

5 Keys to Surviving in This Cultural Wilderness

In a recent blog, I talked about the wilderness and how it will either “Make or Break” a church or an individual if they don’t learn how to survive in that time of testing that everyone will endure.

I now want to share with you the five keys I believe are the answer to surviving this time of trial. Jesus, who was our greatest example, used these same five keys in the wilderness:

1. Relationship with the heavenly Father – First of all, Jesus had a very close relationship with his heavenly Father and was in constant communion with Him on a daily basis. Jesus was even affirmed by His heavenly Father when He was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist before the Holy Spirit ascended upon Him and was led into the wilderness. When we understand our relationship with God and have a covenant with Him fueled by a red-hot devotional life, we will have the confidence to know that the Lord is in control of our outcome and will be with us even when we walk through our trials and valley of death.

2. Being filled with the Holy Spirit – The next thing we need to point out there is that immediately after Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. The thing to understand here is this: If we are going to survive any significant testing, it is essential that we are baptized in the Holy Ghost. If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit baptism to overcome the temptations in the wilderness what makes you think you and I don’t? I always like to point out that Jesus actually “commanded” and not “suggested” that His disciples be baptized in the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:

“Being assembled with them, He commanded them, “Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, of which you have heard from Me. For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:4-5).

3. Being filled with the Word of God – The next thing to point out is that when Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted for 40 days and nights he always used the weapon of the Word! With each fiery dart, the devil hurled at him, His response was “It is written.” In other words, Jesus was filled with the Word of God and understood its power as a weapon of defense against the enemy. You and I must be filled with the Word of God and use this two-edged sword to defeat the enemy and his assignments against us in the time of trial and testing! After three consecutive whippings from the Word, the devil departed from Jesus for a season.

4. Fasting breaks the power of the enemy. One of the primary weapons that Jesus used during his 40 days in the wilderness was fasting. The Bible tells us that he ate nothing for 40 days and 40 nights and afterward hungered. There will be times in our lives where we will need to fast, whether we want to or not—either on a personal level, a corporate level or both.

Fasting is a powerful tool to break the power of the enemy and has many benefits. The book *Isaiah Chapter 58* tells us many of those benefits. If Jesus needed to fast, why would you and I believe we are exempt? In fact, fasting is one of the core duties of a believer, according to the New Testament.

5. Jesus returned to the city full of power. One of the things that always intrigued me was that after Jesus emerged from a 40-day and 40-night trial of fasting and temptation, He returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. It was after this we begin to hear about His ministry exploding with signs, wonders and miracles.

It was after this that we hear of Him raising the dead and casting out devils. I believe there is a level of power in the Holy Spirit that will never be achieved until we encounter our wilderness experience and implement these five keys in our own personal walk with the Lord. If it was possible to survive without any of these things we just named, I believe Jesus would have never practiced them.

However, if He is our example and we are commanded to walk as He walked, then surely we have witnessed a powerful pattern to implement in our lives. {eoa}

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