



the journey of
LENT

The purpose of Lent: If you come from a Catholic or Orthodox background you most likely celebrate the Lenten Season a little differently as if you came from a Protestant background. Let me give a brief overview of what the Lenten Season is about.

Lent is the season of humility and preparation before the great joy of Resurrection Sunday. It is a time of self-reflection of who I am outside of Christ and the necessity for Christ's ultimate sacrifice. It sets a rhythm in the Christian calendar of repentance leading to celebration, reminding believers of both the weight of sin and the hope of Christ's victory over death.

May you find consolation, great joy, and new wonderment of how a loving God made a way for us to be reunited with Him through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Blessings

Jospeh W. Scull III

**All Scripture verses come from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.



Day 1: Ash Wednesday – A Call to Return

Scripture: Joel 2:12-13 -
Even now— this is the Lord’s declaration—turn to me with

all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

*¹³ Tear your hearts,
not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your
God. For he is gracious and compassionate, slow to
anger, abounding in faithful love, and he relents
from sending disaster.*

Reflection: Can you remember a time you were far from God? A time when maybe you let circumstances get in the way of your relationship with God? We all have had them. I remember an experience in my first pastorate. I was very young in the faith, inexperienced, and I let circumstances dictate. So, I played Jonah and ran. But God, in His faithfulness, continued to pursue and love me and brought me back to Him. During that time away, though, I was much like Jonah; I felt lost and overwhelmed, and my heart was far from Him, I seemed to be going through the motions. God doesn’t want just our actions—He wants our heart.

Lent begins with a call to return to Him with all your being. Even if we are not on “the run,” so to

speaking, we always need to return to our Heavenly Father. Not just in repentance but for rest and guidance. Jesus himself would often draw away to a quiet place, away from the crowds, to do just that, to have fellowship with the Father.

Prayer: Lord, soften my heart. I return to You with repentance and humility.

Challenge: Spend 15 minutes in silence today, asking God to reveal areas that need repentance.

Day 2: The Weight of Sin



Scripture: *Romans 3:23 - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;*

Reflection: Sin is a universal burden but acknowledging it opens the door to God's mercy. Sin is a hard thing to talk about. We use generic terms; we avoid getting specific. No one wants to admit that they are a liar or a murderer (hate for another person), an adulterer (lust in our hearts), etc. Because we as believers in Christ gathered in our churches, somehow think we are beyond that. And there in is the problem to our effectiveness for Christ. Yes, I admit it. I am a murderer. I hated so much that I

wanted that other person dead. I am an adulterer. I have lusted. I am a liar. I have made promises and not kept them.

To the left is a picture from the book, “*The Picture of Dorian Gray*” by Oscar Wilde. It portrays what we look like as “sinners,” not pleasant to look at, but that is what sin does to us. This is what we would look like if we were honest about our sin. Sin disfigures, distorts, and disables our effectiveness for Christ. May we be honest with ourselves and God and confess our sins to Him.

Prayer: Father, I confess my sins and ask for Your forgiveness.

Challenge: Write down and confess a sin that’s been weighing on you and then wad it up and throw it away – as Christ has removed our sin as far as the east is from the west.

Day 3: God’s Mercy is Greater



Scripture: *Psalm*

103:10-12 - He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high

as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his faithful love toward those who fear him. ¹² As far as

the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Reflection: My family and I were driving one day in South Bound Brook, New Jersey. We were talking, and admittedly, I was not paying very good attention to the road in front of me. Then it happened, right through the red light, I mean blatantly right through, no yellow, full-blown red. The next thing I know, you guessed it, a police officer with the blue lights on is pulling me over. My wife and I looked at each other and knew what was coming – a big fat ticket, with a big fat fine. Well, to my surprise, after chatting with the officer, he simply said, “Please pay more attention and let me go – mercy.” I am so thankful that God doesn’t treat us as our sins deserve. His mercy brings freedom. This is so clearly pictured for us with the woman caught in adultery. Jesus doesn’t excuse her sin, but neither does He condemn her, but says go and sin no more. May we go and sin no more as well.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for Your incredible mercy that sets me free.

Challenge: Forgive someone today as God has forgiven you.

