

Lent is a Time for Purifying

March 6, 2019

Thank You, Lord, for touching me, an untouchable because of my sins, my leprosy. Thank You, Lord, for not tossing me out into the wilderness to go about crying, “Unclean! Unclean!” Rather, You take me to Your bosom and I’m cleansed from head to toe. Yet knowing there lurks inside of me, still, the seeds of uncleanness. Yet each day You take me to Yourself, and again I am cleansed and revived, given back hope for a life well lived. Thank You, precious Jesus. Thank You.

Well, that introduction kinda gives you an idea of what I've been going through. I've been on a journey into the areas of my life that need reformation, and they are indeed large and deep-seated. Just in time for Lent, a season set apart and sanctioned for purification and giving—which is the antidote for Avarice.

The Lord has told me before that this is His Church, even though it has been attacked and seemingly conquered by evil in the guise of piety. Still, Holy Spirit has moved on the hearts of men who have guided that Church, to set aside seasons for special spiritual objectives.

And Lent, is a time of introspection and a cleaning out the old to make room for the new.

Dear ones. Let’s not strain over gnats and swallow camels and discredit these seasons because they correlate with evil seasons (and much of that has to do with lunar cycles).

God has given us so many gifts! It is man that perverts, twists, and uses these good things for evil motives. We use the Internet to spread the Good News; Satan uses it to lure men into sin. We use cars to get from point A to point B; Satan makes them a status symbol, so men will give themselves over to excessive work and neglect their families to make money to afford them. We use a taxi to get to the doctor; a prostitute uses it to get to the bar where she will seduce men.

Everything God has given us can be used for both good and evil. It is not the object or the season; it is the will and agreement of men that determines whether it is used for good or for bad intentions.

The Lord has taught us to discern by looking at the fruits, and truly Lent is a very productive season as we cast out the old leaven in preparation for a new infilling. A lot of what has been going on with me has been seeing the stain of sin and selfishness.

It began when I kept getting readings about repentance. I was puzzled, because I thought I was doing everything pleasing to Him. Especially that day. I became very frustrated and depressed, because He was saying there is sin to repent of—and I couldn’t put my finger on it. And I still can’t isolate one thing—yet I was begging Holy Spirit to reveal sin in my life to me.

But then, in the course of three days—three painful days of feeling separation from the Lord—little things I never paid attention to popped up... Like wanting to buy vitamins I didn't need yet. Being resentful for interruptions. Getting upset that I spilled a bottle of aloe vera green juice, rather than thanking God that I had it to drink.

And having to repeat myself over and over again to certain individuals that were hammering me to yield to their preferences—when I had sought God and given them His best for the situation. Yet they still wanted more, and the next day—more after that.

I felt a root of bitterness rising up from my gut that I must now deal with, and it is so extremely exhausting.

Now I have a little taste of how Jesus feels when I ask Him for something, and He says 'no.' And the next day I come back afterward, having modified the request, and ask again. And again, and again—with all sorts of compromises and modifications. And the answer is still “No”. Thank you, Lord. I see what I put You through, now! I am so sorry. If it had been good for the purpose intended, He would have said “Yes” the first time. But I was dealing with my personal insecurities, self-will and needing to take control—to make it better with my ideas.

So, I noticed temptations of Avarice, signs of Ungratefulness and Rancor. I was beginning to build a list in my mind. But none of these felt worthy (in my human perspective) of such severe readings on Sinfulness and Repentance that the Lord kept giving me in most of my Bible readings.

So, Ezekiel said, "Well, could this be about repenting for the world?" And boy, would I love to brush it off to that! I said, "No, Honey. I don't think so. I really sense this is about me and something I'm blind to."

These readings and 'words' were something you would hear if you were having an adulterous relationship—not minor things that I was already resisting. He talked about the man with leprosy being cleansed and “sickness” in the form of obsessive-compulsive behavior. And worldly desires.

