

**PENITENCE
& FASTING
ARE FOR LIFE
NOT JUST FOR LENT!**

**THIS WEEK WE HAVE ENTERED THE FORTY
DAY PERIOD LEADING UP TO
RESURRECTION SUNDAY KNOWN AS
'LENT' IN THE 'CHRISTIAN CALENDAR'**

“Lent: the 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter observed by the Roman Catholic, Eastern, and some Protestant churches as a period of penitence and fasting”

MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

**THE NAME 'LENTEN TIDE' IS DERIVED FROM
OLD ENGLISH WORDS (GERMANIC ORIGIN)
FOR LENGTHEN AND TIME - REFERRING TO
THE LENGTHENING DAYS OF SPRING
LEADING UP TO RESURRECTION SUNDAY**

N.B. 'LENTE' REMAINS THE DUTCH WORD FOR SPRINGTIME!

Liturgical colours, meanings, and seasons at a glance

| Liturgical Season | Time of year | Colour | Meaning |
|---|--|---|--|
| Epiphany (sometimes referred to as Time of the Church, or Ordinary Times) | January | Green | Life, hope, anticipation |
| Lent | February-March | Purple or Roman Purple On the 4th Sunday of Lent they wear Rose. | Penance, sacrifice, preparation |
| Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday | The week immediately preceding Easter | Red or Roman Purple | Penance, sacrifice, preparation |
| Easter | March or April | White and/or gold | Purity, light, glory, joy |
| Pentecost | Late May/Early June | Red | God's love, blood, fire, celebrations of Martyrs |
| Time of the Church or Ordinary Times | After pentecost ends to when Advent starts | Green | Life, hope, anticipation |
| Advent | Early December | Blue and Purple On the 4th Sunday of Advent they wear Rose | Penance, sacrifice, preparation |
| Christmas | December | White and/or gold | Purity, light, glory, joy |

LITURGICAL YEAR

Elim, like many 'non-conformist' church movements, do not follow the set annual events and readings of the 'liturgical year'

A potential pitfall of following such a pattern is that what is meant as helpful routine can become unhelpful ritual

Potential positives include annual opportunities to consider and engage in a wide breadth of biblical truth and matters of faith

WHEN LITURGY SERVES A GENUINE GOD-SEEKING HEART, IT CAN BEAR GREAT FRUIT...

WHEN IT BECOMES A MEANINGLESS RELIGIOUS RITUAL, IT NEEDS PRUNING!

OUR 'LITURGY'

The reality is that even in what might be described as 'free churches' we often naturally develop patterns or liturgies

Sometimes these are helpful and life-giving, sometimes they can be restrictive and stifling

Order, routine and healthy habits are a part of God's created design for human flourishing

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---|---------------------------------|
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**LENT IS SET ASIDE TO BE A SEASON OF
'PENANCE, SACRIFICE AND PREPARATION'**

LENTENTIDE

The lenten time period is taken from the inspiration of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness

It can be healthy to take a certain time each year to do these things - but it is even healthier to live in their reality!

Jesus' time in the wilderness was about sacrifice and preparation, but not His own penance...

***Penance: the feeling of being sorry
for something you have done
because you feel it was wrong, or
the act of showing this***

CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY

“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found
in his mouth.”

NO REGRETS

The wilderness was not about His own penance for Jesus because He did no wrong!

Similarly, He did not need to be baptised in order to signify being forgiven of His sin, but to 'fulfil all righteousness'

He did these things on behalf of us - He who knew no sin became sin for us...

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

R&R

But we do need to realise and repent of the things we have done wrong - perhaps every day?

Penitence is the right and healthy response to the realisation of our sin - awakening

This is not just true during Lent!

**THE PATHWAY TO LIFE AND GODLINESS
INCLUDES A ROUTINE OF HEALTHY SELF
REFLECTION AND CONFESSION**

PENITENCE IS FOR LIFE

Christ is mediator between God and humanity - when we confess our sin, He is faithful to forgive (1 John 1:9)

Confession to other (trustworthy and mature) people can help bring freedom and healing (James 5:16)

This is life giving and we do well to have a regular pattern and place for this - and for fasting...

NOVEMBER

Saying **NO** to the flesh and the enemy
Saying **YES** to the power of The Spirit



**Our annual opportunity to fast and pray together at Elim Aberystwyth
Ask The Lord to inspire you as to when and how to fast during the month**

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.