Day 4: Temptation and Strength

Scripture: *Matthew 4:1-11 - Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness*



to be tempted by the devil. ² After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ Then the tempter approached him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell

*these stones to become bread.” ⁴ He answered, “It is written: **Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**” ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: **He will give his angels orders concerning you, and they will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**” ⁷ Jesus told him, “It is also written: **Do not test the Lord your God.**” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ And he said to him, “I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus told him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: **Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.**” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and began to serve him.*

Reflection: Temptations. We face temptations every single day. Temptations to be lazy and not work hard, to complain about circumstances, to take things that do not belong to us, lash out at a co-worker, etc. Then we want to justify what we just did. In the movie *Oppenheimer*, there is a scene where Oppenheimer is upset about his mistress killing herself. His wife looks at him and tells him, “You don’t get to commit the sin and then expect people to feel sorry for you when there are consequences.” The point is that we are going to face temptations; sometimes we will be successful, and sometimes we will fall. Hopefully as we grow in our faith, there should be more victories than failures. Jesus faced temptation and vanquished it with Scripture, and that is the key. So can we, but we must be immersed in Scripture. If we are not in God’s Word, the Holy Spirit cannot give us what we need to overcome those temptations. Jesus had victory because he knew the Scriptures. Eve fell because she misquoted God’s Word – we must know the Word of God.

Prayer: Strengthen me, Lord, when I’m tempted. Help me cling to Your Word.

Challenge: Memorize one verse today to use in moments of temptation.

Day 5: Fasting with Purpose

Scripture: *Isaiah 58:6-7 - Isn't this the fast I*



choose: To break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to ignore your own flesh and blood?

Reflection: Often, when we think of Lent, we think about fasting something; it is a time to give up something for that 40-day period, it could be a food item, video games, tv, etc. However, fasting isn't just about self-denial—it's about focusing on God and what He wants to accomplish in our lives and the lives of others. It is about living just and merciful lives. I have to admit that fasting food is something that comes fairly easy for me, so that is not much of a sacrifice. A harder sacrifice would be to give up all TV watching, which would mean no watching baseball for the 40 days. Filling our lives with purpose is what God wants to do in us, and in order to do that, we need to spend time with Him with no distractions.

Prayer: God, help my fasting draw me closer to You and to the needs of others.

Challenge: Fast from a luxury (a restaurant meal, for example) and donate to a cause that helps the poor.

Day 6: Trusting God in the Desert

Scripture: *Exodus 16:2-5 - The entire Israelite*



community grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate all the bread we wanted. Instead, you brought us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly die of hunger!”

⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This way I will test them to see whether or not they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.”

Reflection: When I took my second pastorate in Colorado, we were amazed at God’s provision. Our son has food allergies, which we did not share with the church that called us. Well, the first or second day after we moved into the parsonage a station

wagon- I know some of you have no idea what that is - pulled into our driveway. It was loaded with three or four big boxes of food, which was amazing in itself, but it got better. Those boxes contain food items that our son good eat, there was nothing in them that he could not eat. God knew the allergies and provided for us. God provides even in the wilderness. That was the point of mana, to trust God daily for His provision. Lent reminds us to trust His provision.

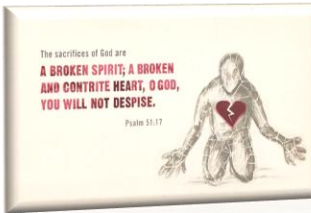


Prayer: Teach me to rely on You, not my own understanding.

Challenge: Skip one meal and pray during that time.

Day 7: A Broken and Contrite Heart

Scripture: *Psalm 51:16, 17 - You do not want a*



sacrifice, or I would give it; you are not pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.

Reflection: I love this Psalm; it is David's heart cry

to God. Nathan had just confronted him over his adultery with Bathsheba and understands he is guilty before Nathan, his family, the nation of Israel, and God. God desires brokenness over perfection. Yes! I love how David refers to this in the Psalm. This Psalm is an honest, heartfelt confession of sin, a plea for forgiveness, and an understanding of how offensive sin is before a Holy God. This is a Psalm of a man completely broken and honest, a man who hungers and thirsts for a for a right relationship with His Creator. Jesus said a similar thing in *Matthew 5:3-6* - *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

And this is why God calls David “A Man after His heart.” Oh, that I may be like David and desire God’s heart more than anything.

Prayer: Lord, break my heart for what breaks Yours.

Challenge: Go to someone you have offended and sinned against and make a confession from your heart to them, asking for forgiveness.

Day 8: The Call to Humility

Scripture: *Philippians 2:5-8 - Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,* ⁶ *who, existing in the*



form of God, did not consider equality with God

as something to be exploited.⁷ Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a

servant,

taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man,⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death— even to death on a cross.

