

HEART OF CALVARY



Demonstrating God's love to people, helping them to be healed from their hurts & set free from bondage, so they can be equipped and trained for ministry to bless generations!

Volume 24, Issue 2

February 2016



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LENT—It's a Good Thing (Really)

By Becky Curtis

Those who have never observed Lent may view it as a legalistic tradition with questionable merit. However, I disagree. The primary purpose of Lent is to help us draw closer to God through self-examination, repentance, and self-denial. It is a time of putting aside our own desires and pressing into God. Life has a way of distracting us and pulling us off course. The disciplines of Lent are meant to help us draw near to God and re-center ourselves in His will.

The exact origins of Lent are not clearly known. In the days of the early church, the actual practices and duration of the Lenten fast varied by location, but by the time of the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., the duration had become settled at 40 days. The number "40" has always had special spiritual significance regarding preparation. On Mount Sinai, preparing to receive the Ten Commandments, "Moses stayed there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, without eating any food or drinking any water" (Ex 34:28). Elijah walked "40 days and 40 nights" to the mountain of the Lord (1 Kgs 19:8). Most importantly, Jesus fasted and prayed for "40 days and 40 nights" in the desert before He began His public ministry (Mt 4:2).¹

Although the fast is 40 days, Sundays are exempt because they are the day of resurrection and are to be celebrated as such. Thus, Ash Wednesday was instituted to bring the number of actual fasting days to 40. Ash Wednesday falls on the seventh Wednesday before Easter and also has great Biblical significance. In Leviticus 16, the Lord established a Day of Atonement, an annual day of repentance for the Israelites. Jesus offered His own blood for our atonement, so on Ash Wednesday, we humble ourselves in prayer and fasting and receive the sign of His cross in the form of ashes on our foreheads, setting ourselves apart for a time of spiritual reflection until we celebrate His resurrection at Easter. In the

traditional church, the palm branches from Palm Sunday are burned and saved to make the ashes which are applied to the foreheads of the faithful at the Ash Wednesday service. The Biblical basis for this practice can be found in Daniel 3:9, "So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and fasting. I also wore rough burlap and *sprinkled myself with ashes.*"

If you have never observed Lent before, I would highly encourage you to do so. The type of fast you choose is between you and God. If you have health issues and can't do a full food fast, you might try giving up a favorite food or drink. If you are able, perhaps you can give up one meal a day and spend that time in prayer. The money you save could go to a mission of your choosing. Another possibility is to do a media fast. Can you give up television for one or more nights a week and spend that time in fellowship, or reading your Bible, or reading a good book that draws you closer to the Lord? Perhaps you could give up Facebook or Twitter time and invest that time in a good web-based Lenten Bible Study. Last year I loved the "She Reads Truth" study at shereadstruth.com and the writings of Ann Voskamp at aholyexperience.com. For the men, there is now a hereadstruth.com. It is uplifting to be doing these studies with fellow Christians all over the world.

Whatever fast you choose, remember you are human and thus are likely to fail, but don't give up. Pray, regroup, and start over. I can tell you from experience that Easter will be so much more meaningful. I really hope you will give it a try and that I will see and hear testimonials of how it has changed your life and brought you closer to your Heavenly Father.

Our Ash Wednesday service will be February 10th at 7:00 p.m. I hope you will join us.

¹Saunders, Rev. William. "History of Lent." *Arlington Catholic Herald*.



peggy's ponderings

RENEWING MY MIND

I am re-reading Smith Wigglesworth's book, HEALING, and I came upon this statement: *"The obedient always obey God when He first speaks. It is those people of God whom He will use to make the world know that there is a God."* I would love to be a woman of God who always obeys Him when He first speaks.

