***THE EASTER CODE***

**Lenten Worship Series – Week 1**

***Code Word:* Fasting**

**February 26, 2023**

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**S  Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim. |

**[*Project* “Week 1.QRCode”***(in Graphics file)* ***or below words on screen as people enter*]**

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| ***Code Word:* Fasting**  ***The purpose of fasting is not to earn God’s love, but to more deeply surrender to it.*** |

**Introduction of Lent series theme:**

Christ taught in his most lengthy recorded sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, that those who mourn are blessed. Mourning means you recognize the most important reality in the human existence, sin. But mourningdoes something wonderful to you. The sad realities that cause you to mourn also cause you to cry out for help, rescue, forgiveness, and deliverance of a Redeemer. So, it is right and beneficial to take a season of the year to reevaluate, recalibrate, and have the values of our hearts clarified once again. Lent is such a season.

During our forty days together, may your mourning increase so that your joy may deepen. May you groan more so that you would pray more. May your sadness ignite your celebration. And may all of this result in blessings that are too big and too obvious to miss.

(*Journey to the Cross*, pp. 7-10)

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| **SB#89/HC#161/SS#48 – O for a thousand tongues to sing (My Great Redeemer’s Praise)** | TB-59 – Azmon  TB-75 – Grimsby  HC-161  SS-48 | HTD3-T4 (4 vs.)  No HT CD  HCD15-T11 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#39/HC#121 – Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee** | TB-367 – Europe  HC-121 | HTD3-T11 (4 vs.)  HCD11-T11 |
| **HC#217/SS#169 – In This Sanctuary** | HC-217  SS-169 | HCD20-T17 |

**Invocation**

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| **Drama – I Surrender** |

**Call to Worship:**

Our theme for this year’s Lent season is *The Easter Code*. Each Sunday will feature a “code word” to help unlock the blessings of Christ’s journey to the cross. Today our code word is Fasting. Why would anyone ever fast? What is to be gained from giving things up? What is the purpose of not eating for a period? Does fasting bring you closer to God? Is fasting a way to defeat sin? Does God require us to fast?

Since Lent is a season of fasting, it is worth giving it a practical, biblical examination. Fasting is God’s invitation to all of his children to refocus, recharge, reengage, and repent. Matthew 6:16-18 says:

(*Journey to the Cross*, pp. 137, 139)

**[*Put scripture below on screen.*]**

**16**“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **17**But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18**so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18, NIV)

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| **SB#38/HC#298 – Jehovah is our strength** | TB-200 – Darwalls  HC-298 | HTD1-T7 (3 vs.)  HCD28-T18 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#34 – I believe that God the Father** | TB-360 – Bethany | HTD11-T1 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#298 – Come, Thou all inspiring Spirit** | TB-370 – Hyfrydol  HC-370 | HTD1-T14 (3 vs.)  HCD10-T14 |
| **SB#923 – God is with us** | TB-394 – Austria  HC-277 | HTD1-T2 (3 vs.)  HCD26-T17 |

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| **Children’s Moment – Fasting** |

***Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness***

**Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:1-11**

[*Scripture can be read by one person, split up into a responsive reading, or as a “readers’ theater using* The Voice *version* - <https://www.biblegateway.com/> ]

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| **SB#627 – There is a holy hill of God** | TB-70 – Fewster (no chorus) | HTD3-T13 (4 vs.) |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#255/HC#286 – I’m set apart for Jesus** | TB-213 – Aurelia  HC-286 | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.)  HCD27-T16 |
| **SB#285 – Holy Spirit, truth divine** | TB-249 – Hendon (repeat last line) | HTD8-T6 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#323 – Lord, hear my prayer, Thy power I claim** | TB-762 – Move, Holy Spirit! | No HT CD |
| **SB#456 – Dear Lord and Father of mankind** | TB-105 – Repton (repeat last line) | HTD8-T13 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#496 – I want a principle within** | TB-64 – Colne  TB-70 – Fewster | No HT CD  HTD3-T13 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#565/HC#89/SS#434 – All I once held dear (Knowing You)** | TB-725 – same  HC-89  SS-43 | No HT CD  HCD7-T19 |
| **SB#571/HC#47/SS#74 – As the deer** | TB-559 – same  HC-47  SS-74 | No HT CD  HCD3-T17 |
| **SB#672 – Savior, if my feet have faltered** | TB-325 – Face to face | HTD7-T6 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#704 – Give me a holy life** | TB-173 – Nuttall | HTD9-T13 (3 vs.) |