So, in the course of three days, I did see tendencies. I think I would call them wrinkles in my wedding gown. Deep-seated habits and attitudes that were not pleasing to God. Even though I didn't out-right exercise them, they were there.

But what hurt and confused me so much was that I hadn't done anything. But I did feel the impulse to do it and suppressed it. Yet the Lord was insisting that I needed to repent. For three days I grieved over this and begged Him to reveal to me what I had done. That's why I couldn't put out a message, guys. That's when I need the most prayers, when I'm quiet...

Then today, His Mercy broke through and I realized: there is a bedrock tendency in me to allow myself many vices that easily turn into sin. Like wasting time at the end of a hard day and

watching a couple of YouTubes. So, I added that to my list. I began to see that beneath this veneer of being a “good Christian” were some serious faults that still exerted influence in my day-to-day life. Even though I was resisting them, they were still there. And they had an influence. I am sure there is much more, and I thank Him for not showing me everything! Although, I wouldn't be surprised if some big things came up towards the end of Lent.

But Lent is a time to get rid of the old yeast, even as Paul wrote:

Get rid of the old yeast, that you may be a new unleavened batch, as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with the old bread, leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and of truth.
1 Corinthians 5:7-8

And I can see, by examining my own life right now, that He takes Lent very seriously. So, I pass that onto you to encourage you to deny yourself during this season and do works of charity for others. And abstain from desserts and pleasing foods as well as meat and poultry on Fridays (and Wednesdays, if you want to add that to it.) Fish and dairy are good substitutes.

In the old days, you abstained from meat for the entire season of Lent, but then the Church changed the rules. So, it's up to our conscience. I think it is best to give the Lord as much as you can with an attitude of thanksgiving. You know you can never out-give the Lord... ever.

To make a point, Ezekiel—before he was saved—was in sin. He knew he was going to hell, so he just figured he'll deal with that when it happens. But for some reason, a spark inside of him decided to abstain from sodas for Lent. At the end of Lent he had a marvelous conversion experience that was the beginning of his life in God.

That said, here is a little more information on Lent.

It starts on Ash Wednesday and its observance (although not its liturgical period, as Sundays are not fast days and are therefore not counted) lasts for 40 days, mirroring the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness before starting his ministry. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday in western Christian Churches. and climaxes during Easter Week.

The last week of Lent is called Holy Week. During the 40 days of Lent, Christians remember the time when Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray. But also, the focus is on giving, sacrificing for the poor while denying yourself.

“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Me.”

So, I know I'm going to get asked. What to give up for Lent? This was an interesting little list, believe it or not, from Wikipedia.

What to give up for Lent?

- Is this something I like?
- Is this something I enjoy doing/eating?
- Is this something that's important to me?
- Do I think this will be a challenge throughout Lent?
- Will I appreciate this when I can have/do it again on Easter?
- Am I giving this up because I have to (someone is making me), or because I want to?
- Is this a true sacrifice?
 - If you answered yes to all of these questions, you've chosen an excellent Lenten sacrifice.

Thus, the rules for fasting and abstinence in the United States are: Every person 18 years or older abstain from meat (and items made with meat) on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent. Every person between the age of 18 and 59 (beginning of 60th year) must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

The idea was that these foods increased sex drive and therefore Lust, which is one of the temptations to be avoided. In the Roman Catholic Church, people would abstain from just meat and poultry on Ash Wednesday and every Friday during Lent. Dairy, eggs, and fish would still be eaten.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus' sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. And we fast from both from food and festivities.

The thing to remember, dear ones, is that this is a time of emptying so that we can be refilled by the Spirit of God, with holy things. The more we draw away from feeding the fancies of the flesh, the deader it becomes, the less influence it exerts over us, and the more we grow in sensitivity to spiritual things.

So, we can expect that at the end of a well-observed Lent, there will be spiritual breakthroughs, and maybe even the grace to live a far more spiritual life than what we were living.

