

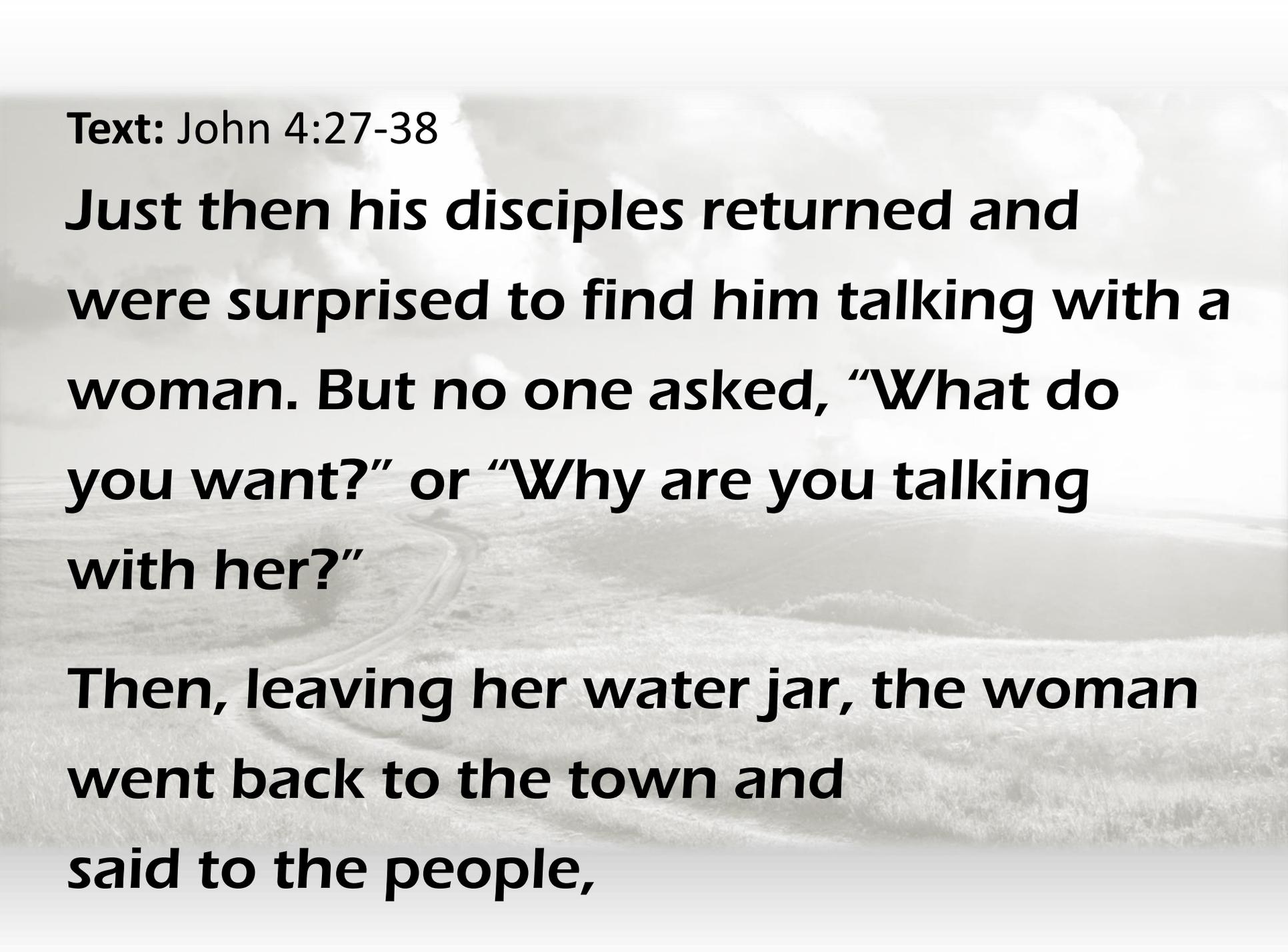
Discovering Jesus

A landscape photograph featuring rolling green hills under a bright, cloudy sky. A dirt road winds through the foreground and middle ground. In the distance, a simple wooden cross stands on a hilltop. The sun is visible on the right side of the frame, creating a lens flare effect.

The Plate Of Obedience

Introduction:

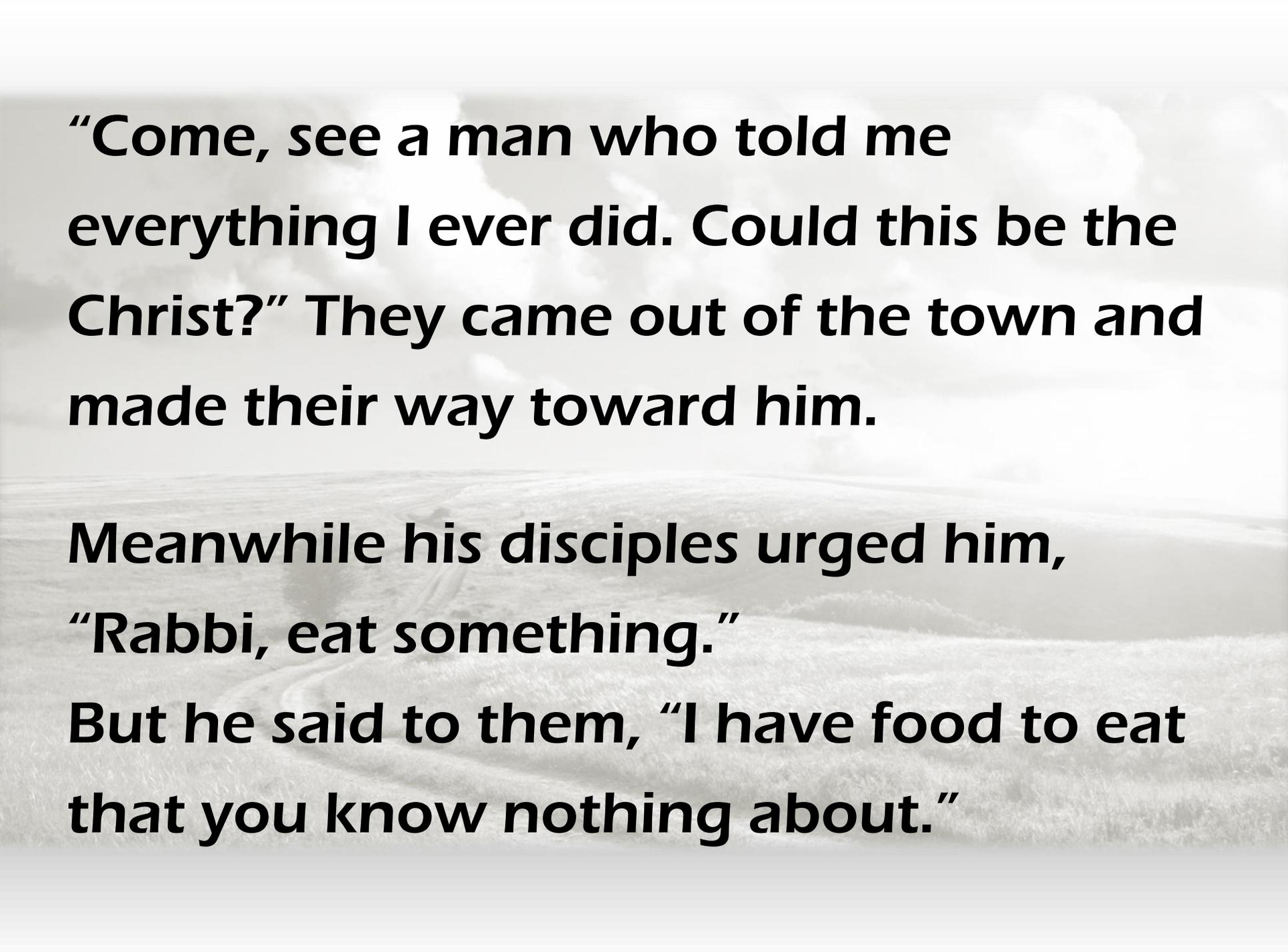
Jesus' desire to please His Father was greater than His desire for food. Would we trade physical bread for the Bread of Life, Jesus?



Text: John 4:27-38

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

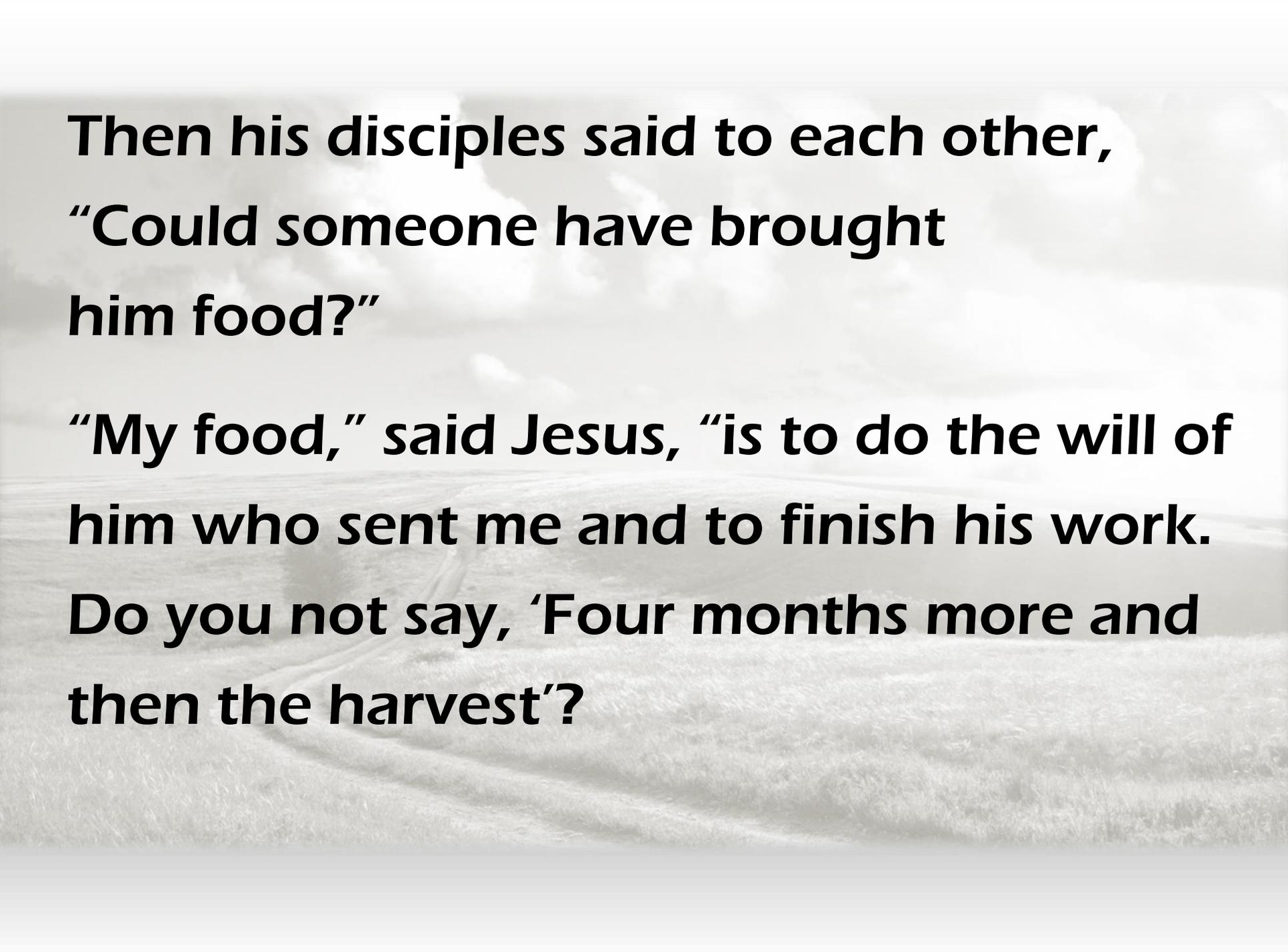
Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,