**Leader: 3**Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
   Who may stand in his holy place?  
**4**The one who has clean hands and a pure heart.  
**5**They will receive blessing from the Lord  
    and vindication from God their Savior.  
**6**Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
    who seek your face, God of Jacob.

**10**Who is he, this King of glory?  
     The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory.

Psalm 24:3-6, 10 (NIV)

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| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same  HC-219 | No HT CD  HCD20-T19 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **HC#160/SS#125 – I Surrender** | HC-160  SS-125 | HCD14-T20 |

**Prayer**

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| ***Code Word:* Multiply**  **“Go into all the world and make disciples.” - Matthew 28:19** |
| **DESCRIPTION:** During the Lenten season we will have an opportunity to take 6 weeks to intentionally fast and pray for the salvation of others. The goal and focus on ‘Multiply’ is to share our faith and to develop an *urgency of salvation* mindset for those who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ; and to invite congregants to fast/pray for salvation of others. It would be wonderful to celebrate on Easter Sunday the people who have accepted Jesus as their Savior! |
| **SUPPLIES NEEDED:** a prayer box on the holiness table (clear case works best); cross which fits inside the box; prayer cards printed on card stock (on three different colors – *see samples in Graphics file*); pens. |
| **VISUAL/INTERACTIVE PRAYER:** During the pastoral prayer portion each Sunday, the meeting leader will invite people to participate in 3 different ways, either writing the name of:  1) **someone for whom you are praying for salvation** (white card)  2) **someone to whom you have witnessed this past week** (green card)  3) **someone who has accepted Jesus as their Savior** (red card)  and placing that card in the prayer box on the holiness table. |
| * Explain the evangelism “visual” * “Multiply” – fill out cards/place in box on holiness table * Prayer time as people put cards in box * Pastoral Prayer |

**Announcements and Offering**

**Testimony of Faith – [Choose someone from the congregation who can testify on this theme.]**

**Message – *Code Word:* Fasting**

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| **SB#290/HC#7 – Spirit of God, descend** | TB-467 – same  HC-7 | No HT CD  HCD1a-T17 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#208/SS#63 – When I survey the wondrous cross** | TB-875 – The wonderful cross  HC-94 – Lamb of God (use vs. 2 as chorus)  SS-63 | No HT CD  HCD8-T14 |
| **SB#255/HC#286 – I’m set apart for Jesus** | TB-213 – Aurelia  HC-286 | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.)  HCD27-T16 |
| **SB#323 – Lord, hear my prayer, Thy power I claim** | TB-762 – Move, Holy Spirit! | No HT CD |
| **SB#409/HC#77/SS#136 – Change my heart, O God** | TB-584 – same  HC-77  SS-136 | No HT CD  HCD6-T17 |
| **SB#496 – I want a principle within** | TB-64 – Colne  TB-70 – Fewster | No HT CD  HTD3-T13 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#506/HC#24 – Lord, You know that we love You** | TB-950 – same  HC-24 | No HT CD  HCD2A-T14 |
| **SB#672 – Savior, if my feet have faltered** | TB-325 – Face to face | HTD7-T6 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#565/HC#89/SS#43 – All I once held dear (Knowing You)** | TB-725 – same  HC-89  SS-43 | No HT CD  HCD7-T19 |
| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same  HC-219 | No HT CD  HCD20-T19 |
| **SB#736/HC#102/SS#115 – Tell me what to do to be pure (Whiter than the snow)** | TB-932 – same  HC-102  SS-115 | HTD9-T19 (3 vs.)  HCD9-T12 |
| **HC#87 – Passion** | HC-87 | HCD7-T17 |
| **HC#136 – We All Bow Down** | HC-136 | HCD12-T16 |
| **SB#313/HC#159/SS#72 – Spirit of the living God** | TB-611 – Fill me anew  HC-159  SS-72 | No HT CD  HCD14-T19 |
| **HC#160/SS#125 – I Surrender** | HC-160  SS-125 | HCD14-T20 |
| **SB#595/HC#173 – In this quiet moment** | TB-186 – same  HC-173 | No HT CD  HCD16-T13 |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19-T15 |
| **HC#214 – Holy Spirit** | HC-214 | HCD20-T14 |
| **HC#236 – Lord, I Need You** | HC-236 | HCD22-T16 |
| **HC#245 – Known to You** | HC-245 | HCD23-T15 |

