

March 2023 Newsletter

“Sometimes the quieting of one’s spirit in prayer exposes the area of sensitiveness to God’s spirit which is submerged by much traffic.”

~Howard Thurman

What exactly is Lent all about? Lent is a forty-day journey from Ash Wednesday until Easter (excluding all Sundays because they are considered celebration days). Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season. The Lenten season is a special time in the life of the church, not just locally, but globally. During Lent, Christians all over the globe fast, pray, hold a posture of humility and self-denial, as well as exercise self-examination and extraordinary generosity. The forty days of Lent on the Christian calendar echoes Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism. The practice of Lent is just about as old as our faith tradition itself.

Furthermore, it is also during the Lenten season that people *give up* something. People give up many different things during this time. Some give up smoking, alcohol, chocolate, sweets, social media, etc. Or, in other cases, people don’t give up anything at all. But they begin new practices. New practices like creating an exercise routine, eating healthier, restoring a broken relationship, going to therapy, etc.

Moreover, if you have not already made a Lenten commitment, first, let me tell you that it is not too late. Second, let me encourage you to consider practicing silence. It is usually during silence that we can reflect; that we can declutter our minds; and that we can practice what I call *listening prayer*. Listening prayer is when you listen to the voice deep within your own heart. That voice deep within your heart serves as a compass, a guide, a light when you find yourself on a dark path, and as spiritual presence. I strongly encourage you to listen to it. Obey it. Follow it. It will never steer you in the wrong direction.

Finally, this process of practicing silence is a lot easier than you may think. Seeing that we observe Lent six days per week, here is a simple schedule that you can follow. Monday through Saturday at a specific time—for example at 6 a.m.—you can practice fifteen minutes of silence. If you are not a morning person, then you can practice silence at night when your house is quite—for example at 8 p.m. This is a simple practice that you can follow. Give it a shot. It may just be the Lenten practice that will change your life.

Blessings upon your Lenten journey!

Pastor Michael