“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

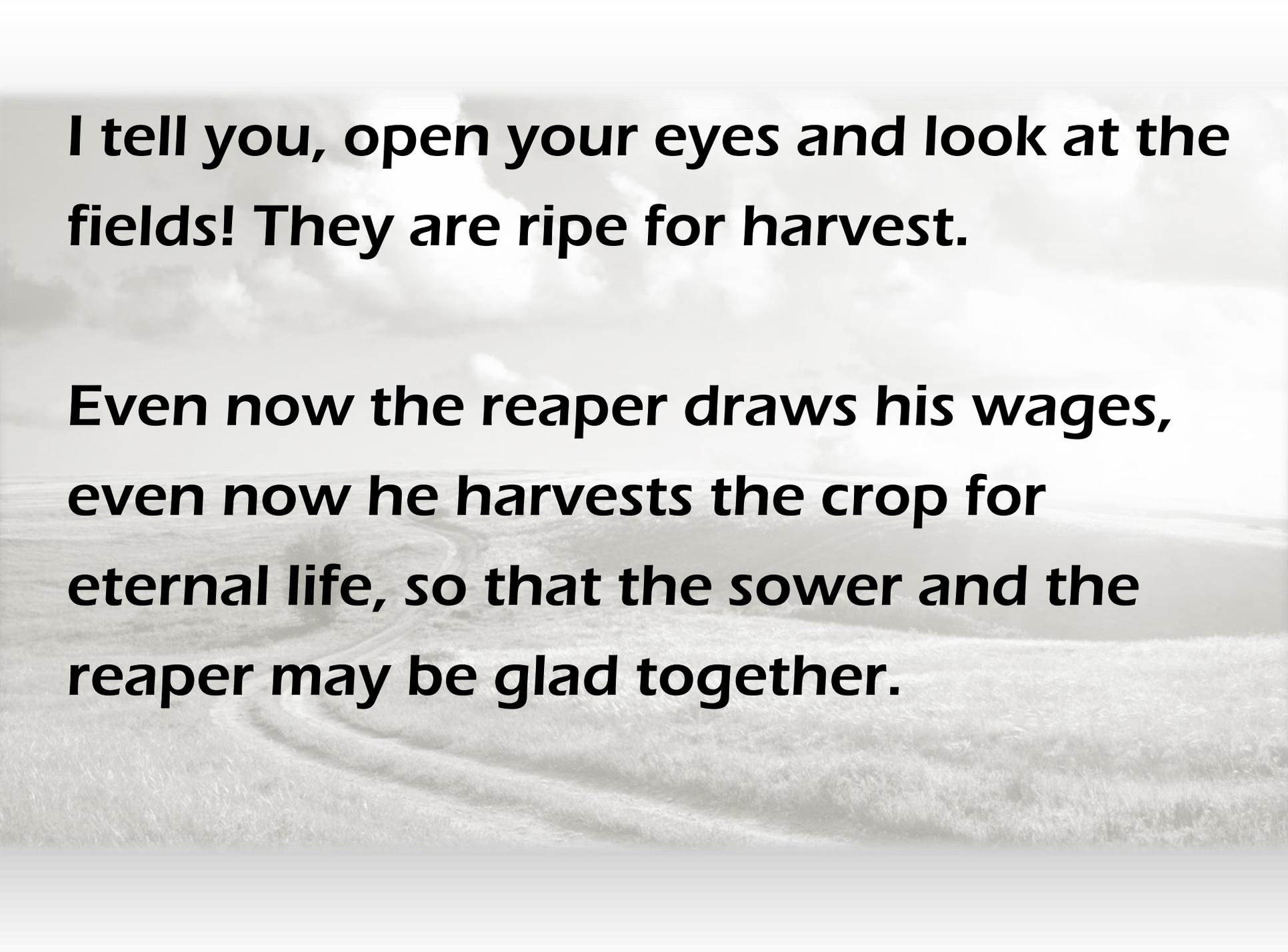
**Meanwhile his disciples urged him,
“Rabbi, eat something.”**

But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”