Reflection: While I was serving at a ministry, I was performing security duties. In those duties, I asked for an item so that it would be easier to perform the security tasks. I was told that I could not have that item because it was unavailable, it was broken, only to see that item being used later in the day. Well, the next day, in front of volunteers, I called someone a liar. Oops! Ouch! Open mouth, insert foot. Public sin demands public confession, talk about being humbled, but I earned that. I should not have said what I said, I sinned openly and publicly.

Now, the passage we look at today is more about serving one another rather than being humble because of sin. The point is that Christ humbled

Himself to the point of death. We are called to walk in humility, serve others, and be able to humble ourselves when we do sin.

Prayer: Help me live with a servant's heart like Jesus.

Challenge: Serve someone in secret today.

Day 9: Surrendering Control

Scripture: *Proverbs 3:5-7 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷ Don't be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil.*

Reflection: Admitting I have no control over anything is hard and yet freeing when I do. There is a fine line between surrendering control and just not caring. One recognizes that God has a plan, and I simply need to follow the instructions. There are other implications I don't care about people or things. Tenth Avenue North wrote a song entitled Control,

“God You don't need me
But somehow You want me
Oh, how You love me
Somehow that frees me
To take my hands off of my life
And the way it should go”

Lent invites us to surrender our need to control and trust God. To embrace what God gives us. As we fight through this sin-cursed life, remember all of this is designed to draw us to the Creator who has a plan, a plan to redeem and make us more like His Son Jesus.

Prayer: I surrender my plans, Lord. Lead me.

Challenge: Give up a habit of control and trust someone else today.

Day 10: Loving the Unlovable

Scripture: Luke 6:27-28 - *“But I say to you who listen: Love your*



enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Reflection: Loving those who love us is easy. On the other hand, those that have hurt us become much harder to love. I guess we need to define what it means to love. In the Biblical sense of agape, it means to love selflessly; it means we put others before ourselves. It means I want the best for you; I

am not going to use you for my gain. Again, it is easy to want those things for those who love us. But it takes a Spirit-filled life to want those things for those who are against us. Jesus calls us to love our enemies, even when it hurts. And that is the call, to allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and treat and love others as Christ loved them. He so loved them that he died on a cross to redeem them. If He did that, then I can, through His Spirit, do the same.

Prayer: Fill my heart with love for those I find difficult.

Challenge: Pray for someone who has hurt you.

Day 11: Listening to God's Voice

Scripture: John 10:27 – *“My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me”*



Reflection: Do you ever get like me just tired of hearing noise? Whether it is the radio playing music, TV watching Baseball, or quite frankly people just talking. To quote from the “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” oh the noise, the noise, the noise! This is one reason we see Jesus drawing off by himself to quiet places to commune with the Father.

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah is on the run from Jezebel, and tells him “Then he said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the LORD’s presence.”

At that moment, the LORD passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.”

We need to be like Elijah, no not running from Jezebel, but listening to God’s voice in that still small voice. God does not shout. In a noisy world, God still speaks. Are we listening?

Prayer: Quiet my heart to hear Your voice, Lord.

Challenge: Spend 10 minutes today in silence, listening.

Day 12: Living by the Spirit

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-17 – *“I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is*

against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want."

Reflection: Walking in the Spirit helps us overcome the flesh and oppression. There are times in my walk with Christ that I have been plagued with thoughts from the evil one. Is it at those times that I first call on the Holy Spirit for strength and He brings to mind some of the great old hymns to sing. As I sing those hymns in my head, the Spirit gives comfort, peace and strength. May we all use the "Good gifts" that God gives us to be overcomers.

Prayer: Spirit, guide my thoughts, words, and actions today.

Challenge: Pay attention to a moment when you need to choose Spirit over self.

Day 13: Bearing Fruit

Scripture: John 15:5 – *"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."*



Reflection: Remaining in Jesus leads to fruitfulness. We are all familiar with what happens when a plant we are growing gets disconnected somehow from the soil or even just a

branch that gets broken off from the main plant – simply put it dies. When I get “busy” with the things of life the day-to-day routine, I get like Martha, forgetting to focus and remain in Christ and then the weariness of the labor sets in. Then there are those times when I am resting completely in Christ and he produces the fruit, some of my better lessons in class have been those that I have simply turned over to Christ and asked Him to teach.

Prayer: Jesus, help me stay connected to You.

Challenge: Do one act of kindness today that reflects Jesus.