Of course, one must first be quiet enough to hear Him speak. Do you know how hard that is for me? I know the Lord said, "My sheep hear My voice." I also, know I am one of His sheep, and He would not have said I could hear His voice if He knew it would be impossible for me to do it. One of the hardest things for me to do is to still my body, let alone my mind. It seems I am so often fidgeting or moving some body part, swinging a leg, or scratching some un-seeable, unreachable itch. If I do manage to bring all outward body parts under control, there's always the biggest culprit of all...my mind. It's so busy 'pinging' here and there and everywhere that sometimes it's gone, and I haven't even missed it. I'm sure you've heard the saying about someone or some thing 'having a mind of his/its own.' Well, I often think my *mind* 'has a mind of its own.' I have asked the Lord many times over the last 48 years: How can I change? How can I learn to stop 'pinging', slow down, be still, and hear You better? I would like to share with you some of my ponderings and perceptions about this 'renewing the mind' business.

I believe that at my creation, my mind was new, fresh, uncontaminated, unspoiled, probably a state-of-the-art marvel. But unfortunately all that changed. Actually it didn't take long for the degeneration to begin, and before I could even form the words to express what was going on in that little mass of gray matter in my cute little baby head, (at least my mother thought it was cute) I was caught up in the world of 'self' and what seemed to be best for my own self's interest. Thus the newness began its erosion and continued until the day I first heard the words of God telling me that if I didn't want to be the way I was and do the things I did; if I wanted to stop being superficial and following the ways of the world, I could be changed (transformed) by renewing my mind. (Romans 12:2) I have been working to accomplish this transformation ever since.

Even though God has given me my own special tutor, His Holy Spirit, without Whom I cannot *spiritually* understand any of His words, this has been no 'cake walk.' I have to discipline my 'self' to take time, sit down, and still my ADD body and my OCD mind. (The OCD mind says everything must be in place, conditions must be perfect, all work done, etc. before I begin this renewing of the mind task, and the

ADD body parts are on constant alert to spring into action whenever the OCD mind says, "Move it!")

Discipline means *to train oneself to do something in a controlled and habitual way.* Some definitions add the words...*using punishment to correct disobedience.* I don't believe God uses punishment to make me renew my mind because Jesus took all my punishment on the cross. Besides, punishment doesn't make me *want* to slow down, be still, and get into God's word for the right reason. I fear punishment, therefore, it might make me slow down, be still, and read God's word; but the reason I would be doing it would be because of fear and not because I wanted to.

I have learned that Satan knows once I begin to get into God's word, and catch glimpses of the GOODNESS that awaits me in the KINGDOM of God, I will want what I see! I will want to change my thoughts and my ways because what I see in the word about KINGDOM living will make me want to experience it...taste it...enjoy it...possess it. He knows I will turn willingly and joyfully to God's word, hungrily feeding on it, becoming more focused on the goodness of God and less focused on the attractions of the world around me.

So instead of centering in on distractions that pull me away from renewing my mind, I purpose to fix my attention on the GOODNESS of God and the amazing benefits of walking daily in KINGDOM thoughts, KINGDOM gifts, and KINGDOM living. With every new revelation of the KINGDOM of God that is brought to me by Holy Spirit, I begin making adjustments in my mind so that my thoughts will line up with each new understanding and perception of God's truths. I begin turning away from kingdom-of-darkness thinking and plunging headfirst into the arms of Jesus and His life-breathing words about the KINGDOM of God.

I no longer have my eyes, ears, mind, and body parts tuned in to the enemy's spin on what is important, but my former ADD mind and OCD body become filled with longing to be remodeled, revamped, reconstructed, and renewed because I now have my mind turned from the enemy's alluring traps and have fixed my eyes on the prize...the GOODNESS of God and His KINGDOM living!

So, today, as I write my ponderings and thoughts, the message of the words in this familiar song take on new meaning for me:

As I turn my eyes upon Jesus in the Word of God and look steadfastly into His wonderful face, the distractions of this world grow strangely dim as He reveals to me the Light of His Glory, Grace, and Goodness in His KINGDOM teachings.

By Sarah Heath



For almost thirty years I have been trying to teach people to stand correctly. Frequently the way we stand, walk and posture ourselves is just a habit we don't even think about. Sometimes that habit can help us to be stronger and stay healthier. Other times it makes us weaker and even causes pain. If we think about it, our bodies have been designed to work in a very efficient manner. Repeatedly over the years, I have encouraged people to stand with their weight even on both feet, keep their shoulders back, tummy in, knees loose and the arch of their feet up. (Arches by definition should be up.)