**Benediction:**

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

[Hebrews 13:20-21](http://www.christianity.com/bible/search/?ver=niv&q=hebrews+13%3a20-21) (ESV)

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| **HC#309 – Go in Peace, Go in Love** | HC-309 | HCD29-T19 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#861/HC#149/SS#41 – In Christ alone** | TB-132 – same  HC-149  SS-41 | No HT CD  HCD13-T19 |
| **SB#89/HC#161/SS#48 – O for a thousand tongues to sing (My Great Redeemer’s Praise)** | TB-59 – Azmon  TB-75 – Grimsby  HC-161  SS-48 | HTD3-T4 (4 vs.)  No HT CD  HCD15-T11 |
| **HC#128 – My Tribute** | HC-128 | HCD11-T18 |
| **HC#198 – In Jesus’ Name** | HC-198 | HCD18-T18 |
| **SB#358/HC#241/SS#30 – Crown Him with many crowns** | TB-162 – Diademata  HC-241  SS-30 | HTD1-T8 (4 vs.)  HCD23-T11 |
| **SB#1031/HC#283 – Lord, if Your presence** | TB-740 – same  HC-283 | No HT CD  HCD27-T13 |
| **SB#241 – And can it be** | TB-445 – Sagina | HTD4-T13 (4 vs.) |

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| **Lent 2023 – Week 1** | |
| **DRAMA**  **I Surrender**  **By Martyn Scott Thomas**  © Copyright 2022 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission. | |
| **Topic:** | Fasting |
| **Scripture:** | Matthew 6:16-18 |
| **Synopsis:** | Three people contemplate fasting for Lent. |
| **Characters:** | Reader 1  Reader 2  Reader 3 |
| **Props/Costumes:** | None. |
| **Setting:** | Bare stage. |
| **Running time:** | 3 minutes |

[*Readers are standing across the front of the stage.*]

**Reader 1:** I think I’ll give up coffee for Lent.

**Reader 2:** I think I’ll give up smoking for Lent.

**Reader 3:** I’m not sure what to give up for Lent. If I promised to eat less junk as a New Year’s resolution, does that just carry over?

**Reader 1:** I really drink a lot of coffee, so this could be hard.

**Reader 2:** I don’t smoke, so I figure this will be pretty easy. Maybe I should give up drinking as well.

**Reader 3:** Maybe not, since I only lasted three days before binging on Pop Tarts and Mountain Dew.

**Reader 1:** Maybe it should just be less coffee. You know, like cut back to five cups a day.

**Reader 2:** Since I don’t drink either, I should be fine. I wonder what else I can give up.

**Reader 3:** I could narrow it down to just chocolate.

**Reader 1:** Or I could just get one of those super large travel mugs. Then I could cut back to one cup a day.

**Reader 2:** I know – gambling. Instead of just passing by the lottery machine at the grocery store, I won’t even look at the jackpot totals.