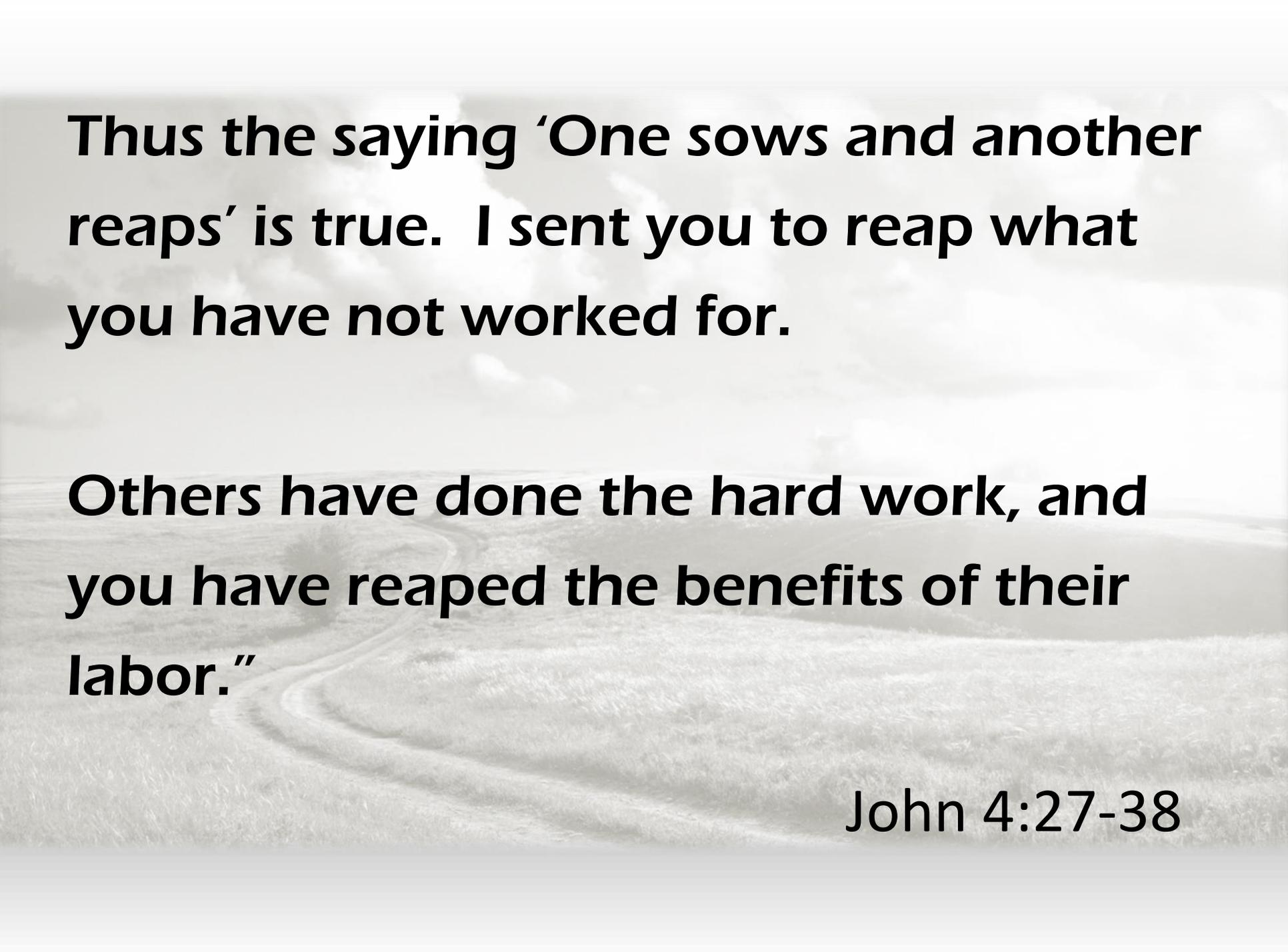
**Then his disciples said to each other,
“Could someone have brought
him food?”**

**“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of
him who sent me and to finish his work.
Do you not say, ‘Four months more and
then the harvest’?”**



I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

**Even now the reaper draws his wages,
even now he harvests the crop for
eternal life, so that the sower and the
reaper may be glad together.**



Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for.

Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

John 4:27-38

Fasting is **BIBLICAL** .

The Bible doesn't talk a lot about fasting.

- The first reference I find in the Bible to fasting is when the son that David and Bathsheba had conceived in sin, died as a result of God's judgment of that sin. David fasted as he mourned.

Fasting is **BIBLICAL** .

The Bible doesn't talk a lot about fasting.

- Fasting is mentioned periodically throughout the period of the kingdoms; is mentioned more prominently during the period of the Exile and return to Jerusalem, and had become commonplace by the time of Christ.

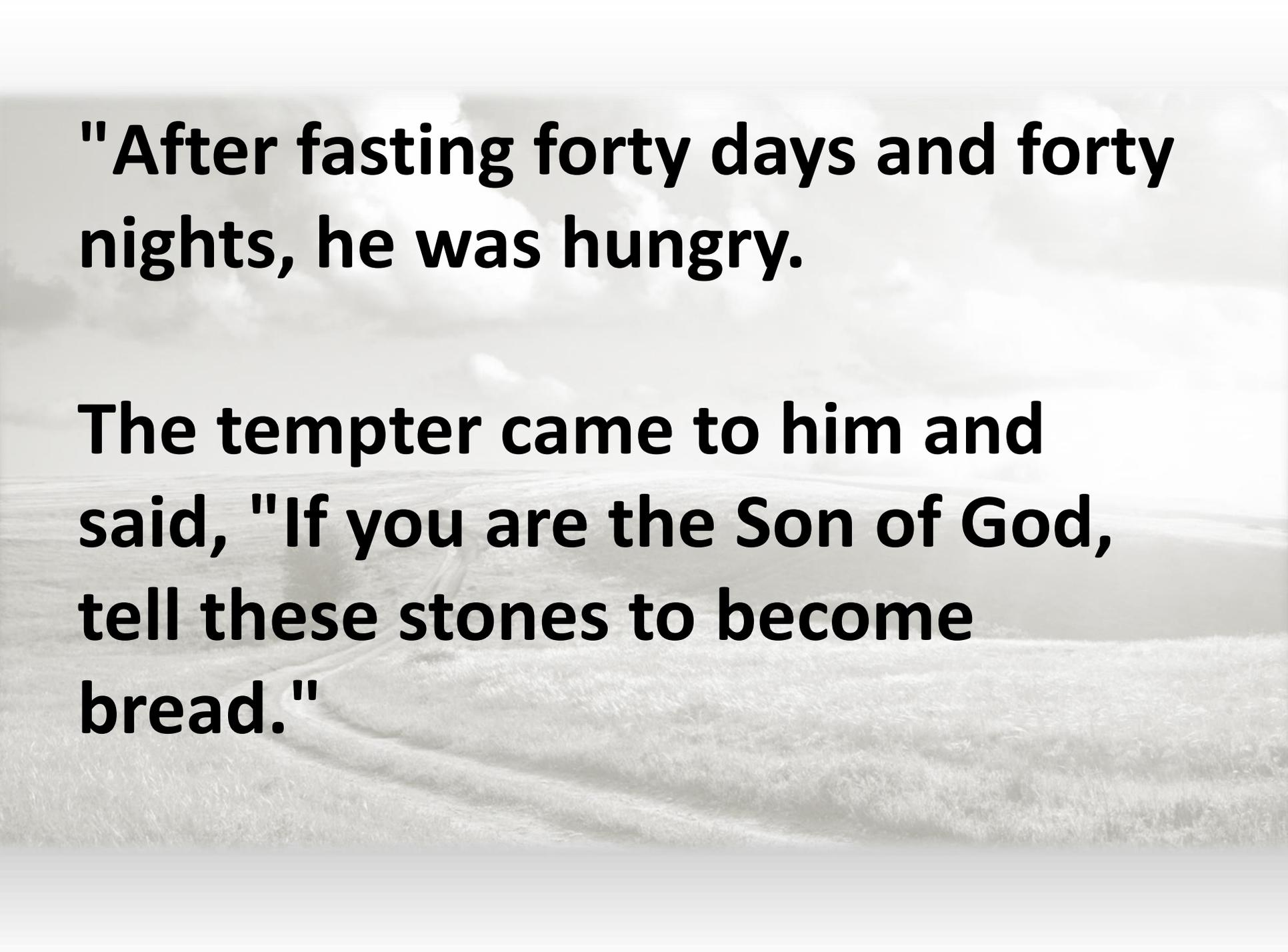
Fasting is **BIBLICAL** .

