the tent gathering. They ended up talking to her and others from her household, and their story became front page news. The family shared how the culture of their home had shifted, and they were no longer arguing with each other since turning to Jesus. The front page had a photo of this grandma smiling in the tent with the headline: **WORSHIP HELPS TRANSFORM LIVES.**

This is the power of the presence of God. When we began to host God's presence with day and night worship and prayer in that neighborhood, the prayers of grandma were answered—God's kingdom was manifested dramatically and lives were changed forever. This amazing testimony reminds me of the story when Paul and Silas had been flogged and thrown into jail. As they sang hymns and prayed at midnight, God sent an earthquake that broke them free from their shackles. They were able to share the Gospel with the jailer and his entire household began to follow Jesus (Acts 16:25-34).

TENTS ARE A SILVER BULLET

There is something about tents that speaks so profoundly to God's desire to invite people who don't yet know Him to experience His presence. On a practical level, tents of day and night worship create an easy environment for the body of Christ to come together in unity, without gathering in one particular church building. They also provide an easy way for the general public to wander in and experience God's presence. Since a tent is not a formal church building, there is much less pressure. Not only do tents point prophetically to the deeper truths of David's Tabernacle, but they serve practically in our modern times to manifest the spirit of the tabernacle of David in public places. Interestingly, North Carolina's Jesus Tent is not the only day and night worship tent that has surfaced in recent years.

About a year before the Jesus Tent was set up in our home state, a group of YWAM missionaries hosted forty days of non-stop worship on the National Mall in Washington DC. After hosting David's Tent DC as a special event for two more years, they decided to launch into a 24/7/365 schedule on September 11, 2015, and the worship has not stopped since! This perpetual love song to Jesus is the only modern expression of continual worship that I'm aware of that takes place under a literal tent.

A few years after David's Tent DC began their unceasing expression of worship, God began to stir another group about tents. David Bradshaw, who I mentioned earlier, was leading a house of prayer in Fredericksburg, Virginia as well as helping to unite prayer groups across their state. God brought up David Bradshaw's name to me when He

began speaking to me about unity among prayer groups. In 2017, David and Jason Hershey, the founder of David's Tent DC, received a vision from God to host fifty tents on the National Mall in Washington DC with simultaneous day and night worship. The idea was that each state in the nation would host a tent with worshipers from their state filling the hours.

This dream became a reality in October of 2017. Over 1,000 worship teams helped host three days of day and night worship, prayer, and outreach for the first national Awaken the Dawn gathering. Tens of thousands of worshipers converged in America's capital for a historic gathering. Not only was it an amazing expression of unity, but God's presence was palpable throughout the event. As the country came together to host God in their capital city, dozens of unbelievers got saved, many were healed, and the crime even slowed down across Washington DC during that time. Now Awaken the Dawn has grown into an ongoing movement centered on uniting the church to host God's presence through day and night worship, prayer, and outreach. Tents are set up every year (sometimes hundreds at a time), and God moves powerfully through these public expressions of Jesus's worth.

I believe this increase in tent gatherings is God speaking to His church about the importance of understanding David's tabernacle. I also believe God has been inviting those in the global prayer movement to take the presence of God into the streets, parks, campuses, and public places to see God's life-changing presence crash into a lost and broken world. If God's presence changes everything, then we must not keep it to ourselves.

THE TENT IS OPEN

This era of history, between the first and second comings of Jesus to the earth, provide a unique time for the nations to enter a covenant relationship with God. David's tabernacle gives us a vivid picture of this truth. Just as David's tent had no veil and was open for the Gentiles to engage in worship, Jesus has opened the door for anyone to come into God's presence through faith in Him. David's tabernacle symbolizes a time when the Gentiles (the nations) can enter into our original purpose as worshippers of Yahweh.

You will remember that during David's reign there were two tents. One was Moses's tabernacle that remained in Gibeon, with all the ornate furniture, animal sacrifices, and Old Covenant rituals. The priests continued to follow the Law, but there was one thing missing—the ark of the covenant. They were going through the motions of worship without the presence of God. The other tent was David's tabernacle. It was in Jerusalem with the ark. There the Levites offered sacrifices of praise from their hearts before the Lord. Their worship in Zion was centered on God's presence. They were interacting directly with the Lord in a real relationship.

These two tents point to the two options we are given in this age. Jesus has established a New Covenant with His people by shedding His blood on the cross. As Jesus's body was torn, the veil of the Jerusalem temple was also torn. God has made a way for relationships with His people again. David's tabernacle points us to this New Covenant reality where there is no veil of separation between us and God—where we can come boldly to His throne of grace.

The “ark” of God’s presence is accessible to Christians because of the work of Christ.

The tent in Gibeon is the tent of empty religion. There the rituals continued without the presence of God, just as many church-goers go through the motions of Christianity while detached from true intimacy with the Lord. Jesus warned of those who honor Him with their lips while their hearts are far from Him (Matthew 15:8). This kind of religiosity tries to earn with our piety what Jesus has purchased for us and offers us freely. There are still two “tabernacles” operating at the same time in our day. The tabernacle of self-righteousness and the tabernacle of grace. The tent of Moses and the tent of David.

This unique time in history is not only our opportunity to enjoy an intimate relationship with God through Christ, but it is our opportunity to invite others into relationship with God too. In the book of Acts, we find a final reference to the tabernacle of David in Scripture, and it is connected to this very idea that the nations are invited into the presence of God.

