

FEBRUARY 22-28

**“TURNING TO THE LORD”**

**TEXT: DANIEL 9:3–23**

Daniel was living in exile. Jerusalem was in ruins. The temple was desolate. The people were scattered. Yet Daniel does not begin by blaming Babylon. He begins by turning inward.

*“So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting...”* (Daniel 9:3)

**Revival does not begin with strategy. It begins with humility.**

**I. A Decision to Turn | Daniel 9:3**

“So I turned...” Repentance is intentional.

Daniel:

- Turned from distraction
- Turned from routine
- Turned from passivity
- Turned fully toward God

**II. Corporate Confession | Daniel 9:4–15**

Daniel was personally righteous. Yet he prayed:

- *“We have sinned.”*
- *“We have done wrong.”*
- *“We have rebelled.”*

He identified with the people.

**The Sobering Reality of Corporate Sin**

Scripture reminds us that sin affects more than individuals:

- In **Joshua 7:12**, Achan’s hidden sin hindered the entire nation.
- In **1 Samuel 7:6**, the people fasted and confessed together.
- In **Nehemiah 9:1–2**, Israel assembled with fasting and confession.
- In **Joel 2:12–14**, God calls the whole assembly to return with fasting and weeping.

Sometimes the only thing standing between us and God’s blessing is unconfessed sin.

- Personal sin
- Family patterns
- Church attitudes
- National rebellion

**III. The Character of God | Daniel 9:4,9**

Notice how Daniel prays: *“O Lord, the great and awesome God... who keeps His covenant of love...”* *“The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving...”*

Confession is not despair. It is anchored in God’s character.

We confess because God is righteous, God is merciful, God keeps covenant and God forgives. We do not approach Him based on our righteousness. Read verse 18,

*“We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.”*

**Application for Our Church**

Week 1 is about intentional turning.

We are choosing:

- To pause
- To examine
- To humble ourselves
- To seek the Lord

**IV. A Cry for God to Act (Daniel 9:16–19)**

Daniel crescendos into urgency:

*“O Lord, listen!  
O Lord, forgive!  
O Lord, hear and act!”*

This is not polite religion. This is desperate intercession.

Notice his motivation: *“For your sake... because your city and your people bear your Name.”*

Daniel cares about God’s reputation.

Week 1 is about crying out: ***“Lord, for Your Name’s sake, move among us.”***

**V. God Responds to Repentant Prayer (Daniel 9:20–23)**

While Daniel was still praying, Gabriel was dispatched. *“As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given...”* Heaven moves when God’s people humble themselves. Sometimes the answer is already on the way before we finish praying. What if revival begins the moment Salem First Baptist truly turns? What if God already has a “Gabriel” in motion?

<b>CHURCH CHALLENGE</b>	<b>This week, read Daniel 9 slowly and prayerfully.</b>	
	<p><b>Substitute:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I”</li> <li>• “My family”</li> <li>• “My church”</li> <li>• “My community”</li> <li>• “My nation”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask the Holy Spirit to expose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hidden sin</li> <li>• Complacency</li> <li>• Pride</li> <li>• Bitterness</li> <li>• Prayerlessness</li> <li>• Disobedience by omission</li> </ul>
	<b>Confess specifically. Receive forgiveness. Commit to obedience.</b>	

**Fasting Suggestions**

Consider:

- One meal fast this week
- A 24-hour fast (if physically able)
- Fasting from media or distraction
- Setting aside focused prayer time daily

**REMEMBER:**

**Fasting is not punishment. It is positioning.**

**It weakens the flesh and sharpens spiritual hunger.**

**\*\*\*consult your doctor if taking medications or you have any health concerns.**

**Our Week 1 Declaration**

|| We believe God hears the prayers of his people.  
 || Therefore, we bring our confession to a forgiving God  
 || We will ask for God’s mercy to be revealed and for revival to begin.

**Salem First Baptist Church — Let us turn to Lord together.**

MARCH 1-7

**BREAKING STRONGHOLDS**

**TEXT: ISAIAH 58:6, 8-10**

*“The chief weapon against Satan is prayer...  
Satan sneers at our schemes, mocks our methods, laughs at our learning,  
but is paralyzed by our praying.”  
— Adrian Rogers*

**We do not fight spiritual battles with human strategy. We fight on our knees.**

**I. The Fast God Chooses**

*“Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness...  
To let the oppressed go free and break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6)*

Biblical fasting is not:

- Religious performance
- Self-punishment
- Ritual obligation

It is:

- A weapon of liberation
- A declaration of dependence
- A confrontation against spiritual bondage

**II. Understanding the Battle**

Spiritual bondage is real.