The Bible doesn't talk a lot about fasting.

- The Pharisees practiced fasting as a religious ritual, but had corrupted it by turning it into a show of superior spirituality, rather than as a covenant of humility and submission.

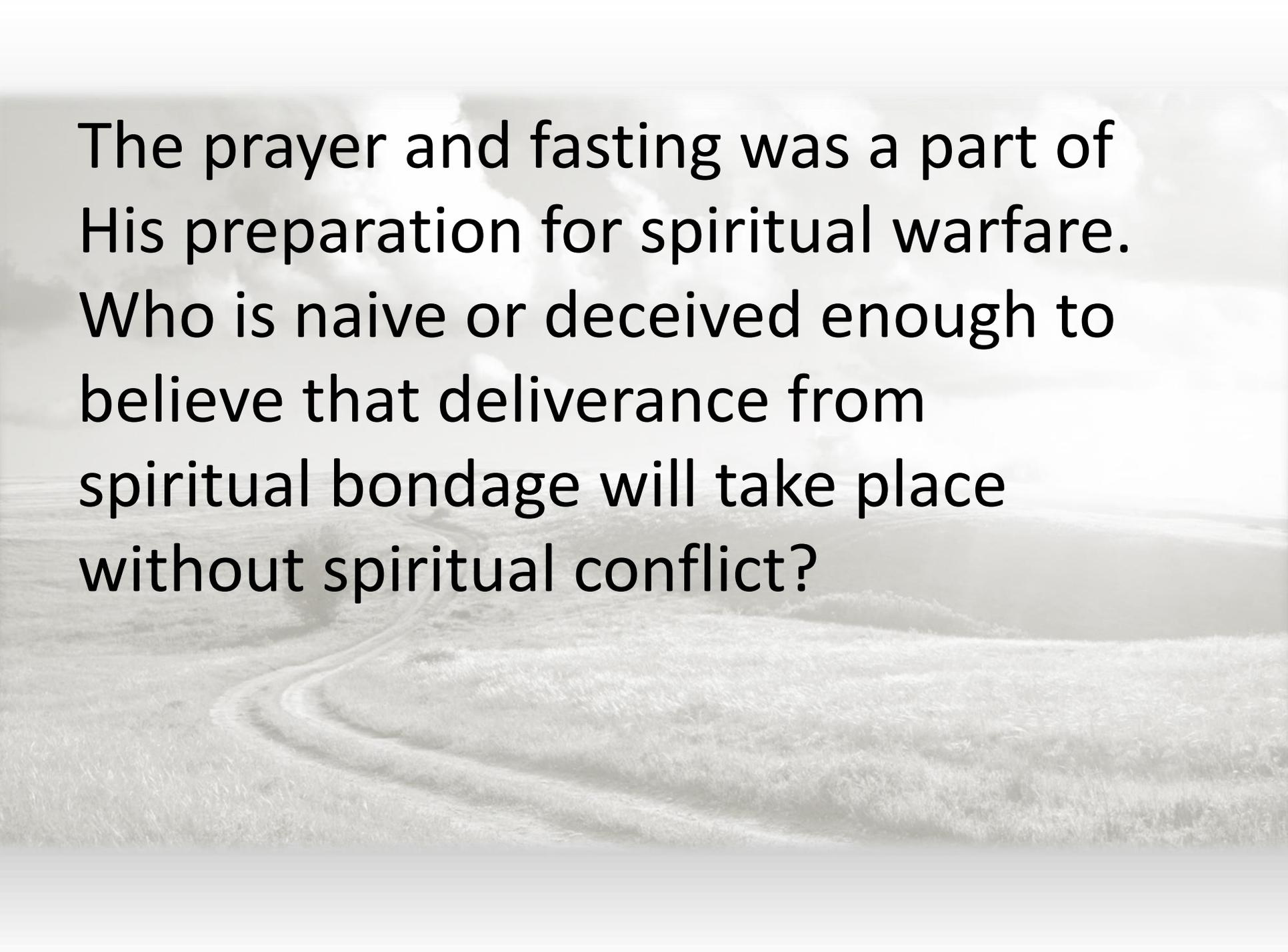
Fasting is **POWERFUL** .

Jesus began his ministry by being baptized as an example to his disciples, then immediately entered into a period of severe spiritual testing and temptation. The Bible says He prayed and fasted for 40 days and nights, THEN was tested.