Day 14: Worship in the Wilderness

Scripture: Habakkuk 3:17-19 – “*Though the fig*



tree does not bud and there is no fruit on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though the flocks disappear from the pen and there are no herds in

the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will celebrate in the Lord; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation! ¹⁹ The Lord my Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like those of a deer and enables me to walk on mountain heights!”

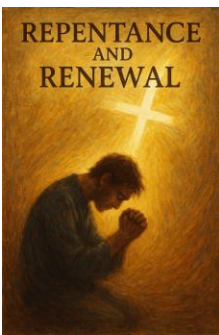
Reflection: Even in hardship, we can worship. We have all been in those places where it seems that God has left us, but it is not God that has moved, it is us. I remember one of those times that I really thought God had put me on the shelf and said I am done with you. I also remember being encouraged by a close friend to stay the course. It was then that I returned to singing hymns of praise, remembering all that God has done in the past for me and clinging to the promises of what was yet to come. Be encouraged today. God has not moved, return to song, to reflecting and you will bloom in the wilderness times.

Prayer: I choose to rejoice in You, no matter what.

Challenge: Listen to a worship song and sing along with a joyful heart. Listen to Bethel Music “Raise a Hallelujah.”

Day 15: Repentance and Renewal

Scripture: Acts 3:19 – *“Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out,”*



Reflection: True repentance leads to times of refreshment. Repentance, during a 180, turning away from sin and to God. I

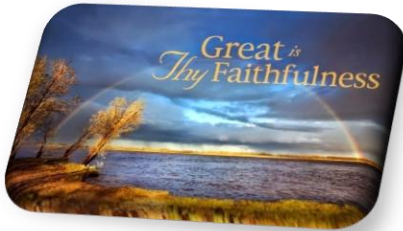
remember a particular time in my ministry when I had to repent that I stayed with me all these years. It was a public act of repentance and asking for forgiveness. Public sins demand public confession and repentance. Repentance as hard as it is, is so comforting. To know the forgiveness that God gives is indeed a comfort to the soul.

Prayer: Lord, renew my spirit as I turn from sin.

Challenge: Spend time journaling what needs to be renewed in your life.

Day 16: God's Faithfulness

Scripture: Lamentations 3:22-23 – *“Because of the Lord’s faithful love we do*



not perish, for his mercies never end.

²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!”

Reflection: God’s faithfulness never fails. As I reflect over the 50 years since Christ saved me and look back I can now clearly see where God was faithful to accomplish His purposes in my life. He has provided the needs for family repeatedly. One time in particular that I remember was when I was

pastoring in Colorado. I took a small outside of Denver on the high plains. We had been called but did not have time to really discuss any family needs. Well God in His faithful providence touched the lives of those families to deliver several boxes of food for us. The thing is our son had food allergies, but the folks did not know that, but God did. Out of all those boxes of food there was NOT one thing that our son could not eat. There were other times as well where God was just as faithful. Let's take some time today and simply reflect on how God has been faithful to us.

Prayer: Thank You for Your steadfast love every morning.

Challenge: Write down three ways God has been faithful to you.

Day 17: The Cost of Discipleship

Scripture: Luke 9:23 – *“Then he said to them*

all, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.”



Reflection: Following Jesus means taking up your cross daily. So, what does it mean to take up my cross? There are several applications that could be made, but since we are in Lent let's focus on one. Taking up your daily, as Luke mentions, reminds us that each day we are to live our lives sacrificially. Jesus himself reminds us that He did not come to be served but to serve. Each day we must surrender our wants, goals, and pride to Him, to use for His glory, for Him to work His plan through us. Lent is about sacrifice in preparation to remember the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross for me, for the world.

Prayer: Give me strength to follow You, no matter the cost and sacrifices my wants for yours.

Challenge: Reflect on what it means to "deny yourself" today.

Day 18: The Power of Prayer

Scripture: James 5:16 – *“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its*



effect.”

Reflection: Prayer is powerful and effective when it comes from a righteous heart.

Prayer: Lord, make me a person of prayer.

Challenge: Pray for five people today by name.

Day 19: Resting in Christ

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30 – *“Come to me, all of*



*you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give
you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke
upon you and learn from
me, because I am lowly
and humble in heart, and
you will find rest for your
souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy
and my burden is light.”*

Reflection: Jesus offers true rest for weary souls.

Ah, rest! Think about when you had a “good” night’s rest. How sweet it was. Resting in Jesus is just as sweet. So, what does that mean? It means I understand that I have absolutely no control over anything and He has all control over everything. Because that is true, I have no need to worry which robs my rest physically and spiritually.

Prayer: Help me give freely and joyfully, as you gave yourself for me.