Sometimes it looks obvious:

- Addiction
- Occult involvement
- Destructive lifestyles

But often it is subtle:

- Fear
- Anger
- Lust
- Bitterness
- Resentment
- Unforgiveness
- Jealous

The enemy works both outside and inside the church. Jesus modeled spiritual warfare through prayer and fasting (Matthew 4:1-17) before confronting Satan.

**We are not called to ignore the battle. We are called to engage it.**

**III. God’s Promise**

**When we fast with the right heart:**

*“Your light will break out like the dawn...  
The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.  
Then you will call, and the Lord will answer...  
‘Here I am.’”* Isaiah 58:8,9

**When strongholds are broken:**

- Light replaces darkness
- Healing replaces oppression
- God’s presence becomes evident

CHURCH CHALLENGE

**This week, focus your prayers on these three areas:**

**Personal Freedom**

- Ask the Holy Spirit:
- Where does the enemy still have influence in my life?
- What patterns need to be broken?
- What sin needs to be confessed?

**Freedom for Our Church**

Pray that SFB would:

- Walk in unity
- Be free from division
- Minister in spiritual authority
- Experience victory through Christ

**Intercession for Others**

Pray for individuals you know who are struggling in bondage. Name them before the Lord. Pressure the enemy with persistent prayer until he loosens his grasp.

**Fasting Suggestions**

Consider:

- Fasting one or more meals this week
- A 24-hour fast (if physically able)
- Fasting from entertainment or media
- Gathering with another believer to pray

**“In Christ, the enemy’s hold is broken.”**

**PRAYER FOCUS:**

- For freedom from strongholds in your own life.
- For individuals bound by fear, addiction, anger, or unforgiveness.
- For victory in our church.
- For captives in our community to be set free.

**Our Week 2 Declaration**

We will not ignore the battle.  
 We will not fear the enemy.  
 We will fast and pray until bonds are loosened,  
 yokes are broken,  
 and captives are set free.

**Salem First Baptist Church — let us engage the battle on our knees.**

MARCH 8-14

**HELP FROM ON HIGH****TEXT: EZRA 8:21-23 | 2 CHRONICLES 20:3-4,12,15**

*“Fasting is calculated to bring a note of urgency and importunity into our praying,  
and to give force to our pleading in the court of heaven.”*

— Arthur Wallis

### **I. Ezra’s Example: Seeking a Straight Path | Ezra 8:21-23**

Ezra proclaimed a fast at the river Ahava: *“That we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a straight and right way for us...”*

He refused to depend on military protection because he had declared:

*“The hand of our God is upon all them for good who seek Him...”*

So they fasted. They prayed. And God heard them.

Before moving forward, they humbled themselves.

### **II. Jehoshaphat’s Declaration: Eyes on God | 2 Chronicles 20:3-4,12,15**

When a vast army approached, Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast. The people gathered from every town to seek the Lord. *“We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”*

God responded:

*“Do not be afraid... For the battle is not yours, but God’s.”*

When God’s people fast together:

- Fear loses its grip
- Unity increases
- Direction becomes clear

### **III. What Fasting Expresses This Week**

Fasting says:

- *“Lord, Your will matters more than my preference.”*
- *“Your direction is more important than my opinion.”*
- *“We trust Your hand upon our family and this church.”*

When we set aside physical appetite, we demonstrate spiritual desperation.

We are not demanding an outcome. We are seeking His heart.

**CHURCH CHALLENGE**

This week identify things that bring you fear and ask God to remove your fear with the perfect love of God.

**Common Fears:**

- Future
- Financial instability
- Children & family
- Failure
- Rejection or disapproval
- Conflict
- Lack of control
- Loss

**Remember:**

- *“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” (1 John 4:18)*
- *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)*
- *“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” (Psalm 27:1)*

“Lord, reveal any fear ruling my heart. Let Your perfect love drive it out. Teach me to trust Your hand upon my life.”

**Fasting Suggestions**

Consider:

- Fasting one meal each day this week.
- A 24-hour fast (if physically able).
- Fasting from media and outside voices.
- Gathering with another believer to pray specifically for unity and clarity.

Pray especially: “Lord, give us a straight and right way.”

**PRAYER FOCUS:**

- For unity in your family as you seek His will.
- For humility as you discuss and discern God’s leading.
- For clarity as you seek direction.
- For protection from division or misunderstanding.
- For God’s continued hand upon Salem First Baptist Church.

**Our Week 3 Declaration**

We will not move in fear.  
 We will not move in pressure.  
 We will not move in confusion.

We will humble ourselves.  
 We will seek the Lord.  
 We will fix our eyes on Him.