7 If you worship me, it will all
be yours."

8 Jesus answered, "It is
written: 'Worship the Lord your
God and serve him only.'"

9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here.

10 For it is written:
““He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””

12 Jesus answered, "It is said:
'Do not put the Lord your God
to the test.'"

13 When the devil had finished
all this tempting, he left him
until an opportune time.

LUKE-ACTS

Luke-Acts was written by a physician missionary to give an accurate 'orderly account' of the life of Jesus to make clear the truth of the gospel and the story of the early church, particularly in reaching the Gentiles (non Jews)

Luke's account of Jesus' 3 temptations is ordered slightly differently to Matthew - probably with his specific emphasis in mind - Jesus overcame all 3!

CHRIST-CENTRED

Our temptation is to consider Biblical stories as if we are the central character - much like with any story or movie

It is natural and can help to see how it relates to us and how we would or should respond in the given situations

But the central character in this story (and all of scripture) is Jesus Himself

CHRIST-CENTRED

We should start by seeking understanding of what Jesus achieved through this story

Luke emphasises the humanity of Christ in terms of the fact that He ate nothing and was 'hungry'

Jesus overcame the power of sin, the flesh, temptation and of the tempter in the wilderness

διάβολος

Diabolos: Devil, accuser, slanderer

Usage: The term "diabolos" is used in the New Testament to refer to the devil, the chief adversary of God and humanity. It characterizes the devil as a slanderer and accuser, one who opposes God's purposes and deceives humanity. The word is often used to describe the spiritual being who tempts, accuses, and seeks to destroy.

3 FOR 3

The first temptation was for physical satisfaction and fulfilment - desire of the flesh (He was hungry)

The second temptation was for a distorted power and material wealth - lust of the eyes

The third temptation was to put God to the test and abuse His identity - pride of life

**IN OVERCOMING THESE THREE GREAT
TEMPTATIONS BY THE WORD OF GOD,
CHRIST OVERCAME THE FAILURES OF
HUMANITY IN AREAS COMMON TO US ALL**

I'M HANK MARVIN!

'I'm starving' - all parents have heard these words, and have probably responded similarly about how privileged we are

We think we are 'starving' if we have skipped one of our three (or more) square meals a day whilst many in our world know what it is actually like to have no food

Have we forgotten what real hunger feels like?

**IF WE CAN LEARN TO BE HUNGRY
PHYSICALLY, PERHAPS WE WILL LEARN
WHAT IT MEANS TO HUNGER AND THIRST
AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS (MATT 5)**

GET FAST

Fasting is a spiritual discipline intended for us to grow closer to God and embrace more of Him

There are different interpretations of how fasting might be done but biblically it refers to abstaining from food

Fasting is not meant to be done as a display of our spirituality in order to impress others

16 "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward."

17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

A TIME TO FAST

Fasting is not expected to be an every day occurrence but is for all believers (where medically advisable)

It is also not meant to be once in a lifetime or just done in giving up chocolate for for lent!

It is to be part of a Jesus inspired, godly lifestyle

'Are you giving up anything for lent?'

LOCAL FOOTBALL FAN ON THE SIDELINES LAST TUESDAY

**WE HAVE REACHED A POINT IN SOCIETY
WHERE WE WANT THE PANCAKES AND
CHOCOLATE EGGS WITHOUT EVEN GIVING
UP THE TREATS IN BETWEEN - WE CHOOSE
THE BITS OF 'RELIGION' THAT WE LIKE!**

5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble
themselves?

Is it only for bowing one's head like a
reed and for lying in sackcloth and
ashes?

Is that what you call a fast, a day
acceptable to the Lord?

GOD'S CHOSEN FAST

They were fulfilling the rituals society demand but failing to honour God - looking after the needy etc

His desire is for us to know and love Him and show that love to others every day

The enemy's passionate desire is stop this

FASTING IS FOR LIFE

We cannot expect to operate with spiritual authority over an enemy to whom we are submitting in our choices

We can find great breakthrough in the spiritual realm through fasting

Fasting is life giving - we do it for life!

CHOOSE LIFE

Last week we talked about one degree changes that can have a big impact in the journey of our lives

How can you more fully embrace a healthy, life-giving lifestyle of repentance and renewal this week?

How can you more fully embrace a healthy, life giving lifestyle of fasting this week?