Challenge: Give away something today that you value.

Day 21: Faith That Perseveres

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-2 – *“Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before*



us, ² keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Reflection: Lent teaches us to run the race with endurance, fixing our eyes on Jesus. Ever just want to give up, but you kept going? Being a diabetic, I have to walk a lot, it helps keep my sugar and weight under control. But where I walk there are

some steep hills and there are even stairs. And I will admit that every once in a while, climbing those hills and steps I just had to stop and sit down, then I remember that if I do will get even harder the next time, so I keep going. So too with our faith walk. The moment we “sit down” it will harder the next time. So, keep going, remember the suffering here is nothing compared to the glories of being with Jesus in heaven. Keep the faith.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to give up when the road gets hard. Help me to keep on going, knowing that better days are ahead.

Challenge: Identify one area where you are tempted to quit and commit it to prayer.

Day 22: Compassion in Action

Scripture: Colossians 3:12 – *“Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion,*



kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,”

Reflection: We are called to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, and humility. Compassion is defined as feeling deep concern over the misfortunes of others which drives you to try and bring relief. One of the blessings God has given me over the years is to be able to sit down with young people as they are hurting and to walk them through the Scriptures to find the answers they need to resolve their problem. Sometimes it has worked well, and they come back and thank me, other times it is still a work in progress. Which is where we all are. As believers we are still a work in progress. With that in mind then, we need to continue to remember that God is not done with us, He is still molding and shaping us into the image of His son. So, let's look at each other through the eyes of Christ, compassionately and help them rather than criticizing them.

Prayer: Help me reflect Your love through my actions, and words today. Help me love compassionately as you do.

Challenge: Look for a small act of compassion you can do for someone today.

Day 23: The Freedom of Forgiveness

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-15 – “*For if you forgive others their offenses, your*

heavenly Father will forgive you as well. ¹⁵ But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.”



Reflection: Forgiveness frees both the offender and the offended. Forgiveness is the hardest thing we will have to do. Forgiveness is not telling the person that hurt us that what they did is ok, but ***rather it is telling them that I am giving up my right to get even, or revenge.*** That is hard. Everything in me wants to get even to do something to them that will hurt them bad. Think where we would be if Christ was not willing to forgive me. I would be burning in the pits of hell this very minute. Because He forgave ALL my sin, all means all, and not only mine but everyone's, that now means I have no right not to forgive those that hurt me. By not granting forgiveness I am making myself higher than God, which I am not. Yes, forgiveness is the hardest thing we will ever do, however, in Christ I can be forgiving.

Prayer: Help me release any bitterness I'm holding. Help break the chains that hold me back from reflecting your love to those you have hurt me.

Challenge: Write a letter of forgiveness—even if you don't send it.

Day 24: The Strength of the Lord

Scripture: Isaiah 40:29-31 – *“He gives strength to the faint and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰ Youths may become faint and weary, and young men stumble and fall, ³¹ but those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint.”*



Reflection: When we are weak, God gives strength. Can you think of a time that you weak and Christ came to strengthen you? There are several times in my life that I can remember that happening. The most recent one was when I was struggling with “ministry” issues. In those moments Christ sent me need counsel from friends, reminders through hymns and refreshment through prayer. It is so important to surround our lives with good, solid, believing friends, good sound doctrine music, and

times of prayer to receive the needed strength for each day.

Prayer: Lord, renew my strength today. Send a hymn, a friend, a word with you that will renew my spirit and refresh.

Challenge: Encourage someone who seems weary or burdened.

Day 25: Living Sacrifice

Scripture: Romans 12:1 - 2 – *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. ² Do*

not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.”

Reflection: God calls us to offer ourselves fully to Him. For the last couple of years, I have been a high school principal, and I did enjoy it. However, in December of 2024 God clearly spoke to me through

several passages of Scripture, specially Acts 20:24
“But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.” It was like I heard His voice saying to me, “I gave you the gift of teaching, why are you not using it.” It was epiphany. Ok, Lord, I will return to the classroom. I stepped down as principal and returned to the classroom and I have to say the Lord was right – of course. Surrendering to His will and following His plan is the only truly satisfying thing in life.

Prayer: I surrender myself to You as a living sacrifice. Lord, not my will but yours be done.

Challenge: Fast from something that distracts you from God today.