And we trust: **The battle is not ours, but God’s.**

**Salem First Baptist Church — let our eyes be upon Him.**

MARCH 15-21

**SEEKING THE MIND OF CHRIST****TEXT: ACTS 13:1–3; 14:23 | JEREMIAH 29:12–14**

Fasting positions us to hear the voice of God and discern His will.

*“Fasting is only a way which God hath ordained,  
wherein we wait for His unmerited mercy...”*

— John Wesley

Fasting is not a formula to get what we want. It is a posture to receive what God wants.

We do not fast to earn favor. We fast to seek His face.

**We do not fight spiritual battles with human strategy. We fight on our knees.**

**I. The Early Church Example**

In Acts 13, the leaders in Antioch were **worshipping, fasting** and **waiting**.

And the Holy Spirit spoke: *“Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul...”*

History shifted in that moment. The missionary movement was launched.

In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders with prayer and fasting.

Major leadership decisions were made in an atmosphere of worship, prayer, and fasting.

- They did not rush.
- They did not rely on strategy alone.
- They sought the mind of God.

**II. God’s Promise to Seekers**

Jeremiah 29:12–14 says, *“You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.”*

God promises to be found by wholehearted seekers. Fasting expresses wholehearted pursuit.

**III. What Fasting Expresses This Week**

Fasting says:

- *“Lord, we want Your will more than our preference.”*
- *“Guide our thinking and our planning.”*
- *“Prepare our church to follow God’s leading.”*
- *“Keep us from becoming lethargic and passive when it comes to obedience.”*
- We are not trying to force God’s hand.

We are positioning ourselves to hear His voice.

We have just finished paying off North Block. After 10 years God has graciously enabled our church to be debt free. But He has more of a vision for North Block than just parking.

This is not simply a leadership decision. It is a spiritual appointment.

We trust that God already knows how He wants us to fully utilize North Block.

We have a vision to be a church for the city. Praying that God would lead our church to be a blessing to our city. Our responsibility is to seek Him with all our heart. Ask God to reveal the strategies to love our city.

**CHURCH CHALLENGE**

Ask God to **reveal his plan** to our church in how to steward the North Block

Like the leaders in Antioch, we must:

- Worship first
- Fast intentionally
- Wait expectantly
- Listen carefully

As you drive around the city ask the Lord to reveal the needs of the city and how our church might help meet those needs.

**Fasting Suggestions**

Consider:

- Fasting one meal specifically for the future planning of our church
- A 24-hour fast (if physically able).
- Setting aside extended time to worship and listen.
- Praying daily for our church to be obedient to God.

Pray: “Lord, speak. We are listening.”

**PRAYER FOCUS:**

- Guidance and unity for our leadership team as we seek God’s will for how to develop North Block.
- God’s leadership for our church to fully love and serve our city.
- The continued blessing on all of our current expressions of ministry to our city as well as all of the current use on North Block.
- Patience, protection, and spiritual growth for our church.
- Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as we move forward.

**Our Week 4 Declaration**

We will not rush ahead of God.  
 We will not manipulate outcomes.  
 We will not rely on human wisdom alone.  
 We will worship.  
 We will fast.  
 We will seek Him with all our heart.  
 And we trust that as we do,  
**He will be found by us.**

**Salem First Baptist Church — let us seek the mind of God together.**

MARCH 22-28

**HUMILITY BEFORE THE LORD****TEXT: PSALMS 69:10 | DEUTERONOMY 8:2-3, 10-18****Fasting humbles our hearts and exposes what controls us.**

*“More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.”*  
— Richard Foster

*“I humbled my soul with fasting...”* (Psalm 69:10)

Fasting is not merely about food. **It is about the heart.**

Fasting is not a formula to get what we want. **It is a posture to receive what God wants.**

### **I. God’s Purpose in the Wilderness**

In Deuteronomy 8, God explains why He led Israel through hunger:

- To humble them
- To test them
- To reveal what was in their hearts
- To teach them dependence

*“He humbled you, causing you to hunger... to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”* (Deut. 8:2,3)

Hunger exposes need. And need cultivates humility.

### **II. The Danger of Prosperity**

God warned Israel: *“When you eat and are satisfied... when your silver and gold increase... then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord.”* (Deut. 8:10-18)

Comfort breeds independence. Independence breeds pride. Pride distances us from God.

Fasting interrupts self-sufficiency.

It reminds us:

- We are dependent.
- God is the provider.
- Every blessing comes from His hand.

### **III. A Divine Corrective**

It was God’s choice to humble Israel through hunger.

It was David’s choice to humble himself through fasting.

