

PRACTICING
LENT

A GUIDE FOR ENTERING INTO
LENT *at* REDEEMER

“The practice of Lent is a means of grace,
but grace itself is a mystery that grips us
however buttoned-up or sloppy our Lenten
practice is.”

-Tish Harrison Warren

What Is Lent?

Lent is a 40 day period of Christ-centered devotion between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. The practice of Lent has been observed by Christians around the world since the early centuries of the church.

Why practice Lent?

The most important reason to practice Lent is to draw near to Jesus Christ and become like him. Lent is a season of intentional discipleship under Christ and with Christ. We also practice Lent to bond more closely with fellow Christians who are on the same journey, not only in our local church but also around the world. Along the way, our sin and enslaving habits are put to death, and we learn to internalize and share in Christ's resurrection power.

Invitation to Practice Lent at Redeemer

To the extent that you are able, practice Lent with with your church family. Begin with an Ash Wednesday service and receive the sign of the cross on your forehead - reminding you of your own mortality. Use this little booklet to read scripture and confess your sin each day. (You'll notice that the themes for confession each week track with our Ephesians sermon series.) Participate in a Small Group and discover that you are not alone in your struggle. Remember to keep the balance between fasting and discipline on Mondays-Saturdays and feasting on Sundays. Plan ahead for Holy Week, so that we can walk through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday together as a church.

What we hope you'll find is that, as we enter into these practices together, God's grace for us is more abundant than we previously thought. We'll try together and we'll fail together, then we'll confess our sins together and be forgiven together. When we come out on the other side, into a bright Easter morning, we'll find ourselves closer to Christ and closer to each other.

What are ways I can expect to become more like Christ during Lent?

There are some themes that often arise when people describe their experience of practicing Lent; however, this list is not exhaustive, God's activity in your life cannot be predicted or controlled.

HUMILITY | Humility is the capacity to recognize who we are in relationship to the living God. The path of Lent reveals our mortality, sin and limitations. Often, the Holy Spirit reveals personal and corporate blind spots during Lent. Our hunger pains, headaches and failures during Lent become living reminders of our great need for the salvation offered through Jesus Christ.

REORDERED LOVES | The gentle harness of Lent is designed to loosen our unhealthy attachments to creation (including food, drink, and money) so that we may enjoy a deeper bond to the Creator. We learn to internalize and enjoy the love of Christ during Lent.

PURITY | Soren Kierkegaard said that "purity of heart is to will one thing." During Lent, we see the incompatibility between our commitment to Jesus and our dabbling in idolatry. We confess our sins and thereby take hold of the forgiveness that is ours in the Gospel.

JOY | As we give ourselves to him in our suffering, Jesus Christ supplies us with a lasting spiritual overflow and the consolation of the Holy Spirit. This is to be distinguished from a spiritual high, which cannot be sustained over time or during suffering. Easter Sunday and corporate worship during Lent grants us a taste of heaven.

RENEWED IMAGINATIONS | As we progress through events of Ash Wednesday, the 40 days of Lent and the drama of Holy Week, see ourselves and the world as they are in God. The events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection become for us a window into the new creation (otherwise known as the Kingdom of God) in which we can participate and from which we can receive a secure identity.

DEPENDENCE | During Lent, we unlearn the lie that we are self-made, self-contained individuals. We learn to draw upon the life of God and the bonds of affection with our fellow Christians.

FAST | PRAY | GIVE | FAIL

FAST | Fasting is a willing abstinence from eating food (and sometimes drink) to make space in our souls to feast on Jesus.

Partial Fast: cutting out part of your diet such as sugar/desserts, alcohol, meat, caffeine, or dairy products for the entire duration of Lent (except Sundays). Choose something that has an inordinate hold on your life.

Partial “Media” Fast: You may choose to abstain from modern distractions that have an inordinate hold on your imagination, such as social media, screen-based entertainment, or the news.

Whole Fast: choose a challenging weekly practice of skipping entire meals, from 1 meal a week to 1-2 days per week. You still need to take in enough water and calories to sustain energy without satisfying hunger. Key days to practice the Whole Fast is Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. You can continue this practice on Fridays throughout the year as a way to remember Jesus’ death and commune with him on the way to your resurrection.

PRAY | Prayer is participating in the life of God talking with and listening to him, whether in solitude or in common worship.

- Christians often pray using the Scriptures, especially the Psalms.
- In Lent our prayers take on a tone of repentance and contrition.
- Use this booklet as your guide for prayer.

GIVE | Giving is a direct participation in God’s generosity as we give away our resources in love to our neighbor.