Lord, have you something to add?

Jesus began, "Oh, the influence and power a pure soul has before My Father in Heaven. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see shall Me.

"Dear Children, this season is most necessary for you, because you accumulate the toxins of the world. They cling to you like barnacles on a ship. The longer you've been in the world, the greater the build-up of attractions and distractions of the world. And the more impurity you build up.

"As you can see from the Gospels, even I felt the necessity of cleansing Myself from 30 years of living in the world, yet not being of the world. And My mother is not of this world. Rather, she is a most heavenly woman, completely caught up in the agenda of Heaven and leading others to holiness.

"She had quite a reputation for being very innocent and pure. As a young one, she practiced the abstinences of the Temple as she was growing. Because of her tender age, she was not required to do what the priests did. However, zeal for Heaven was so great in her young soul that she hungered to dwell in the Heavens and was given many Heavenly visions that only served to make her more dedicated as she grew up.

"Her home had not a hint of the world—not in speech, nor in dress, nor in necessary things. All was very plain and did not attract you to itself. Whereas in a palace, everything from the floor to the curtains and the furniture, lamp stands, etc. is lavish and decorated in such a way that you could not walk through the palace without stopping to admire the workmanship of so many beautiful objects.

"You see, this beauty on Earth begets a hunger for more beauty on Earth—and one begins to long after fine carvings, gemstones, marble floors, silk curtains and elaborate clothing. The most elaborate thing she ever did was My one-piece tunic.

"But herein lies the entire secret of her holy life. She surrounded herself with nothing other than the plainest pots and bowls, mattes and utensils. She had no longing for these things, because she starved it out of her soul. Anne and Joachim, her parents, also lived an austere life, because their hearts were very much turned Heavenward. They had lived and seen so much of the world, it had no appeal to them at all.

"And this is why I came to Earth in poverty. There was nothing in My appearing that would appeal to the carnal man. It would be the shepherds, fishermen, and carpenters that were attracted to Me, because their hearts were empty of the desires and glories of man on Earth.

"Substance is everything. The outer appearance means nothing if the inside is not Godly.

"And so I began My ministry by depriving My flesh, so it would let go of the accumulated sights and sounds of the past, wanting only to be free of all Earthly entanglements. This cleansing subdued My flesh, so I could be more deeply united with My Father.

"Truly the flesh is a briar patch, and you cannot walk through this world without attracting thorns and thistles to yourself. And this time, completely apart from human and worldly consolations, broadened the space of My flesh to receive more and more of the Spirit."

In other words, I think He's meaning here that His flesh was under the control of His Spirit more and more.

“That is why this spring cleansing has so much spiritual significance. My dear ones. I wish to fill you more and more. I wish to direct your lives out of this world and into the world soon to come, just as I led the Israelites out of the abundance of exotic foods into the desert with only Manna to eat. It was to be a cleansing from the accumulated toxins of the Egyptian culture with all its idols.

“There I tested and tried the people to see if they were worthy to enter the Promised Land. Your Promised Land is the Realm of Heaven and I am preparing you for the journey Homeward.

“Yet, there is work to be done on Earth, and each of you need a new vision in understanding, equipping, and opportunities to leave the very best of yourselves behind to nourish those yet to enter the Kingdom. So, I am coming to you to entreat you to observe the Lenten fasts to the best of your ability, while steadily looking forward to the new infillings and equipings I will infuse into your souls as you make more and more room for Me.

“For some of you, this will be very difficult. Clare, My darling, I know you fear these challenges. Yet I will help you, all of you. Call out to Me when you struggle and I will gently lead you out of your trial.

“For all of you, Heartdwellers, I exhort you to do your best, knowing that for each pleasing morsel you give up, I have spiritual gifts and mantles accumulating for you, which I have longed to lavish on you, My Beautiful Bride.”

Clare pulled this rhema just after recording the message and wanted to include it here.