Day 26: The Servant Heart of Christ

Scripture: Mark 10:42 - 45 – *“Jesus called them over and said to them, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among*



you will be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Reflection: Jesus came to serve, not to be served. So should we. Man’s basic sin nature cries out to be served, we want people to wait on us hand and foot. However, Christ has called to do the opposite, to be the ones doing the serving. To be the ones the world would consider to be the lowest. To have a servant heart like Christ means that we are going go about our day with humble hearts, looking to the needs of others first, to obey God’s commands, to even sacrifice my rights for the betterment of others. In that we will find the contentment we long for.

Prayer: Lord, give me the heart of a servant. Give me your eyes to see others the way you see them.

Challenge: Do something today that serves another's need without being asked.

Day 27: The Joy of Salvation

Scripture: Psalm 51:12 – 13 – “Restore the joy of



your salvation to me and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit. ¹³ Then I will teach the rebellious your ways, and sinners will return to you.”

Reflection: Salvation brings deep and lasting joy, even in sorrow. We are told in Galatians that Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit as such only as yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to grow that fruit in us. Even David in this Psalm in verse 11 asks God not remove the Spirit from his presence. Resting in the Spirit transforming our hearts, minds and souls will bring us the joy that will allow us to sing in the prisons of life like Paul and Silas.

Prayer: Restore to me the joy of Your salvation.

Challenge: Share your testimony or a story of God’s work in your life with someone.

Day 28: Holy and Set Apart

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:15-16 –“ *But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; ¹⁶for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.***” 1 Peter 2:9 –



“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

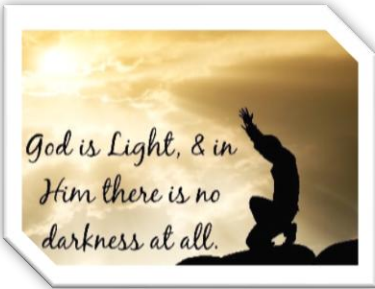
Reflection: Lent reminds us to pursue holiness in a world that often opposes it. Holiness, God character demands it. The purpose of the Ten Commandments is to show us how far we are away from the holiness, none of us can meet that standard. Only in Christ and through His blood are we declared holy. The nation of Isarel was to testify to that holiness by being set apart, they were to stand out from the world around them. Believers today have also been called to stand out from the world. Instead, we are trying so hard to “fit in.” Let’s return to the calling of God to be different, to be holy, to be as the King James says in 1 Peter 2: 9 a peculiar people, so that the world wants to know the God who saved us.

Prayer: Make me holy, Lord, as You are holy.

Challenge: Remove one thing from your life that hinders holiness.

Day 29: Living in the Light

Scripture: 1 John 1:5 – 10 – *“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him. ⁶ If we say, “We have fellowship with him,” and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the*



truth. ⁷ If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another; and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say, “We have not sinned,” we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

Reflection: As we walk in the light, we find fellowship and forgiveness.

Prayer: Expose the darkness in my heart, Lord, and bring Your healing light.

Challenge: Confess a struggle to a trusted Christian friend or mentor.

Day 30: God's Love Displayed

Scripture: Romans 5:8 – 10 – *“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. ¹⁰ For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.”*



THE STORY OF
GOD'S LOVE

Reflection: Christ’s death on the cross is the ultimate demonstration of God’s love. In the movie “The Passion of the Christ” by Mel Gibson, there is a scene where Mary following Jesus as he carries his cross to Golgotha, she is in an alleyway and see him fall. The scene shows us her reflections as a mom running to aid her son when he has fallen as a child to help, but now her heart aches because she cannot run to him and aid him. Heartbreaking! I

imagine that heartbreak as God looks on His Son on the cross – paying for the sins of the world. There is no greater love, than Christ’s outstretched arms as He died for my sin.

Prayer: Thank You, Jesus, for loving me when I was still a sinner.

Challenge: Tell someone today that God loves them.

Day 31: A Heart of Gratitude

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:16 – 18 –

“Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray constantly, ¹⁸ give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”



Reflection: Gratitude shifts our focus from problems to God’s goodness. Simply saying thank you has an amazing effect on people, especially when it is truly meant. I have seen the hardest of people soften when a simple “thank you” is offered for the service they perform. All of us want to know that your work is appreciated, all of us love to hear those words – “thank you.” Let’s be an encourager today by saying “thank you” and meaning it, it is not that hard. Thank You!

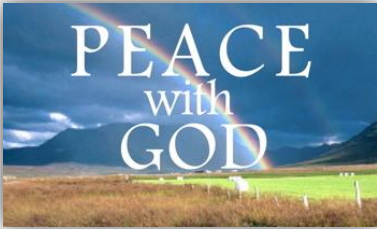
Prayer: Help me give thanks in all circumstances.