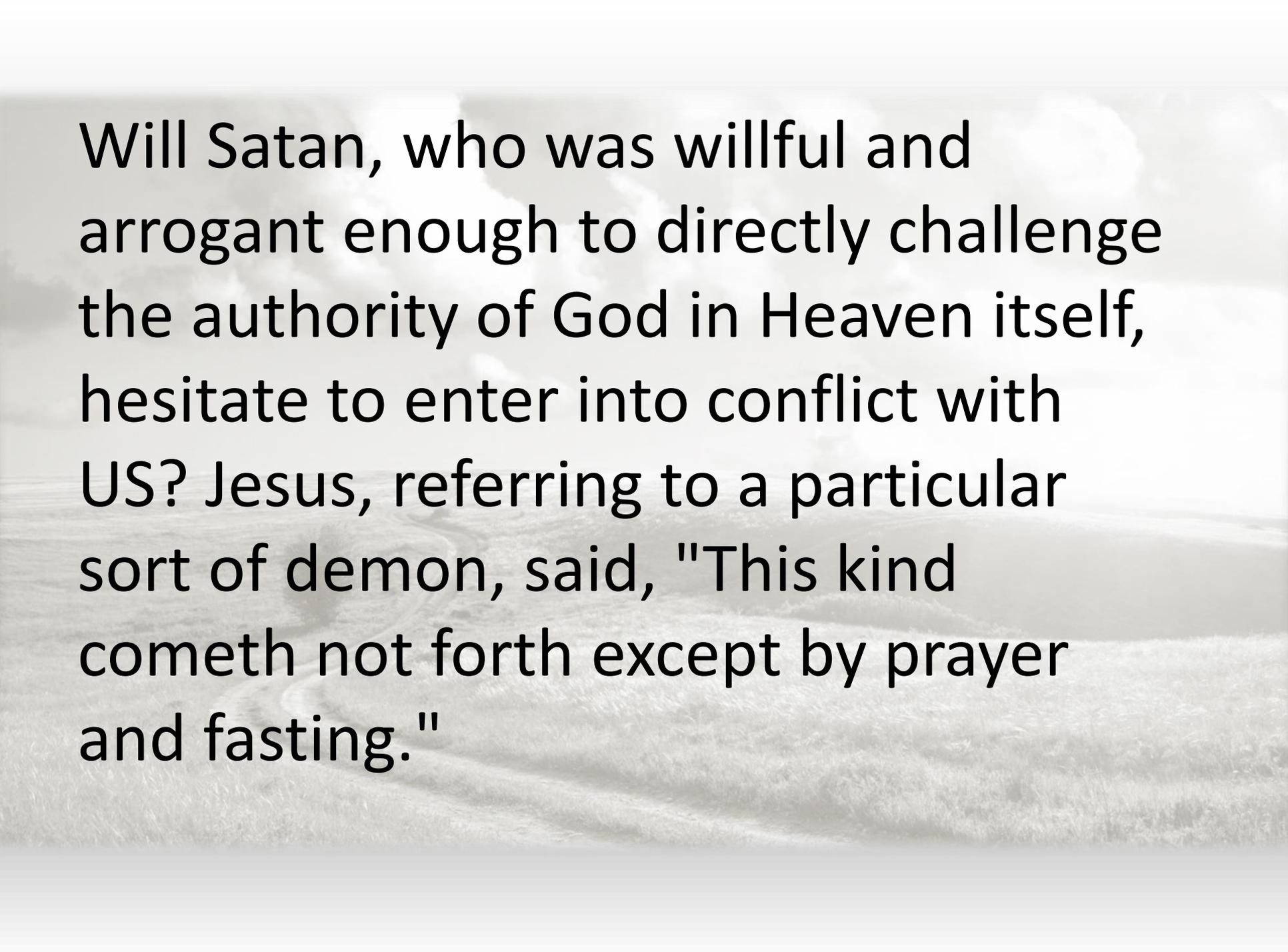


"After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

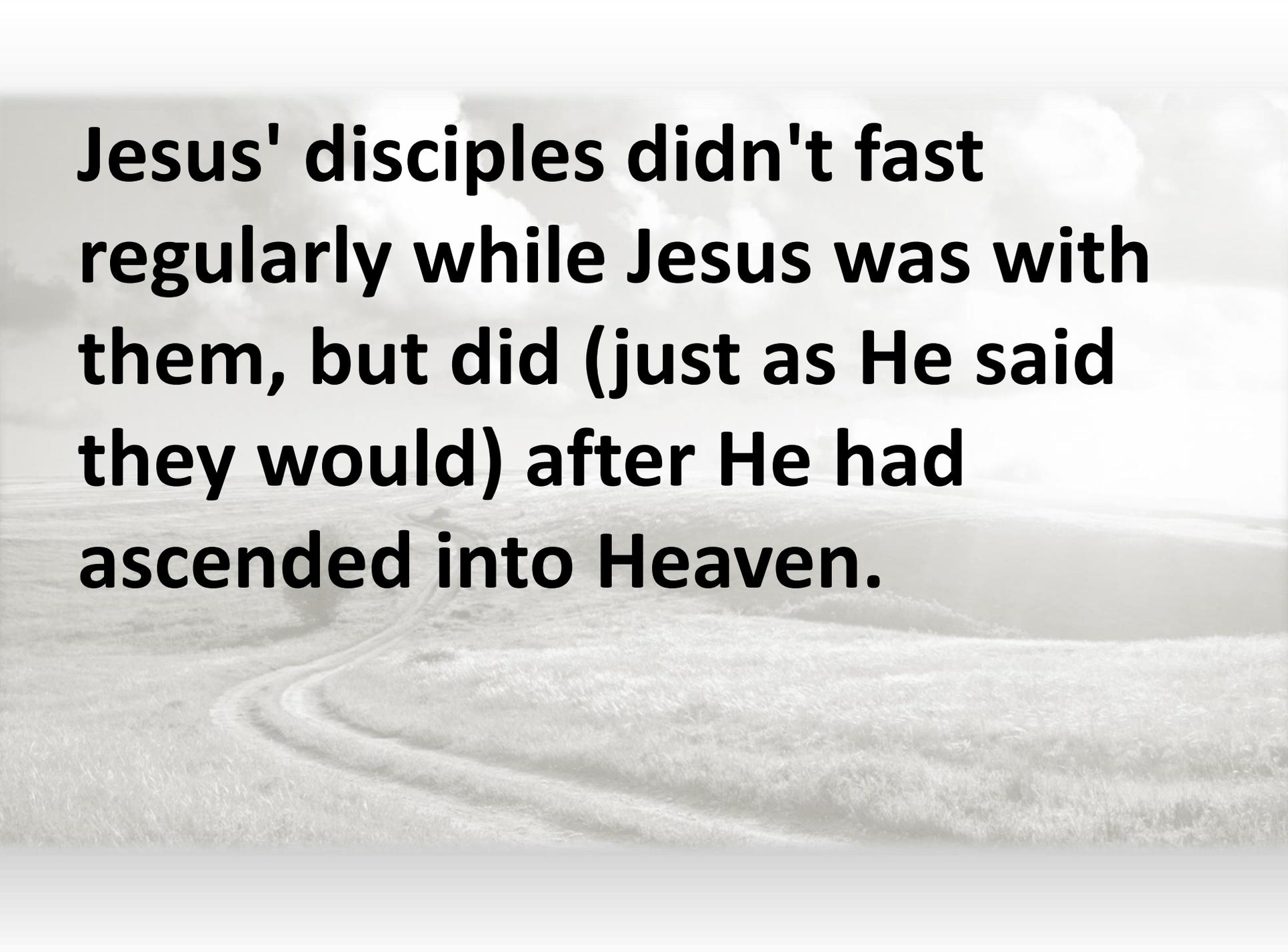
The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."



