



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

Lent is the season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which began on Ash Wednesday and ends on the Saturday before Easter Sunday. Lent is actually a word that comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, which means spring. Historically, Lent began as a period of preparation for baptism for converts on Easter Sunday. As decades and centuries passed, it became a time for self-examination and penitence by all Christians. Such a season, though admittedly much shorter, was noted as early as the mid 100's. The Council of Nicea in 325 discussed a 40 day spring season of fasting. It was Gregory the Great (c.540-604) who formalized the dates of Lent. This period of time was characterized by austerity; inviting people to fasting and to serious reconsideration of their lives. It would begin on the Wednesday forty days before Easter—excluding the Sundays (which were considered feast days that anticipated the joy of the resurrection).

Simplicity, poverty and self-examination are all themes that mark this season. Scripture readings from both testaments make for good devotional reading during this season; lifting up the intentional decision to find ourselves on the spiritual path. The prophet Isaiah exhorts the people to “go up to the mountain of the Lord... He will teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths.” (Isaiah 2:3) “Come let us walk in the light of the Lord.” (Isaiah 2:5). The psalmist writes “He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” (Psalm 23:3) And the gospels drop hints throughout their chapters that Jesus is on a most important path; the path to Jerusalem where he will face the brokenness of the world head-on in the event of the cross. Jesus sacrifices his life for us. And, we are called to do the same for one another.

Be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:7-10

— Rev. Dr. Beverly Jones, Associate Pastor

A Family Affair

Read Matthew 26:17-30 and discuss with your family. What do you think the word *betray* means? The dictionary defines *betray* in a couple of ways: to deliver to an enemy, to be false or faithless to someone, and to disappoint. The scripture tells us that Judas *betrayed* Jesus. If we read further in the scripture, we learn that Judas is the one who led the chief priests and elders to Jesus and identified him, so they could arrest him.

Sometimes it can be easy to pass judgment on Judas by thinking, *I would never turn over my innocent friend to be arrested*. Even though Jesus no longer walks on earth, can we still betray him today? How? Share ideas. Would being false or faithless to a friend be included? Do you think Jesus may be disappointed by our actions at times? Certainly telling a lie or disrespecting our parents could be a disappointment as both actions break one of the Ten Commandments. Jesus commanded his disciples (and us) to love one another. How can we show love? And to whom? Make a plan with your family for how you can show the love of Jesus to others in the next few weeks, as we prepare for Easter.

Dear God, thank you for the many examples we can learn from in your Word. Help us to remember you each day. May all of our actions and words reflect your love. In Jesus name, Amen.

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children’s Ministry

Monday: Matthew 25:31-46

“Knowing the commands of the Christ,
Let this be our way of life;
Let us feed the hungry,
Let us give the thirsty drink,
Let us clothe the naked,
Let us welcome strangers,
Let us visit those in prison and the sick.
Then the judge of all will say even to us;
Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the realm
prepared for you.”

Byzantine Vespers

• Which of the actions that speak to “our way of life” as Christians, can you dedicate yourself to for the next 40 days?

Tuesday: Matthew 5:44

“When we pray, we are not to pray for ourselves alone...our prayer must be for the general good. When we pray, we do not pray for our own single selves...we pray for all God’s people, because they and we are one.”

Cyprian of Carthage, 3rd Century

• For whom do you find it the hardest to pray? Pray for them. Include in your prayers the unity you have with them.

Wednesday: Ecclesiastes 10:18

“O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, vain curiosity, lust for power, and idle talk. But give to me, your servant, a spirit of soberness, humility, patience and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my neighbor. Amen.”

Ephrem the Syrian, 4th Century

Thursday: United Methodist Hymnal #340

“Come all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor and maimed and halt, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.”

Charles Wesley, 18th Century

• Grace comes when we turn fully to Jesus in our need. What is your need this day?

Friday: Matthew 7:12

“Incline us, O God, to think humbly of ourselves, to be saved only in the examination of our own conduct, to consider fellow creatures with kindness, and to judge of all they say and do with the charity which we would desire from them ourselves.”

Jane Austen, 18th Century

• Lent is a time of self-examination. Where do you find you need the most work and/or help?