It was Christ’s choice to fast in the wilderness (Matthew 4).

It is our choice to willingly allow God to refine us the same way.

When we fast, we declare: *“Lord, I do not trust my strength. I depend on Your Word.”*

Humility does not come naturally. **It grows when the flesh decreases and the Spirit increases.**

**CHURCH CHALLENGE**

**This week, we go to battle against pride.**

As a church family, we want to walk in unity and humility.

True humility reflects Christ in us.

**Pride often lies at the root of:**

- Criticism
- Strife
- Division
- Self-promotion
- Defensiveness

**Questions for Reflection**

Ask the Holy Spirit:

- Walk in unity
- Where am I self-reliant instead of God-dependent?
- Where have I become proud in success?
- Where have I been defensive or critical?
- Where do I need to humble myself?

Are you willing to place yourself in a position of dependence on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God?

**Fasting Suggestions**

Consider:

- Fasting one meal and using that time to pray specifically about humility.
- A 24-48 hour fast (if physically able).
- Fasting from social media or self-promoting habits.
- Meditating on Deuteronomy 8 during your fast.

**PRAYER FOCUS:**

- For freedom from strongholds in your own life.
- That areas of pride in your heart would be exposed and corrected.
- That you would walk humbly before God.
- That criticism, strife, and division rooted in pride would be uprooted in our church.
- That Salem First Baptist Church would shine with God’s glory in our community as we see ourselves rightly before Him and others.

**Our Week 5 Declaration**

We will not be ruled by pride.  
 We will not forget the Lord in comfort.  
 We will humble our souls before Him.  
 And as we walk in humility,  
 God’s glory will be reflected through us.

**Salem First Baptist Church — let us humble ourselves before the Lord.**

MARCH 29 – APRIL 4

**FASTING WITH EXPECTATION — THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING****We fast and pray with anticipation of Christ's return.**

*"It will be a fasting and praying Church that will hear the thrilling cry,  
'Behold, the Bridegroom!' Tears shall then be wiped away, and the fast be followed  
by the feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb."*

— Arthur Wallis

Fasting is not only about humility. It is also about longing.

**We fast because we hunger for Someone.****I. The Cry of the Bridegroom**

In Matthew 25:6, we read: *"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'"*

Jesus described His Church as a waiting bride. A ready bride. A watching bride.

Fasting sharpens our spiritual alertness. It awakens expectancy. It keeps oil in our lamps.

**II. The Fast Before the Feast**

Jesus spoke of a time when His followers would fast: *"The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them; then they will fast."* (Matthew 9:15)

We fast now because we live between promise and fulfillment. But one day, fasting will give way to feasting.

In Revelation 19:7–9, Scripture describes: *"The marriage supper of the Lamb."*

The temporary hunger of earth will be replaced by eternal satisfaction in Christ.

**III. Why We Fast as a Church**

We fast because:

- We long for Christ's return.
- We desire spiritual readiness.
- We refuse spiritual complacency.
- We want clean hearts and burning lamps.
- We believe revival precedes His appearing.

A fasting church is a watching church. A praying church is a ready church.

**IV. Living with Eternal Perspective**

When we fast, we declare: This world is not our home. Comfort is not our treasure. Christ is our reward.

Fasting detaches us from temporary things and attaches us to eternal hope.

It trains our hearts to say, *"Come, Lord Jesus."*

**CHURCH CHALLENGE**

**This week, we commit to reflecting on the Lord’s return.**

Ask yourself:

- Am I living in daily expectation of Christ’s return?
- Has comfort dulled my spiritual hunger?
- Would I be ready if the Bridegroom came today?
- Does my life reflect longing for eternity?

**We will live as those who believe the Bridegroom is truly coming!**

**Fasting Suggestions**

Consider:

- A 24-72 hour fast focused on Christ’s return.
- Fasting one meal daily this week to pray for readiness and revival.
- Fasting from distractions that dull spiritual hunger.
- Reading Matthew 25 and Revelation 19 during your fast.

**PRAYER FOCUS:**

- For unity in your family as you seek His will.
- That Salem First Baptist Church would be spiritually awake and ready.
- That our hearts would burn with love for Christ.
- That we would live with urgency and holiness.
- That we would hunger more for Christ than for comfort.
- That many in our community would come to know the Bridegroom before He returns.

**Our Week 6 Declaration**

We are a watching Church.  
 We are a praying Church.  
 We are a fasting Church.

We wait with oil in our lamps.  
 We wait with hope in our hearts.

And one day, the fast will give way to the feast.

**Salem First Baptist Church — “Behold, the Bridegroom!”**