re:new

devotional guide

lent 2021

CANTON FIRST
church of the nazarene

Adapted from

2017 Lent Guide

by

The Village Church

Flower Mound, Texas

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INTRODUCTION TO LENT

O Lord and Master of my life!

Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness,

lust of power and idle talk.

But give me rather the spirit of chastity, humility,

patience and love to my servant.

Yea, O Lord and King!

Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother;

for thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

A COMMON FOURTH-CENTURY PRAYER OF LENT

FROM ST. EPHREM THE SYRIAN

Lent is about the gospel.

It is a time to narrow our focus to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The season of Lent lasts approximately 40 days, excluding Sundays, between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. The 40 days have obvious biblical parallels in the flood narrative (Gen. 6-8), the giving of the Law to Moses on Sinai (Exod. 24:12-18), Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:1-12) and Jesus' fasting and temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:9-12, Luke 4:1-13). The last of these accounts is most relevant to the season.

Originally a preparation period for those desiring to be baptized, Lent eventually became embedded into Christian tradition as a season for the Church to symbolically follow Christ into the wilderness. It is a time for fasting and self-denial, though not for denial itself. It is a period to empty ourselves of lesser things so that we might be filled with the greater things of the gospel. While Advent is a season of ever-increasing light awaiting the incarnation of Christ, Lent is a season of ever decreasing light approaching the cross.

THE LENT CALENDAR

Celebrated each spring as the days begin to lengthen (the term Lent is from a Saxon word meaning "lengthen"), Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 46 days before Easter Sunday. It is marked by periods of fasting and feasting. Each week, participants traditionally fast during the week and feast on Sundays. This pattern continues throughout the season as the Church journeys toward the Holy Week commencing on Palm Sunday. The final period of Lent is often referred to as the Triduum, beginning Maundy Thursday and continuing through Easter Sunday.

In our context, it is easy to get lost in the cultural expectations of Easter and miss out on the meaning. Lent is a reminder that the resurrection only occurred after the crucifixion. Rather than skipping over the ministry and crucifixion of Christ, Lent is a season to prepare ourselves for the joy of Resurrection Sunday as we enter the sorrow and pain which preceded it.

HOW TO USE THE LENT GUIDE

This guide walks you through the seven weeks of Lent. Each week includes a reading from the life of Christ in the Gospel of Luke, as well as four supplemental passages to consider throughout the week. Additionally, there is a suggested fast to coincide with each week.

Each Sunday, you should read the provided passage from the life of Christ and consider journaling, discussing, praying through and rereading the narrative and supplemental texts throughout the week. This process will hopefully stir up a few questions:

1. *What do these passages of Scripture reveal about the nature and character of Christ?*

2. *What do these passages reveal about your own heart?*
3. *How can you respond to God's provision in His Son and Spirit in light of your own deficiency?*

As Lent is not intended to be pursued merely on Sundays, this guide is not intended to be picked up one day a week. We can only truly enter into the tradition of Lent by establishing a rhythm of consistency. You are encouraged to spend time considering how and when you will pursue the joyful disciplines of reading, praying, meditating, and fasting during the season.

WEEKLY FASTS

Each week, we have suggested an area of fasting to apply to our lives. Far from a mere responsibility, these weekly fasts give us opportunities to pursue greater communion with Christ. By emptying our lives of commotion, clutter, and noise, we hope to find greater room for Him to speak through His Word. Rather than simply subtracting something from our lives, this is an opportunity to add something greater.

Some of the fasts are traditional (food, caffeine, sweets), while others may be novel for many of us (media, sleep, shopping). These particular fasts were chosen because each represents a common comfort to which our culture runs for distraction. The hope for each is that a season of unplugging from the background buzz will be leveraged for the sake of communing with the Lord. Therefore, we should consider ways in which we can leverage the fast to engage in deeper prayer, study, community, meditation, etc.

Although encouraged to pursue a complete fast on many of the weeks (i.e. abstaining completely from the area of the week), there are two weeks in particular in which you are encouraged to plan ahead the degree to which you will engage in the fast. Weeks 1 and 7 are not expected to be absolute fasts.

- *Week 1 involves a fast from food. You may choose to fast from one meal a day; others will do an entire day; others still might choose a fast of multiple days.*
- *Week 7 involves a fast from sleep. You are neither expected nor encouraged to abstain from sleep for the entire week. However, the hope is that we might set our alarms an hour or two earlier, stay up an hour or two later and devote one entire night or morning to prayer.*

Additionally, participants should consider the possibility of building each week upon the next. For instance, an individual could continue the Week 1 fast into Week 2 and so forth to eventually do all seven fasts together. Again, this is not intended to be a burden, but rather an opportunity, and should be stewarded as circumstances allow. If we are to follow Christ in the wilderness, it will take some degree of discomfort and inconvenience. May we begin to prepare our hearts accordingly.