- Begin with prayer walks, observing the areas where your community is in need and in pain.
- Set aside money for a “neighbor fund” that you would otherwise spend on yourself. Pray for opportunities to spend it in love towards your neighbor, be they a coworker, extended family, prisoners, or refugees.
- Give generously towards the church above and beyond your pledge or tithe. If leaders highlight a special offering, contribute money that you have set aside during Lent.

FAIL | Let failure be your teacher. Inevitably, you’ll find yourself slipping out of the gentle harness into old patterns. Your “inner rebel” will rise up and assert itself against the vision of deeper communion with Christ. Use this as an opportunity to cry out to God (and his people) to encourage and support you. Failure and setbacks are tools in Jesus’ hands to shape you into his image. Remember the Apostle Paul’s great paradox, that Christ’s strength is indeed displayed through our weakness.¹

In the following pages, you'll find a short liturgy crafted around six different themes for confession - all drawn from the book of Ephesians. There are also scripture readings assigned for each day to go along with that week's confessional theme. We encourage you to set aside 10 minutes or more for this each day (either in the morning, midday, or evening).

You can pray this alone, but we think you'll find praying the liturgy with family members, roommates, and/or friends will enrich and deepen your experience.

-The Redeemer Team

Week 1 | CONFESSING OUR FRACTURED UNITY

CALL | If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. - 1 John 1:8-9

COLLECT | Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations, and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LESSON | *Read from either the Sunday or the Daily Lesson.*

REFLECTION | *If you are alone or with others - take some time to reflect on the lesson of the day. If you are with your Redeemer Small Group - reflect on the Sunday Lesson from Ephesians.*

CONFESSION | Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and apart from your grace, there is no health in us. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare all those who confess their faults. Restore all those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to all people in Christ Jesus our Lord; And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may now live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of your holy Name. Amen.

JESUS PRAYER *Breathing in* Lord Jesus Christ Son of God
 Breathing out have mercy on me a sinner.

FORGIVENESS | Grant your faithful people, merciful Lord, pardon and peace; that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMISSION | The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen. - 2 Corinthians 13:14

SUNDAY
LESSON
Eph. 4:1-16

DAILY
LESSONS

M | Philippians 1:27-2:8, Mark 8:34
T | John 17:1-20
W | John 17:20-26
T | Colossians 3:1-17
F | Psalm 51
S | 1 Peter 2:1-12

Week 2 | CONFESSING OUR OLD WAYS

SUNDAY
LESSON

Eph. 4:17-32

DAILY
LESSONS

M | Ps. 73

T | Jer. 32:22-32;

33:7-11

W | Ez. 36:22-32

T | Rom. 1:18-

32; 12:1-2,

9-21; 13:8-14

F | Rom. 6:1-14

S | I Cor. 2:12-

16; 6:9-11

CALL | For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. - Psalm 51:3

COLLECT | Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

LESSON | *Read from either the Sunday or the Daily Lesson.*

REFLECTION | *If you are alone or with others - take some time to reflect on the lesson of the day. If you are with your Redeemer Small Group - reflect on the Sunday Lesson from Ephesians.*

CONFESSION | Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and apart from your grace, there is no health in us. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare all those who confess their faults. Restore all those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to all people in Christ Jesus our Lord; And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may now live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of your holy Name. Amen.

JESUS PRAYER *Breathing in* Lord Jesus Christ Son of God
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FORGIVENESS | Grant your faithful people, merciful Lord, pardon and peace; that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMISSION | May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen. - Romans 15:13

Week 3 | CONFESSING OUR LACK OF LOVE

CALL | To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him. - Daniel 9:9

COLLECT | Heavenly Father, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you: Look with compassion upon the heartfelt desires of your servants, and purify our disordered affections, that we may behold your eternal glory in the face of Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

LESSON | *Read from either the Sunday or the Daily Lesson.*

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FORGIVENESS | Grant your faithful people, merciful Lord, pardon and peace; that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMISSION | Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen.
Ephesians 3:20-21

SUNDAY
LESSON

Eph. 5:1-12

DAILY
LESSONS

M | 1 Corinthians
13:1-13

T | 1 Peter 4:8

W | 1 John 4:7-8

T | 2 Timothy
2:24-25

F | Leviticus 19:18

S | Colossians 3:14

Week 4 | CONFESSING OUR DESIRE FOR DOMINANCE

SUNDAY LESSON

Eph. 5:22-33

DAILY LESSONS

M | Psalm 9:9-10

T | Isaiah 1:17

W | Psalm 72:4

T | Zechariah 7:10

F | Luke 4:18-19

S | James 2:6

CALL | Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. - Matthew 3:2

COLLECT | Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LESSON | *Read from either the Sunday or the Daily Lesson.*

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COMMISSION | The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen. - 2 Corinthians 13:14