Challenge: List ten things you're thankful for today.

Day 32: The Peace of Christ

Scripture: John 14:27 – “Peace I leave with you.

My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful.”



Reflection: Jesus gives peace not as the world gives. It calms the soul. I

will admit it took a little while before I truly let the peace of Christ rule. Several years ago, it finally set in. I understood that I have no control over anything and that Christ had control over everything – ah! What peace, that means that whatever comes my way on any single day is in the control of Christ who loves me more than I can even imagine and has nothing good planned for me. So why worry then. Yes, I still would like answers to what I don't understand, but at the end of the day I keep saying not my will but yours be done. I say that a lot and it does bring peace.

Prayer: Let Your peace rule in my heart today.

Challenge: Choose peace over worry by praying instead of stressing.

Day 33: Jesus, the Good Shepherd

Scripture: John 10:11 – 14 – *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired*



hand, since he is not the shepherd and doesn't own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters

them. ¹³ This happens because he is a hired hand and doesn't care about the sheep. ¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me,”

Reflection: Jesus knows and leads His sheep with love and care. **Psalm 23** is the great Psalm of Christ as shepherd, let's just rest there today.

*“The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need.
² He lets me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters. ³ He renews my life; he leads me along the right paths for his name's sake.
⁴ Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear*

no danger, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live.”

Prayer: Lead me, Good Shepherd. I trust You.

Challenge: Take a prayer walk and reflect on God’s guidance in your life.

Day 34: Abiding in Christ

Scripture: John 15:4 – 5 – “Remain in me, and I in



you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can

you unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.”

Reflection: Abiding means remaining close to Jesus

every day. Remaining close is a work in progress, the business of day gets in my way. In Luke 10, Jesus has come to the home of Mary and Martha, Marhta is busy getting dinner ready while Mary sits at the feet of Jesus. Martha frustrated asks Jesus to tell Mary to get to work. That is me too often. I am too busy about the things I must do, lesson preparation, grading, mowing lawn, cooking, etc. that I forget to spend time with the one who wants that relationship with me. I have learned to have conversations all day long, read and listen to Scripture, and to fill my mind with “good solid” Christian music, to look for His guiding hand. Listen today to the old hymn “Just a Little Talk with Jesus. It helps us to stay focused on what is worthwhile – my relationship with Christ!

Prayer: Teach me to stay connected to You in every moment.

Challenge: Unplug from distractions and spend extended time with God.

Day 35: Called to Be Holy

Scripture: Ephesians 4:22-24 – *“to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires,²³ to be renewed in the*



spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth."

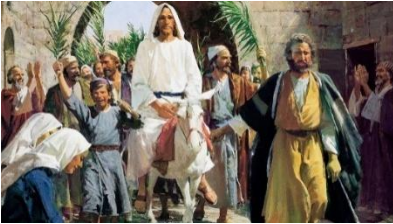
Reflection: Lent is a time to take off the old self and put on the new. Just recently I went back over the Ten Commandment with my students. They were given to us to show us the character of God – Holy! And to show us our sinfulness and reason we need a savior. Those commandments as just as valid today as they were when God gave them to Isarel. God expects holiness and without Christ we are unholy. It is Christ's righteousness that was given to me when I received Him as savior that makes me holy before a Holy God. As Peter wrote "for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.**" God's standard has not changed. Let's therefore examine ourselves and rid it of anything that is contrary to God's Holy character.

Prayer: Help me grow in holiness and righteousness.

Challenge: Identify one area where you need spiritual growth and take action.

Day 36: Palm Sunday – Welcoming the King

Scripture: Matthew 21:6 – 9 – “*The disciples went*



and did just as Jesus directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt; then they laid their clothes on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread

their clothes on the road; others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. ⁹ Then the crowds who went ahead of him and those who followed shouted:

Hosannato the Son of David!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosannain the highest heaven!”

Reflection: The crowds welcomed Jesus with praise. Will you welcome Him daily? In his little booklet “*My Heart Christ’s Home*,” Robert Boyd Munger, illustrates a new believer receiving Christ as Savior and having Christ move into his “home.” As Christ settled into the home, He asks the homeowner about things that should not be in the home and then ask to permission to clean up those areas. It is an interesting little story that paints a clear picture of receiving Christ and allowing Christ

to make each part of our life honoring to Him. It is only when we receive Christ that we can become transformed and made new.

Prayer: Hosanna! I welcome You as my Savior and King.