The prayer and fasting was a part of His preparation for spiritual warfare. Who is naive or deceived enough to believe that deliverance from spiritual bondage will take place without spiritual conflict?



Will Satan, who was willful and arrogant enough to directly challenge the authority of God in Heaven itself, hesitate to enter into conflict with US? Jesus, referring to a particular sort of demon, said, "This kind cometh not forth except by prayer and fasting."

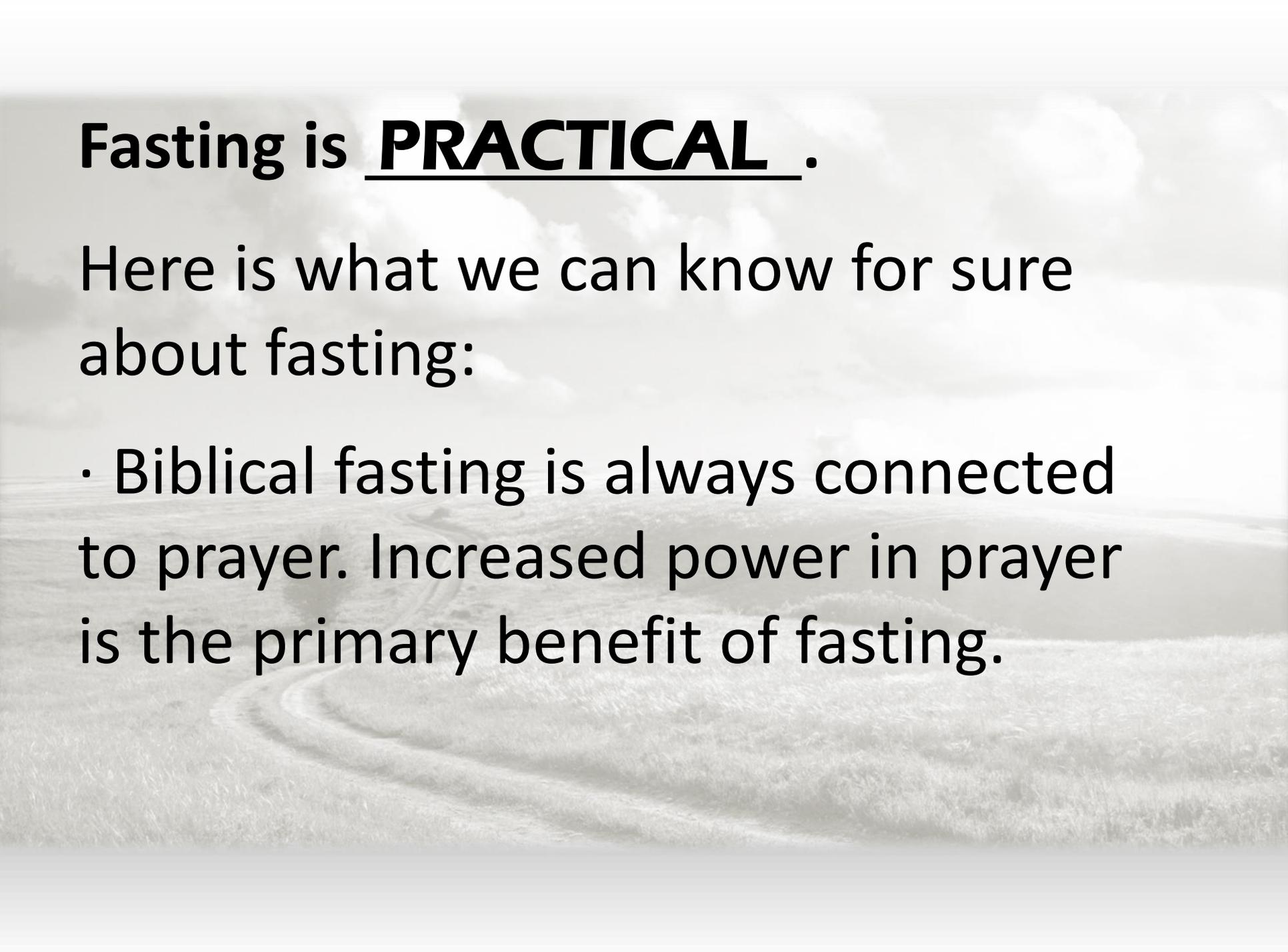


Jesus' disciples didn't fast regularly while Jesus was with them, but did (just as He said they would) after He had ascended into Heaven.

