

# Why Lent?

Mar. 6, 19

1. **40 Days is an ongoing biblical theme of testing (& strengthening our faith)** – Jesus in the desert (Mt. 4:2), Noah (Gen. 7:12), Moses on receiving the law on Sinai (Ex. 24:18), the Israelites investigating the promised land (Num. 13:25), the time between Jesus' resurrection & ascension (Acts 1:3) ... to name a few examples
2. **Prayer & fasting are practices Jesus affirms in Scripture** - It is implied that Christians will fast:
  - a. *When you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do ... then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. (Mt.6:16-18)*
  - b. *"Why don't your disciples fast like we do and Pharisees do?"*  
*Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Mt.9:14ff.)*  
It is implied that the 12 disciples will fast when Jesus is not there with them (after his ascension). Jesus is not currently here with us – if we are His disciples that would imply there will be fasting in our lives.
3. **Prayer & fasting are God-given means of reaching this town with the gospel** - History is littered with evangelistic stories of the partnership of gospel proclamation, prayer & conversions – John Wesley; George Muller, Charles Spurgeon, Acts 1-2
  - a. *Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. <sup>15</sup>My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made (2 Chron. 7:14-15)*
4. **Lent is a means to make Easter what it should be: A Great Celebration!** In fasting, in our 'hunger pains' we anticipate a relief of this fast, and a celebration at Easter. To a greater degree, we anticipate a time where heaven & earth will be one, where none will go hungry, none will go thirsty, and the full fruition of the resurrection of Christ will be a fully lived experience in our lives.
5. **Fasting tears us out of spiritual complacency** - We are forced to deal with the desire and habits that we are feeding. Through a change and new discipline, we are forced out of our every-day routines.
6. **You can create a new habit in 40 days** – It is said it takes some 27 days to create a habit. 40 days gives opportunities for the formulation of a new positive habit.
7. **Fasting creates new space for God in your life.** If you are fasting from media or a meal or activity – there's now an opportunity: a new space for God to be at work in your life. Ask God how to use this space for His glory whether it's prayer, Scripture reading, journaling, a book, having coffee with a dear friend, or serving your family or roommates.
8. **Fasting & Prayer reaffirm who's #1 in your life.** The spiritual discipline of fasting can help reaffirm, that God is your first love, and you can take practical steps to affirm that, and show Him whom you love,

So let me ask you, "Why *not* lent?"

My prayer is that God will use these '40 days' to strengthen our relationship with God, and, to a greater degree, clarify "Who's on the Throne" of our lives. May God use our praying and fasting to grow us as a church in FOLLOWING JESUS. EQUIPPING EACH OTHER. SHARING THE GOSPEL.

*"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." (Heb. 10:24-25)*