**Reader 3:** Make that chocolate candy bars. I do like some chocolate cake from time to time.

**Reader 1:** One cup it is. Unless they’re offering free refills at the Speedy Mart.

**Reader 2:** I really don’t know why I’m giving up anything. I’m a pretty good person already.

**Reader 3:** Do Skittles count? They’re not chocolate.

**Reader 1:** Who am I kidding? I can’t go more than a few hours without my caffeine fix.

**Reader 2:** Who decided that we should give things up anyway?

**Reader 3:** How long is Lent? 40 days? Who thought that would be a good idea?

**Reader 1:** If they call it fasting, why does it seem to last forever?

**Reader 2:** If I’m just going to start up again after Lent is over, what’s the point of giving it up in the first place?

**Reader 3:** Maybe I can give up meat. But that’s only on Fridays, right?

**Reader 1:** Never mind.

**Reader 2:** I’m not even going to try.

**Reader 3:** What’s the point?

[*Blackout*]

***THE EASTER CODE***

**Children’s Moment – Week 1**

***Code Word:* Fasting**

**February 26, 2023**

**by Katie Laidlaw**

**Synopsis:** *The Code Word* series focuses on 7 topics, from the perspective of scientists working in “The Code Lab,” in order to find the secret ingredients to living out the power of the resurrection.

**Costume:** Lab coat, goggles/glasses, gloves, mustache.

**Set-up/Staging:** Small table or rolling cart with props.

**Props:** 3 large clear water pitchers/vases (2 full of water, 1 empty), 1 small cup of glitter

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| **Week 1 – Fasting** |

[*Invite children to come to the front, either having them stand or sit for the lesson.* (It is recommended to have the children stand, as this helps keep them attentive, engaged, and involved in the lesson—especially with the dynamic of the congregation “watching them.” In this more public/formal setting, sitting provides a more relaxed/informal mindset, allowing the children to disengage and merely be present in the moment.)]

**Script:**

Welcome to The Code Lab! I am one of the scientists here, and I am so glad to have some visitors. My oh my, do we have a lot of work to do. Over the next several weeks, we have been given the job to test out some theories; form a hypothesis, if you will. There are several subjects we will be exploring in order to figure out how we can best live our lives for Jesus.

Our first subject requiring some research and testing is something called fasting.

I went ahead and gathered some research. Fasting is a common practice throughout the Bible. In the Bible, fasting is being willing and prepared to not eat or drink in order to focus on praying, studying God’s word, or listening for God’s voice.

Right before beginning His ministry on earth, Jesus went into the wilderness, where He experienced temptation from the devil. Jesus had been fasting from food for 40 DAYS!

Do any of you ever get so hungry that you get cranky? [*Allow children to respond*]

Have you ever been so picky about what you eat that you started an argument with one of your parents? [*Allow children to respond*]

Sometimes we let something as small as what we eat take control of our whole day! Adults need to have their coffee, some people hate vegetables, some people get cranky and mean when they are hungry… something as little as what we want, or what we won’t eat can take all of our focus.

Fasting is meant to help us focus on God. This is why people choose to fast from other things in life that can cause distraction.

What are some things that can be a distraction from spending time with God? [*Allow children to respond*]

When Jesus was being tempted by the devil, He needed to be focused on God, which is why he decided to fast!

Let me show you something.

[*Show water in container*] This container of water is us. We are filled with distractions, commitments, thoughts, and emotions. When we commit to a time of fasting, we make a sacrifice to remove, or rebalance those distractions, commitments, thoughts, and emotions. [*Pour out water into empty container*]

Then, through the removal of all of those things, Jesus can fill us [*pour fresh water into first container*] with brand new things, thoughts and emotions, all while drawing closer to Him, because we made time for Him in our lives. And do you know what? Jesus makes our time of sacrifice beautiful [*add glitter*].

The Bible says, **“Be still, and know that I am God”** (Psalm 46:10, NIRV).

Fasting is a tool, just like some of the tools I use in The Code Lab. Fasting is a tool meant to help us refocus on Jesus and become better friends with Him. I think we have done some great research in the lab today. Time to go!