It is amazing to watch people change to this alignment and all of a sudden they feel muscles starting to work and support them. Then they may even feel their pain decrease. The right stance can do a lot for us. Now this does cause the muscles to work a little more, but it is easier work because they are in the right position. This posture also takes a lot of stress off the joints in the body.

Now what is true about this natural stance can also be true with our spiritual stance. If we stand firm in our habits of following God's word, having time set aside for Him and communion with fellow believers we will be able to more easily stand firm in our faith. The Bible frequently encourages us to stand firm. In fact when the apostle Paul tells us how to put on the armor of God there is a lot of standing.... Take your STAND against the devil's schemes.... So that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to STAND your ground, and after you have done everything to STAND, STAND FIRM then... (Ephesians 6:11-14). That's four times in three verses that he tells us to stand.

Now it must not always be easy to stand firm or he wouldn't have to tell us four times! My conclusion is that it's pretty important to get the right stance before we take off running. As we start this New Year, let's find the right stance so our work will naturally follow God's design.

Blessings,

Sarah Heath



By Karla Bensinger

and I decided it was just not right that we and others I know have worked hard all our lives.

Then God spoke:
"So I don't love them?"
"So I don't want them saved?"

Needless to say, this brought me to some tears and I was broken that I would feel this way. Praise God that he speaks to us and changes us until the day of His return, or our return to Him.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten son, that whoever (not just me or people that look at things the way I do) believes in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

It is God's wish that all be saved: murderers, alcoholics, thieves, adulterers, and those that choose not to work a day in their lives.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for *any* to perish but for *all* to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

For me, God sometimes just speaks to me out of the blue. I would say more than a direct answer to a question I have been asking him. Bottom line is, as long as He keeps speaking (which He always will), I will attempt to keep listening and learning from Him.

Let me start by saying that God knows it anyway, so I have learned He really wants us to be genuine with Him.

So I am driving across a bridge on the way to work and looking over to what I would say is a poorer area of town. And I am feeling so much compassion for the poor and I want to help them in their situation and their brokenness. Then I remember someone from the past that lives in this area and this person hardly ever worked a day in their life, has always lived off the system, including having more kids so they can get more money without working. Might I add stealing from others. Let me just stop there. My compassion was gone



happy anniversary

Brad & Barbara Cook	February 2
Pastor Kyle & Beth Andrews	February 14
Jerry & Carol Stevens	February 14
Lynwood & June Andrews	February 27

Don't miss the Accepted Youth Group's Annual

Valentine's Day Dinner

Sunday, February 14th at 5:00 p.m.

Menu: Chicken Bruschetta with Alfredo
Salad, Soup, and Dessert

Tickets are \$20 for singles and \$45 for couples

We are really excited and hope we have your support!



GOD'S LOVE IS
UNCONDITIONAL
UNENDING &
UNMISTAKABLE.

WE ARE
BELOVED.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

February EVENTS

Jan 31st	Citywide Prayer & Praise New Life Community Church (815 Ohio Street)	6:00 p.m.
Feb 10th	Ash Wednesday Service	7:00 p.m.
Feb 14th	Valentine's Day Dinner	5:00 p.m.
Feb 19th & 20th	Marriage Retreat	(see insert)



Susanne Wagner	February 1
Jake Daugherty	February 2
Ken Parsley	February 8
Alaina Keegan	February 16
Karen Mullenix	February 19
Rachael Pounds	February 19
Ronda Hamelmann	February 25
Caleb Andrews	February 26
Shannon Belzile	February 26
Dena Tilford	February 27

REVIVE Wabash Valley

Revive Wabash Valley will meet on Feb. 8th & Feb. 27th. The gatherings are 90 minutes long with a time of prayer huddles, outreach, and sharing. For further info, they now have a website: www.revivewv.org

Note

If you have anything you want to share in the newsletter, let me know at beckycurtis2116@gmail.com or 812-870-0254.

CALVARY TEMPLE CHURCH -
Terre Haute