Challenge: Read the full story of Jesus' triumphal entry and reflect on His kingship.

Day 37: Cleansing the Temple

Scripture: Matthew 21:12 – 13 – *“Jesus went into the temple and threw out*



*all those buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves.*¹³

*He said to them, “It is written, **my house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of thieves!**”*

Reflection: Jesus calls us to holiness in the place of worship—and in our hearts. The cleaning of the temple illustrates to us the need to clean up or should I say to allow Christ to clean up our lives. To rid them of anything that would interfere with the relationship He wants with us, that is contrary to

His character, of anything that would hinder our testimony for Him.

Prayer: Cleanse my heart, Lord, and make me Your holy temple.

Challenge: Remove distractions and idols from your life today.

Day 38: The Last Supper (Maundy Thursday)

Scripture: Luke 22:19 – 20 – “*And he took bread,*

gave thanks, broke it,

gave it to

them, and

said, “This

is my

body, which

is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ *In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”*

Reflection: Jesus gave us the gift of communion as a remembrance of His sacrifice. Sacrifice, as Americans we really don’t have to sacrifice much. We have been blessed greatly, and as such will be held responsible for that. “To whom much is given



much will be required.” So, with that in mind how do you and I say sacrifice considering the great sacrifice Christ gave for us? The old saying is to check our checkbooks and see where we are spending the wealth that has been given to us. Maybe we need to “eat out” a little less to give that money to a worthy cause, to watch a little less TV to give that time to a worthy cause, etc. Let Christ direct you, LENT is about sacrificing and preparing.

Prayer: Thank You for the body and blood given for me.

Challenge: Participate in communion or reflect on its meaning deeply today.

Day 39: The Cross (Good Friday)

Scripture: John 19:23 - 30 – *“When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. They also took the tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.”* ²⁴ So they said to one another, *“Let’s not tear it, but cast*



lots for it, to see who gets it." This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled that says: **They divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing.** This is what the soldiers did. ²⁵ Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. ²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now finished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, "I'm thirsty." ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it up to his mouth. ³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished." Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.

Reflection: Jesus' final words on the cross declared our debt paid in full. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

As Jesus hung on the cross, he forgave the soldiers who had crucified him and prayed for his mother and friends. Jesus wanted all of us to be able to live forever with God, so he gave all he had for us.

Jesus, let me take a few moments now to consider your love for me. Help me thank you for your willingness to go to your death for me. Help me express my love for you!

My Jesus, three hours did you hang in agony, and then die for me; let me die to my sin and live for your love and faithful service.

Prayer: Jesus, I remember Your suffering and thank You for dying in my place.

Challenge: Spend time in solemn reflection and prayer at 3 p.m. today.

Day 40: Waiting in Hope (Holy Saturday)

Scripture: Romans 8:24-25 – “Now in this hope we



were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.”

Reflection: The silence of Saturday reminds us to hope in the unseen. In John 2:19 – 22, right after Jesus cleans the Temple for the first time, He tells

the Jews about His resurrection. “Destroy this temple (His body) and in three I will raise it up.” His disciples remembered these words as they patiently waited for that promised resurrection day. Jesus has also promised to return a 2nd time as King, and now we wait patiently for that promise to be fulfilled. As we prepare to celebrate His resurrection, the proof our salvation has been paid for and accepted by God the Father, let’s rejoice in God’s provision.

Prayer: I trust in Your promises, even when I can’t see the outcome.

Challenge: End your day in silence, awaiting the joy of resurrection.

Conclusion: From the Cross to the Empty Tomb

As this forty-day journey through Lent comes to a close, we are



reminded that the Christian life is a rhythm of repentance, renewal, and rejoicing. Lent has guided us to see

the seriousness of sin, the depth of God's mercy, and the beauty of walking daily with Christ. It has called us to humility, sacrifice, prayer, and trust in God's faithful love.

But Lent does not end in sorrow. The cross, though central, is not the conclusion, it points us to the empty tomb. The silence of Holy Saturday prepares our hearts for the victory of Resurrection Sunday. Christ's death paid our debt in full, and His resurrection secured eternal life for all who believe.

May this season strengthen your faith, deepen your love for Jesus, and renew your hope in His promises. As you continue forward, carry with you the lessons of Lent: a broken and contrite heart, a spirit of compassion, a life surrendered to Christ, and a steadfast hope in the risen Savior.

“He is not here, for He is risen, just as He said, come see the place where he lay” (Matthew 28:6). Hallelujah!