[*Pray.*]

**Main Points:**

* In the Bible, fasting is being willing and prepared to not eat or drink in order to focus on praying, reading the Bible, or listening for God’s voice.
* When we commit to a time of fasting, we make a sacrifice to remove, or rebalance those distractions, commitments, thoughts, and emotions.
* Fasting is a tool meant to help us refocus on Jesus and become better friends with Him.

**Questions:**

* Do any of you ever get so hungry that you get cranky?
* Have you ever been so picky about what you eat that you got into an argument with one of your parents?
* What are some things that can be a distraction from spending time with God?

***THE EASTER CODE***

**Lenten Sermon – Week 1**

***Code Word:* Fasting**

**February 26, 2023**

**By Major Peter Mount**

**TITLE: *Code Word:* Fasting**

**THEME: The Temptation of Jesus**

**SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:1-11**

**INTRODUCTION:**

As we begin our series on Code Words that unlock the Lenten season for us, our first word is Fasting. (I am always impressed by people who fast, but never impressed enough to do it myself. This morning, I must confess that even though I knew about fasting and that it was a spiritual discipline that could bring me closer to God, I didn't feel like fasting was for me! Fasting was for more religious people!)

Today, I want to challenge us that, in fact, we can all practice the discipline of fasting.

Let’s begin with some foundational elements. (This is not going to be a sermon about losing weight so if that’s your motivation for fasting – just go on a diet!) This is not going to be a sermon that encourages you to fast because it's the “trendy” thing to do. I believe that as we look at the story of Jesus in today’s scripture there are some really great challenges for us.

Let’s turn to Matthew chapter 4.

**POINT(S):**

1. What is fasting?
2. Fasting is the desire to let go of an appetite in order to seek God on matters of deep concern for others, myself and the world.
3. Fasting is about being *intentional*—intentional in our relationship with Christ and in growing in our love for others.
4. Relationships with other people are built by spending quality time with each other. Unfortunately, in our Christian life we do not always feel the same way about our relationship with Christ. For this to grow in our spiritual lives and in our relationships, we must spend intentional time with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
5. How can this be done?
6. Through prayer (conversation with God).
7. The study of His word.
8. Connection with His creation, both in nature and through human interactions (fellowship/hanging out).

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Are you too busy to spend time with God?
2. When you look at your calendar, where does Jesus fit in?

**POINT(S)**

1. Fasting is denying yourself (self-denial) of normal necessities in order to intentionally draw closer to God.
2. Did you hear that word again – *intentionally!*
3. Bringing attachments and cravings to the surface opens a place for prayer. The physical awareness of emptiness is a great reminder to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy.
4. I want to challenge us to stop doing something—not so that we can add something else, but to focus on God in a more intentional way. I don’t want us to stop watching TV just so we can spend more time doing X, Y and Z (busyness).
5. Fasting is removing a necessity or common activity to *intentionally* spend that time with God.

**READ SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:1-11**

**CONTEXT:**

This passage comes after we read of John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus in Matthew 3. John baptizes Jesus, and in 3:16-17, we see the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Jesus. Then a voice from heaven says, *“This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

That is what leads into Matthew 4. God has sent his Son into the world to be 100% God and 100% human and gives Jesus the highest compliment: “In my son (Jesus) I am well pleased,” for the whole world to hear. Then the third part of the trinity—the Holy Spirit—leads him into the desert to be tested and prepared (Matthew 4:1), to intentionally spend time with the Father to prepare himself for what was to come in his ministry: temptation, betrayal, miracles, belief, scorn, beatings, death and resurrection.

After these 40 days and 40 nights of fasting in the wilderness, my favorite portion in this whole passage is found in verse 2: *“he* [Jesus] *was hungry.”* No way! Who wouldn’t be physically hungry after 40 days of not eating?

I would also imagine that Jesus is tired, as he has not eaten, and sleeping in the desert is not the most restful. Hungry and sleep-deprived, the devil comes to tempt Jesus (v. 3). How often when we are at our weakest does temptation come in our own lives?