In Acts 15, the apostle James quotes Amos 9:11 at a pivotal moment for the early church. Christianity had begun in Jerusalem at Pentecost, but persecution had caused Christians to disperse into the surrounding regions. As they went, they naturally shared the gospel (Acts 11:19). The city of Antioch became a major hub for Christian activity at that time, and it began to create quite a stir. Barnabas went from Jerusalem to check out what God was doing and led Saul (later called Paul) there as well. From Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were sent out as

the first Christian missionaries, and the gospel expanded to new cities and regions.

The multi-ethnic expansion of Christianity became a topic of debate among Christian leaders who were primarily Jewish. How “jewish” would they require the new Gentiles converts to become? Would they need to be circumcised, for instance? Debates about these issues led to the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. At this council, after a time of sharing testimonies and discussion, James stood up to quote Amos 9:11 to the apostles and church leaders.

“After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,’ says the Lord who does all these things” (Acts 15:16-17, NKJV).

James tweaked some of the language of Amos to fit the given context. He said that God was rebuilding the tabernacle of David for a specific purpose: “so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord.” He realized that God’s plan all along was to reach “the rest of mankind” with the gospel and David’s tabernacle was part of that plan.

After the debate, the church leaders at the Jerusalem council agreed to allow the Gentiles to be Christians without being circumcised or becoming overly “jewish.” The apostles used an interesting phrase when they communicated their decision to the church. They said, “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28). I was familiar with this phrase, so it stuck out to me when I was rereading the story of David’s tabernacle. Notice that King David said, “If it seems good to you, and

if it is of the Lord our God..." (1 Chronicles 13:2) when he was proposing that they bring the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem. The apostles were sitting in Jerusalem, James was quoting a prophecy about David's tabernacle, and then they used nearly identical terminology that David used when he established his original tabernacle. David said, "If it seems good to you, and if it is of the Lord our God." The apostles said, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." David said this while establishing a revolutionary way for people (even Gentiles) to experience God's presence. The apostles said this while embracing a revolutionary way for people (even Gentiles) to experience God's presence in Christ Jesus! I personally have not found any other instance in Scripture with similar phrasing. The similarities seem more than a coincidence.

WORSHIP AND MISSIONS

The need for a council was sparked by what was happening at the church in Antioch, and there are a few things worth noting about this important Christian hub. The believers there were ministering to the Lord, fasting, and praying. These new Christians had grasped their calling to function as a priesthood before the Lord. In fact, there was something suspiciously *Davidic* about what was happening there.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away (Acts 13:2-3).

This context and culture of worship and prayer is the environment from which God would send forth Saul (Paul)

into his initial missionary journey.¹ This would become Paul's missions base from which he would embark on all his church planting and apostolic ministry. This was the first time we see any believers intentionally engaging in fasting or cross-cultural outreach. Prior to this, the Christians in Jerusalem ministered locally. Before Antioch, the only time the gospel began to spread outside of their immediate context was when persecution began to force the believers to be dispersed from Jerusalem. The fact that any non-Jews are Christians today is largely due to the pioneering missions ministry that flowed out of Antioch. It is no coincidence that this congregation's primary activity seems to be ministering to God in worship, and that it is also the first place from which missionaries were sent. I believe it's likely that Antioch was the first church that really began to manifest God's desire for Christians to engage in Davidic worship. Like the Morvians in Herrnhut, the church at Antioch's intense focus on devotion to the Lord began to launch them into the Great Commission to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

Another "Davidic" facet to the community at Antioch was their ethnic diversity. When you study the Antioch leadership team, listed in Acts 13:1, you find a multi-ethnic group of teachers and prophets working together in unity. Just as David's tabernacle extended an invitation to some Gentiles to participate in the priesthood, Antioch was extending the bounds of what was acceptable in Christian worship, leadership, and mission.

1 Interestingly, Paul's first recorded sermon after he leaves Antioch is centered on David. King David is mentioned four times in Acts 13.

There are hints at this international dimension to David's tabernacle in the original story. I have already mentioned how Obed-Edom, the Gentile who temporarily housed the ark of the covenant, was invited to serve at the tabernacle as a gatekeeper. You will also notice another foreshadowing in the very first song sung at David's tent. The first prophetic song ever sung on Mount Zion was an invitation to the nations to come worship God.

Sing to the Lord, all the earth; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples (1 Chronicles 16:24).

The idea that God was inviting all people groups into relationship with Him was instilled at the very foundation of the Davidic order of worship. What David established for Israel was always meant to be expanded to the nations of the earth. As we have seen, it took Jesus to begin to manifest the global aspect of David's tabernacle that was always in God's heart.

John Piper articulates this convergence of worship and missions perfectly when he says that worship is the fuel and goal of missions.² Reaching people far from God with the gospel and seeing them restored to God in Christ must include them becoming passionate worshipers. I have already made a strong case that worship is God's original

2 “Worship... is the fuel and goal of missions. it's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the Nations into the white hot enjoyment of God's glory.... But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God and worship proceeds the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish... missions begins and ends in worship.” John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1993, 2003), 17.

purpose for humanity. If that is the case, then worship is certainly the goal of missions. Worship is also the fuel, because we naturally invite others to enjoy what we enjoy! If Jesus is our supreme delight and treasure, then we will speak of Him to others. The biblical pattern that we see so vividly with the story of Antioch is that worshipers who love God will go and invite others to worship Him. Those new worshipers will then invite others to join too. So worship becomes the fuel and goal of missions.

Believers worshipping under a tent is a beautiful picture of this reality. It's as simple as worshipers inviting others to come join them under the canopy of God's presence: "Come see what I see. Come feel what I feel. Come experience what I'm experiencing. Come and worship Jesus with me."

This is what the rebuilding of David's tabernacle is all about, and it is this glorious truth that launched me years ago from my summer camp experience into my ministry. I had encountered God's presence and wanted others to experience His life-changing presence too.

