

## Fountain of Life Covenant Church

### The Season of Lent

Lent is the 40-day period in the church year when we journey with Jesus to the cross. In Lent, we remember our sin and its wages, death. We know ourselves as sinners who, without Christ, would be without hope and without God in the world, strangers and aliens to God's promises.

Think about Lent in three ways. First, Lent is a **time for repentance**. We repent, turning from our sin to a life of faithful obedience to the Father. We are sinners on our best days, and—no matter how much the world wants to tell us we are fine just the way we are—we know that we are *not* fine, that all of us are wayward, all of us are prodigals, all of us have traded away the love of God for lesser loves. An old prayer has it exactly right: “I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault...” During Lent, we tell the truth about our lives, that we are sinners. And then we turn around, face the cross of Jesus and follow him.

Second, Lent is a **time for holiness**. Peter writes, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” This is first a promise; only then is it a command. Or maybe it's like a command which all of a sudden you realize you can obey! Even as Jesus said to the paralytic, “Rise, take up your mat, and walk”, he says to us, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” We can't be holy any more than he could walk, *unless* the God who commands us gives us his Spirit to make it happen.

Many Christians choose to put off or put on certain habits during Lent as a way of growing in holiness. It is a time to put to death the deeds of the flesh, those ways in which we rebel against the Father. It is a time, too, to put on the mind of Christ as we walk in the Spirit. Fasting as feasting, as John Piper puts it. In clearing our lives of one habit, we make room for another. If, for instance, you stop watching TV during Lent, consider taking that time for prayer with your family, memorizing Scripture or to reach out to a neighbor who's lonely.

Finally, Lent is a **time for worship**. At times during Lent it recedes into the background, but we still know the end of the story—Jesus is risen! Because he is risen, we know that his death meant something. In fact, it meant everything. For even our best attempts at repentance and holiness are weak and marred by selfishness. We sin even when we try to stop sinning. But Jesus never sinned. He lived a spotless life and then gave it away, suffering the death, which should fall on us and providing a way for us into forgiveness, into life, into friendship with God. We think about our own sins and our own holiness in Lent, yes, but even more, we think about Jesus and his sacrifice. So, more than anything, this Lent, gaze on Jesus.

Here are just a few Bible passages you might meditate on in the days ahead: Psalm 51:1-17; Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Isaiah 30:15-21; Isaiah 53; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21; John 3:13-21.

Bless you as you journey with Jesus to the cross.

In Christ,  
Matt Jenson