Week 5 | CONFESSING OUR MISTRUST

CALL | If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. - Mark 8:34

COLLECT | Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LESSON | *Read from either the Sunday or the Daily Lesson.*

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COMMISSION | May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen. - Romans 15:13

SUNDAY
LESSON

Eph. 6:1-9

DAILY
LESSONS

M | Proverbs 3:5

T | Psalm 56:3-4

W | 1 John 4:18

T | Isaiah 26:3-4

F | Philippians
4:6-7

S | Psalm 37:5-6

Holy Week | CONFESSING OUR FEAR

SUNDAY
LESSON
Eph. 6:10-24

DAILY
LESSONS

M | Isaiah 41:10
T | 2 Timothy 1:7
W | 1 John 4:18
T | Luke 12:22-24
F | Psalm 56:3-4
S | Psalm 23

CALL | All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. - Isaiah 53:6

COLLECT | Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for us you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon himself our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and come to share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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COMMISSION | Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen. *Ephesians 3:20-21*

MAUNDY THURSDAY | in SMALL GROUPS

CALL | This is the night that Christ the Son of Man gathered with his disciples in the upper room. This is the night that Christ our Lord and Master took a towel and washed the disciples' feet, calling us to love one another as he has loved us. This is the night that Christ our God gave us this holy feast, that we who eat this bread and drink this cup may here proclaim his perfect sacrifice. This is the night that Christ the Lamb of God gave himself into the hands of those who would slay him.

COLLECT | The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty Father, whose most dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it in thankful remembrance of Jesus Christ our Savior, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

LESSONS | John 13:1-15 or Luke 22:14-30

FOOT-WASHING | Fellow servants of our Lord Jesus Christ: On the night before his death, Jesus set an example for his disciples by washing their feet, an act of humble service. He taught that strength and growth in the life of the Kingdom of God come not by worldly power and authority, but by such lowly service.

Therefore, I invite you who share in the royal priesthood of Christ to come forward, that we may recall whose servants we are by following the example of our Master. Come now remembering his admonition that what will be done for you is also to be done by you to others. Engrave on your hearts and mirror in your actions Jesus' words: *"A servant is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."*

FOOTWASHING | Each person should have the opportunity to wash someone else's feet AND allow their own feet to be washed. Both giving and receiving are essential.

COMMUNION | Every baptized Christian is welcome to receive the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

Bread | This is the body of Christ, broken for you.

Wine | This is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

COMMISSION | A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. - *John 13:34*

GOOD FRIDAY | 6-6:45pm Service at Redeemer

FASTING | We (who are able) abstain from solid food from sunrise to sunset. Our hunger reminds us of our dependence on God.

REFLECTION | We pause throughout the day to reflect on Christ's sacrifice for us, remembering the cross, and saying "Thank you" again and again.

DRESS | We wear black or gray clothes as an outward symbol of our inner grief.

SILENCE | We depart from the Good Friday Worship Service in silence, symbolizing the silence of the grave and the hopelessness of death without resurrection.

HOLY SATURDAY | Alone or with Others

QUIET | Today is a quiet day. We intentionally avoid movies, TV, music, and entertainment of any kind. We are together as a family in a time of waiting.

WILDERNESS | In between our cities, suburbs, farmlands, and neighborhoods is... empty space, wilderness space. If you are able, go to a wilderness space today. Sit and be still, and contemplate how there is both beauty and emptiness there. Beautiful because God made it that way - by His common grace, but also empty - because humans who bear His image have not cultivated it to bring forth its fruitfulness. Wilderness can be a symbol of the space between Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday - we dwell in the grace of God to us through Christ's death on the cross, but we have not yet tasted the joy of the Resurrection.

SIMPLICITY | Today we neither fast nor feast. Eat simple foods, wear simple clothes, do simple tasks.

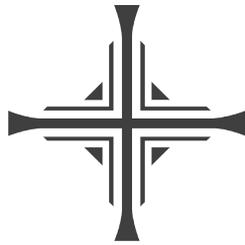
EASTER SUNDAY | 10:00AM at 2715 Grove Ave.

SUNRISE | If you are able, rise early to greet the morning.

PARTICIPATE | Read John 20:1-18. In your heart, run with the disciples to the tomb, search with Mary Magdalene, hear the voice of the risen Jesus speak your name _____!

CELEBRATE | Eat a real breakfast, dress in clothes of celebration, and join your brothers and sisters in the church to celebrate the resurrection of Christ from the dead! SING with all your might! LIFT YOUR HANDS in praise! PRAY with a heart filled with gratitude and joy. RECEIVE the bread and wine of Communion with thanksgiving.

FEAST | Plan to feast together after the worship service.



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