Ministering to the Lord
Tim Miller - Gateway Fellowship - Jan 11, 2015

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

- leitourgeo - to minister, to serve, to perform religious duties, in ancient culture this word was used when secular wealthy people would serve the city without pay - i.e., at cost to themselves.
- The old testament worship arrangement was entirely about what the Lord required and what the Lord instructed and what pleased the Lord and what the Lord enjoyed. It was never once about how good the priest instructed or how well the singers sang from the perspective of the gathered worshipers.
- Who is the party for? Can you imagine throwing a party for someone but being primarily concerned about your own preferences being met at the party?
- Up then out. I find it interesting that as we draw near to give the Lord our love in song, prayers, offerings - these acts of worship which are our New Covenant priestly offerings - as we do that, he sanctifies people, sets them apart, for his purposes. The upward flow of worship led to the outward flow of mission.
- Corporate commissioning. Something about being united in prayer, worship, fasting, seeking God caused the church corporate to line up with and authorize what God had already placed within individuals among them. That corporate commissioning seems to have been what gave the PUSH needed to get the individuals moving. I think there's something important in that dynamic.
- Incubator/Greenhouse. I wonder if the spiritual environment they cultivated wasn't akin to an incubator or a greenhouse, to develop people's hearts, intimacy, character gifts, calling in a temperature controlled and nutrient rich environment designed to foster rapid maturation to the point that they can be launched sustainably into the "real world" which can be so hostile. Those are really exciting pictures to me.
- Incubator:
  - an enclosed apparatus providing a controlled environment for the care and protection of premature or unusually small babies.
  - an apparatus used to hatch eggs or grow microorganisms under controlled conditions.
- Greenhouse: a glass building in which plants are grown that need protection from cold weather.
- A Spirit Led congregation, not an Opinion Led Congregation. This wasn't a democratic vote. The church didn't merely offer her opinion on the matter. It was the Holy Spirit through the prophetic voice. The Voice that abides in that context of prayer. They could have treated this message with contempt, especially if they had personal hurts blinding them to Gods call on Paul and Silas, or blinding their ability to receive from God through the persons who heard God's voice. Dulled spiritual ears often are the result of unhealed hurts, or from inner self-protective resolutions that came from hurts.
• **Up and then Out. (Isaiah 6)** The similarities between these two movements in this passage and the same two movements in Isaiah 6 is apparent. Isaiah is in the temple and he saw the Lord, high and lifted up, his robes' train filling the temple, the temple fills with smoke, the whole place rumbles and shakes and creaks before the holy majesty of the infinitely Holy One, and Isaiah is overwhelmed. Overwhelmed. He’s undone. He’s shattered. God was clothed in glory, Isaiah was clothed in inadequacy and flaws. And then the angel uses tongs to get a red hot burning coal from the altar and touch it to Isaiah’s lips - the lips that he said were unclean. Then - and this is the part where we should be getting excited - then the seraphim, relaying what God’s words, speaks forgiveness and cleansing. But that’s not all. Then an invitation is issued. After absolution the soul hears an invitation. Forgiveness is not the end of the story, it’s the beginning of a journey. “Whom shall I send? Who will go?” That is the great question in every generation. In every generation the unanswered question echoes out, and heaven is poised silently waiting for someone to answer the call.

• **Response:** Humbled, shattered, embraced, healed, seared, forgiven and restored, Isaiah stands to his feet, raises his hand and cries, “Here am I! Send me!” And God says, “Yes.”

• **Keep Pressing Forward Through Your Own Moral Haze.** Somebody says, "I don’t know to what extent I can be myself, know myself, offer myself, or even keep my promises. Sometimes I'm overwhelmed at my own moral complexity, spiritual dullness, and moral weakness." Here's my exhortation: Keep getting back on the altar. Keep choosing to humble yourself before the Lord. Keep saying yes no matter how many times you are dismayed to discover that your life is speaking “no.” Get back on the Great Potter’s Wheel time after time and let him move you, change you, adjust you, correct you, wound you, do whatever must be done to conform you to Love’s beautiful image.

### Fasting

• **A call to Fast! Fasting from Tuesday till Sunday Supper** - Things you can fast from:
  - Full On Water Fast
  - Partial Fast (eat at sundown)
  - Media Fast (twitter, instagram, facebook, television, web browsing, texting, movies, music except worship - basically screens)
  - Silent Fast - fasting from communication
  - Name Your Fast - something that actually matters to you. If it’s no sacrifice, it defeats the purpose.

• **The point of fasting** is saying to God, “I want you this much. I want you more than food.”

• **Eat, drink, be merry.** If this one short life is our only life, and when you're dead, that's it, then wisdom would say, "Enjoy your one life! Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!” But if we're living for another life, then fasting begins to make sense.

• **Feast while you fast.** The point of fasting is not just to be uncomfortable. It's about freeing up time and attention for God. It's about making space to seek God more intensely than usual. The time you would be spending on your own comfort and pleasure and agenda can be devoted
to the Lord’s presence and pleasure and will. Your spirit, then, has more focused opportunity
to feast on his will while your body is suffering and being told, essentially, "I will live spirit
first, not flesh first." You are being put back in order, because you and I so naturally get out of
order.

Fresh encounter 4

Areas we hope to pray through and meet God in next weekend

- Friday Night - True Fasting
- Saturday Morning - Ministering to the Lord
- Saturday Morning - Repentance - Renewed Mind - Reconnecting With God
- Saturday Night - Intercession
- Sunday Morning - His Will, Our Food

- Various Gateway worship team members will lead us in songs and set the mood for our time

The time Heidi didn’t preach. She just prayed. And inside one half hour I was reconnected and
re-surrendered and cleansed in my conscience in a way I didn’t even know had become compromised.
My conscience had become unclean, and had stayed that way for a long time, but I knew when it got
free. It got free when I knew that I wasn’t holding anything back any more. Not even THAT THING.

Time to Pray...

- Listening prayer