Check out the resources available on the website (search "fasting") for some tips on fasting if you are unfamiliar with the discipline.

Weekly Fast Schedule

Week 1: Food

Week 2: Television and Movies

Week 3: Social Networking and Internet

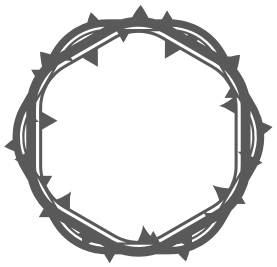
Week 4: Caffeine and Sweets

Week 5: Radio and Music

Week 6: Shopping for Non-Essentials

Week 7: Sleep

Week 1



Week 1

TEMPTATION

Weekly Fast: Food

Reading: Luke 4:1–13

Supplemental Passages to Consider Throughout the Week:

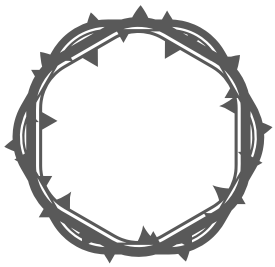
Hebrews 2:14-18, Hebrews 4:14-16, 1 Corinthians 10:6-13, James 1:12-15

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again,
Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

JOHN 6:35

Week 2



Week 2

RESPONSE TO LOVE

Weekly Fast: Television & Movies

Reading: Luke 7:36-50

Supplemental Passages to Consider Throughout the Week:

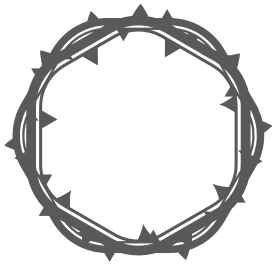
Romans 6:1-14, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, Galatians 5:16-24

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life..

JOHN 8:12

Week 3



Week 3

CONFESSION & COST

Weekly Fast: Social Networking & Internet

Reading: Luke 9:18-27

Supplemental Passages to Consider Throughout the Week:

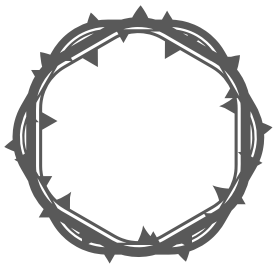
Philippians 3:7-16, Colossians 3:1-4, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Hebrews 12:1-11

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

JOHN 15:5

Week 4



Week 4

LEARNING TO PRAY

Weekly Fast: Caffeine & Sweets

Reading: Luke 11:1-13

Supplemental Passages to Consider Throughout the Week:

Ephesians 3:14-21, Philippians 4:4-7, Matthew 6:25-34, James 5:13-18

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one can come to the Father except through me.
JOHN 14:6

Week 5

Week 5

HUMILITY & JUSTIFICATION

Weekly Fast: Radio & Music

Reading: Luke 18:9-17

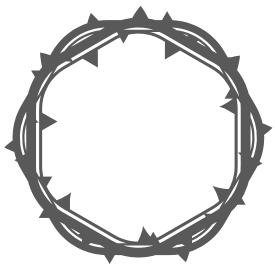
Supplemental Passages to Consider Throughout the Week:

James 4:1-10, 1 Peter 5:5-8, Philippians 2:1-13, Matthew 5:3-12

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved.
They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.
JOHN 10:9

Week 6



Week 6

THE COST OF RICHES

Weekly Fast: Shopping for Non-Essentials

Reading: Luke 18:18-34

Supplemental Passages to Consider Throughout the Week:

Matthew 13:44-46, Hebrews 13:5-6, 1 Timothy 6:6-12, Matthew 6:19-24

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

I am the good shepherd.
The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.
JOHN 10:11

Week 7

Week 7

TRIUMPH & TEARS

Weekly Fast: Sleep

Reading: Luke 19:28-44

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

Maundy Thursday

SACRAMENT

Reading: Luke 22:7-23

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

Good Friday

SORROW

Reading: Luke 22:39-46

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

Holy Saturday

SACRIFICE

Reading: Luke 23

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

I am the resurrection and the life.
Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.
JOHN 11:25

Easter Sunday

LIGHT & HOPE

Reading: Luke 24

Supplemental Passages to Consider Throughout the Week:

Romans 10:1-17, 1 Corinthians 15:1-49, Ephesians 2:1-10, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those who thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, not yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure – then, from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than they stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die.
"DEATH, BE NOT PROUD"
JOHN DONNE (1572-1631)

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
1 CORINTHIANS 15:26