**POINT(S)**

The devil knows what buttons to press and what temptations to throw our way:

1. Verses 3-4 – The button/temptation is hunger and food—Jesus’ response is Biblical.
2. Verses 5-6 – The button/temptation is safety and protection—Jesus’ response is Biblical.
3. Verses 7-8 – The button/temptation is power—Jesus’ response is Biblical.
4. After three of these interactions with the tempter, Jesus shows us the results of intentional fasting (building that relationship with God) and living life for his Father.
5. Verse 10 – *“Away from me Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”* Another epically biblical response!
6. Because Jesus knew the Father (his words) and Spirit (whose power he lived in and through), he was able to fight the battle against sin.

**POINT(S): How and why should we fast?**

1. First, there is no magic in fasting. Giving up food won’t instantly make you more godly. Fasting allows you to give yourself to other spiritual disciplines that will bear a harvest of good fruit in your life.
2. Second, you don’t fast in order to gain God’s favor, but to help bring your life into even greater surrender to him and a greater appreciation of his favor. Fasting is spiritual warfare. It is one way that God has provided for you to fight for your own heart.
3. So, how do you fast?
4. **Give yourself to prayer**. One of the primary purposes of fasting is to be able to give yourself more fully to prayer. The normal routines of food selection, preparation, and eating are replaced by new routines of prayer. It is this more focused communion with God that produces some of fasting’s best fruit.
5. **Don’t make a show of it**. Fast in private. Don’t announce it. Don’t broadcast it after. Pride in fasting robs fasting of its spiritual benefit. Seek God; don’t seek the approval of others for seeking God in this way.
6. **Bathe yourself in God’s word**. Fasting can give you time to meditate on God’s word. In our busy lives, most of us spend very little time in actual scriptural meditation. Biblical meditation is not like Eastern meditation. In Eastern meditation you empty your mind. In Christian meditation you fill your mind with God’s word, chewing it over and over again until you are digesting spiritual morsels you have never digested before.
7. **Make sure you’re ready**. There are no spiritual benefits to damaging your body or putting your health at risk. Make sure you are physically, financially, and situationally prepared for whatever fast, for whatever period, you are about to undertake.
8. **Be quiet before the Lord**. Since fasting is about ceasing participation in a particular thing, your fast shouldn’t be filled with other activity. Fasting is a time to wait on the Lord. And as you wait, remember that for the Christian, waiting is not about what you *get* at the end of the wait, but more importantly about what you *become* as you wait.
9. **Confess what has been revealed**. As you seek God in prayer, as you meditate on his word, and as you are quiet before him, the Lord will reveal your heart. Fasting is a way to fight the spiritual blindness that affects us all. So be ready to confess new areas of sin, weakness, and failure that God has revealed as you have fasted.
10. **Make new commitments**. If confession is turning from the old way, then commitment is turning your heart and life to God’s new and better way. At the end of your fast, think about where God is calling you to new commitments of faith and discipleship where you live and work every day.
11. **Be thankful**. Thank God for how fasting is an indication of his welcoming, patient, perseverant love, continually drawing you into even closer, more heart-satisfying communion with him.[[1]](#endnote-1)

(*Journey to the Cross*, pp. 139-141)

**CHALLENGE:**

1. So, do you know Jesus?
2. How are you getting to know more about God?
3. Do you want to know and experience Holy Spirit more?
4. What would fasting for you look like in this next week? Over this Lenten season?
5. That same Holy Spirit is with us today – do you want that power to overcome sin?
6. Fast, pray and spend time with him not just today, but from this point on!

**Additional Scriptures:**

**Psalm 35:13**

**13** Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting.

**Ezra 8:23**

**23**So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

**Nehemiah 1:3-4**

**3**They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” **4**When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

**Luke 2:36-37**

**36** There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, **37**and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

**Matthew 6:16-18**

**6**“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **17**But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18**so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

1. Tripp, P. D. (2021). *Journey to the Cross: A 40-Day Lenten Devotional.* Crossway. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)