Fasting is **PRACTICAL** .

Here is what we can know for sure about fasting:

- Jesus expected that Christians would fast as both a spiritual discipline and to gain power in prayer.
- Fasting isn't a "Law Thing," but is a "Spirit Thing."



Fasting is **PRACTICAL** .

Here is what we can know for sure about fasting:

- Biblical fasting is always connected to prayer. Increased power in prayer is the primary benefit of fasting.

Fasting is **PRACTICAL** .

Here is what we can know for sure about fasting:

- A great secondary benefit of fasting is an increased ability to resist temptation. Anything that increases our true righteousness increases our power in prayer, because "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Fasting is **PRACTICAL** .

Here is what we can know for sure about fasting:

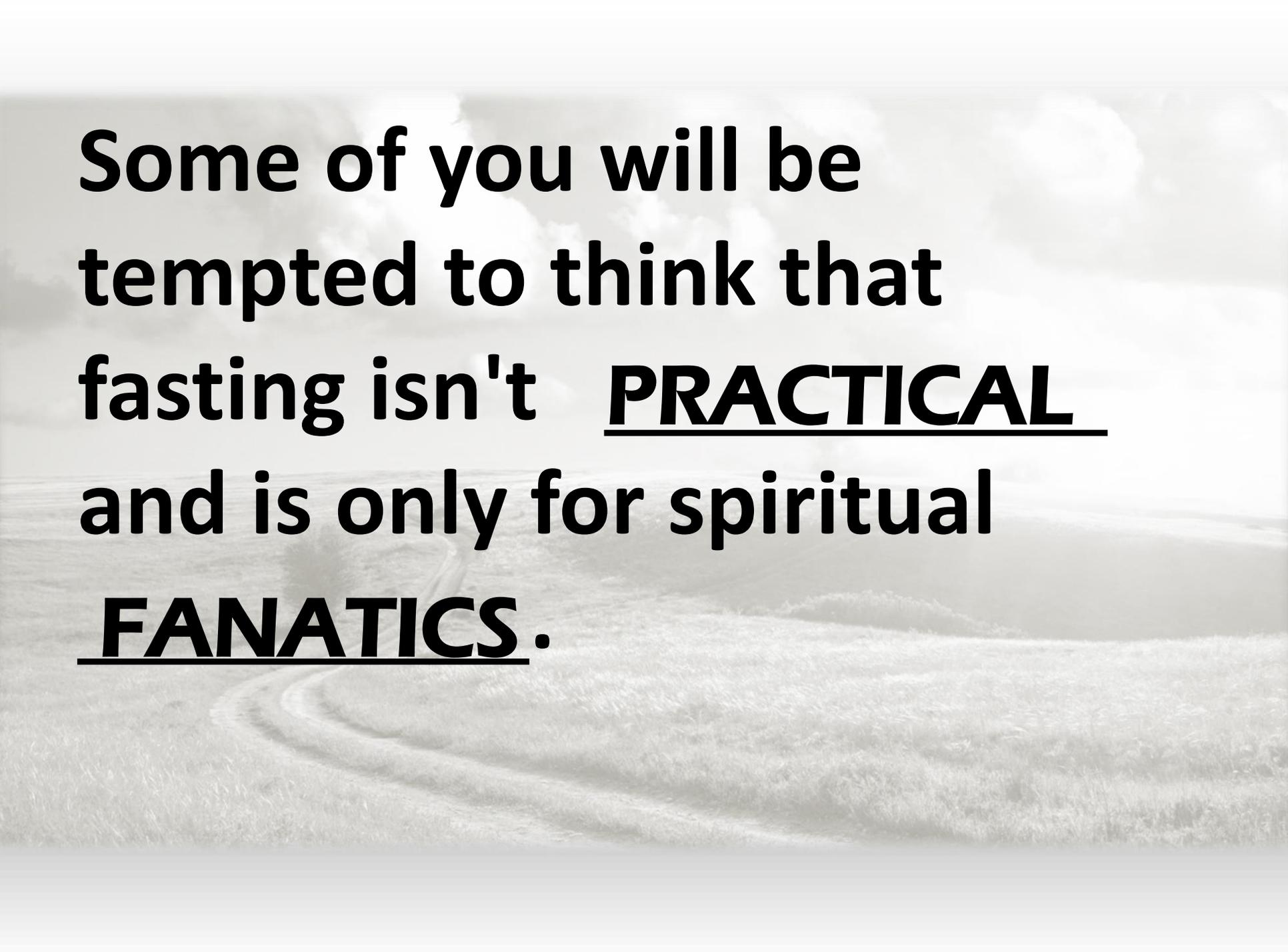
- Fasting *properly* purifies the mind, body, and spirit.
- Fasting puts the flesh in its proper place as servant to the spirit, rather than as the ruler of our being.

Fasting is **PRACTICAL** .

Here is what we can know for sure about fasting:

- Jesus' 40 day fast was not the norm of Biblical fasting and was enabled by special divine protection and provision.

(Kids, don't try this at home!)



Some of you will be
tempted to think that
fasting isn't **PRACTICAL**
and is only for spiritual
FANATICS.

Conclusion:

Fasting is a trust thing. We may not be able to completely understand it, but we can still choose to trust God and to demonstrate our obedience through fasting. Your empty plate symbolizes your desire and willingness to trade physical bread for the Bread of Life.

Conclusion: (Con't)

Please write your commitment on your plate, then sign it. It's magnetized so you can put it on your refrigerator as a visible reminder. Please plan to join us Thursday evening at 6:30 pm for a powerful time of consecration, communion, and prayer!

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