

Dear friends,

For many of us, Lent is weird. Mere religion. Not spiritual. Legalism. Why bother? There is no denying that for many people, "Lent" is mere legalism and religion. But there is a compelling Christian and Biblical way to appreciate Lent.

A Christian is one who has trusted Jesus the crucified Messiah to be their Saviour, AND, who now seeks to follow Him as their Lord. We acclaim that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is Lord of all. But is He Lord of time? Well, yes, we would say that Jesus is Lord of time. How do we try to live with Jesus as Lord of time? Part of how we make Jesus Lord of time is by "setting aside" part of our day to read the Bible and to pray. By doing this, we say that Jesus is Lord of our day and while He can claim our whole day, we offer a part of the day to Him as a sign that it all belongs to Him.

Another way we acknowledge that Jesus is Lord of time is by keeping the Sabbath. By "giving" Him one day a week, we are acknowledging that the whole week is His. Jesus is to be the Lord of the rhythms of my day and my week. How does Jesus become the Lord of our year? Do we merely allow our culture and state to determine the shape and rhythms of our year? State holidays and "cultural" days (Mother's Day, etc.) shape our time and our understanding of time.

The Christian Year developed piecemeal over time as Christians tried to affirm Jesus the crucified Messiah as the Lord of our year. This began with individual "days" and seasons until it encompassed the whole year. In the Christian Year, the central truths and acts of the person and work of Jesus are central to shaping the year. Notable Biblical events and people become a part of the Year. Lent is part of the Christian Year. It is, in fact, a perfectly reasonable idea to call Christians to a life of deeper discipleship as we approach the yearly remembrance of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

But what about this call for "fasting" and denial and soul-searching? Isn't this mere "works righteousness" and legalism? No question. It can be, but it does not have to be.

We live in a highly hedonistic, materialistic and narcissistic culture. That means we highly, highly value personal pleasure, personal comfort, possessions, things, stuff and we are self-centered. We are consumers in a consumeristic nation, blind to how being a consumer defines and shapes us. There is no question that Jesus says that at times His disciples should fast; we should be generous; we are to be part of a community of disciples; we are to die to self; we are to examine ourselves and repent of our sin and self-centeredness; we are to live for Him.

So the question is, when are you doing this? How are you making this real in your life? Yes, it can be legalistic to have to do it the same time every year. Yes, it can become a mere religious act by which we "put God in our debt" or "pay our dues" so He will leave us alone the rest of the year. Yes, it is better to feel the Holy Spirit convict us of our need. But let's be real. In a culture like ours, this can practically mean we never fast or soul-search or deny ourselves. If nothing else, having Lent as a season in the year means we are invited to consider our need to put Jesus's words into practice in our 24/7 lives.

George +



Making disciples gripped by the gospel, living for God's glory.

**February 22, 2015**

**Lent I**

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**I need to develop godly attitudes.**

- A) Pray for godly attitudes in general & certain attitudes in particular.
- B) Ask others to pray the same thing for you.
- C) Repeat the attitude to help it sink in. Do this in conjunction with A & B!

**Attitudes.**

- 1) People matter to God.
- 2) Followers of Jesus want to know what the Bible says.
- 3) Jesus weeps. God, please keep my heart tender.

**I need to grow in prayer.**

A great way to do this is to learn to pray the Bible. Pray this prayer until you can pray without reading.

Dear God, I praise You for Your mercy! Thank You that You take no delight in the death of a sinner. I praise You that Your desire is that we will turn from our wickedness to You. I praise You that to turn to You is to live. Please incline my heart and my mind and my will and my soul and my body to You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**I need to get God's word in my mind and heart.**

"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live." (Ezekial 18:32 ESV)

**I need to do something or start to do something.**

Complete the following sentence: "In light of God's word, the Holy Spirit is leading me to \_\_\_\_\_."

GOING DEEPER

**Getting to know me.**

How and when did you first hear about the events on September 11, 2011?

**Getting into the Bible.**

Remember to pray for God's help!

- 1) Read Luke 19:28-44.
- 2) Read Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 1:1-11, John 12:9-19.

**Getting real.**

Has God moved you in some way as you pondered and discussed His word? Can you share some of this so people can pray for you?

**SUN / FEB 22 Vestry Reports Due**

**TUE / FEB 24 Messiah Prayer Meeting**  
7:00pm @ Messiah Office / 315 Lisgar St.

**The House (Home Group)**  
7:00pm @ 148 Augusta St.

**Lowertown Home Group**  
7:00pm @ 110 Nelson St.

**WED / FEB 25 Church on Wednesday**  
7:00pm @ uOttawa, Agora

**The Wurtemberg Home Group**  
7:30pm @ 111 Wurtemberg St.

**THU / FEB 26 Church on Thursday**  
5:00pm @ Algonquin  
Visit churchonthursday.ca for details.

**SAT / FEB 28 Messiah Annual Vestry & Potluck**  
4:00pm @ St. Peter & St. Paul's / 152 Metcalfe St.  
All are welcome to attend the Annual Vestry (General Meeting), immediately followed by an all-church potluck! Please bring something to share.

**WED / MAR 4 Jericho Road Coffeehouse**  
7:00pm @ St. Paul's United / 473 Cumberland St.  
Food prep and volunteers needed.  
Email info@messiahchurch.ca to get involved!

**FRI / MAR 6 Against Critical Thinking by Dr. RR Reno**  
Weston Lecture (Augustine College)  
7:30pm @ Saint Paul University Auditorium  
223 Main Street

In this free public lecture, Dr. Reno will argue that the life of the mind is based on our capacity to know and affirm truth.

**SUN / MAR 8 Daylight Savings Time starts (spring forward)**  
**Early Service**  
9:00am @ Ottawa Little Theatre  
The regular 10:00am Service will take place at 9:00am on Sunday, March 8.

**2014 TAX RECEIPTS AVAILABLE**

If you donated to Church of the Messiah in 2014, you can pick-up your tax receipt on the stage near the Besserer door. Envelopes are arranged in alphabetical order by last name. If you have any questions please contact Amy at amy@messiahchurch.ca.