

Glenpool Church of Christ

A Serious Conversation about Lent

Why in the world would a preacher of the churches of Christ even concern himself about this topic that is wholly associated with Catholicism? I'll tell you why. For the last two years when the Lenten season in the liturgical calendar of Catholicism has rolled around, I've encountered several articles and posts on social media from those inside and outside the church who observe this season. However, many of my other brethren have always had their snarky comments to post as well: "I'm giving up Lent for Lent," or "I don't have any Lent in my pocket, so what's the fuss!?" Now, don't get me wrong, I'm a prince of all things snarky, so I'm not criticizing.

Before I go on with this conversation, let me make a few things clear so you or anyone else won't misconstrue what I mean: (1) There is no word "Lent" in all of the Bible. (2) There is no command to observe any season in the Bible for religious purposes, let alone that of Lent. (3) There is no example of the church observing any similar season in the Bible. As far as I see it, these are the facts.

Moving on from that, I was curious about this season of Lent, so I considered two sources – my Christian wife who was reared Roman Catholic, and the Encyclopedia of Early Christianity (2d. ed.). My dear wife, who is of Italian descent, converted to Christianity when she was seventeen. She was the first person I ever studied with and baptized, but she was reared Roman Catholic. Her maternal grandparents were charter members of St. Ignatius Catholic parish in Antioch, TN. Her parents and grandparents were wed at The Cathedral on Broadway where the bishop resides. She grew up going to Catholic school from kindergarten all the way through middle school. I asked her what she could tell me about Lent, and she said that it was a time, for her at least, when you couldn't eat meat on Fridays and had to give up something. She said that the Church did a poor job educating young Catholics as to why they observed Lent, and to her it was always an inconvenience.

When reading about it, Lent was a forty-day fast period before Easter. It used to be that during these days, people considering conversion to Christianity would undergo a forty-day period of religious instruction that culminated with their baptism on Easter Sunday – the day that was regarded as "the feast of feasts" because of Christ's having arisen from the dead on that day. The word "Lent" itself is Anglo-Saxon and means "spring."

Not only did Jesus fast while He was tempted, but the disciples fasted often, so the exact duration of fasting in the earliest history of this religious observance was not uniform. Actually, the fasting period in the earliest associations with Lent was

... Continued Inside

March 5, 2017

ELDERS

Bobby Hill

Bill Path

Keith Riggs

David Tenison

PULPIT MINISTER

Benjamin Williams

YOUTH DIRECTOR

Haden Brill

PRISON MINISTER

Bill Hamrick

DEACONS

James Hamilton,

WORSHIP

Thomas Hallsted,

FINANCE

Todd Khoury

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Johnny Riggs,

MEMBER SERVICES

Bruce Rothell,

MISSIONS

Zac Tenison,

YOUNG FAMILIES

Edwin Whittlesey,

ADMINISTRATION

SECRETARY

Karen Brown

Belong. Learn. Serve.

Continued From Previous Page

two days, or forty hours. Since Jesus' flesh was what was crucified, this became the reason for abstaining from meat during this season – especially on Friday, since that was the actual day that Christ was crucified.

Now, considering all of this, I'm not in the least bit advocating that we should observe Lent. However, I would want for us to think about not merely fasting, but spiritual disciplines as a whole. There are several spiritual disciplines that we could practice as the church and as individuals. Of course, bear in mind that if the Scriptures do not command it in certain terms, then we do it only out of devotion to Christ and have no right to bind on another what God hasn't already bound through the Sacred Scriptures. I've heard of congregations of the Lord's Church having prayer meetings, or a twenty-four hour Gospel meeting. Some at the end of the year have twenty-four hour readings of the Bible where people take turns reading portions of the Scriptures. Of course, included in these spiritual disciplines is not only prayer and Scripture reading, but fasting. Fasting from food, if one's health will allow, as a discipline to dedicate one's self to God for a purpose (i.e. divine event such as worship, repentance, or sorrow) is certainly seen in the Scriptures, but if we aren't yet disciplined enough to fast from meals, surely some of us could stand to fast from social media, television, or something else that occupies our time to the neglect of God.

Here's my only point for bringing this up: we celebrate the temporal holidays of the 4th of July, Mother's and Father's Day, New Year's Eve and the like which are fashioned by the American Civic religious ethos. Should not our calendars be more Gospel shaped than secular shaped? If we are truly citizens of heaven (Phil. 3.20), should not the things of heaven occupy us a great deal more than they do? Instead of viewing Lent as a "mere tradition" and an "empty ritual," perhaps we can learn from it. According to my wife, the majority of people she knew shared her views about Lent when she was a girl. The people I've spoken with who observe it do so out of sincere devotion to God from what I can tell. If there's anything we can learn, can it not be that we should be more spiritually disciplined? I must confess my own hypocrisy, because I'm poorly spiritually disciplined in my own eyes. I can binge watch Netflix like it's going out of style.

I can, however, admire the truth that Lent represents: depriving my flesh of its wants to focus more on God. If Paul could learn from Greek poets and quote them in the Holy Bible, I can learn from my other religious neighbors too what I may neglect as a Christian. I'm not arguing for a Lenten observance. I'm only suggesting that we take stock of ourselves and if we practice any spiritual devotions to God. Jesus has told us how we may do so to the pleasure of our Father (Matt. 6.1-18).

by Stephen Hunter

GRADUATES

If you or someone in your immediate family is graduating please let the office know as soon as possible. Our High School seniors need to submit their questionnaire and photo to Haden or the office ASAP!

Sunday, Mar 5

Youth Devo all afternoon

Sunday, Mar 12

Leadership meeting 3:00

Daylight savings time — change clocks on Saturday

Sunday, Mar 19

Training for the sound booth at 4:00

Young families dinner

Sunday, Mar 26

VBS meeting 4:00

Fellowship meal—group Tenison

Wednesday, Mar 29

5th Wednesday night singing



IN NEED OF OUR PRAYERS

- Rosalie O'Neal had tubes put in her kidneys (she has blockage from previous radiation treatments) on Friday at St. Johns. This should have been an out patient procedure.
- **Service men and women:** Jenna Sullivan; Jacob Littlebear; David Stills; Ken Whittington (Ben & Selene's brother-in-law)

Long Term Prayer List: Eric Vaughan (heart); Henry Lack; Stephanie White (pain); Dolores Scherman; Alan Trimble (ALS); Wayne Morgan; Rosalie O'Neal (kidneys); Ruth Henry; Kathy Henry; Shelby family; Piper Pence; Billie English (cancer); Bob Howard (respiratory);

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Wednesday, Mar 15, the young men will NOT be leading the Wednesday night devotional.

Wednesday, Mar 29, will be our 5th Wednesday night singing. No classes.

LADIES BIBLE CLASS

Contact Ben if you would like to be a teacher for a Ladies Bible class during the week.

MONDAY NIGHT FOR THE MASTER

Due to lack of participation the Monday Night for the Master has been canceled.

LEADERSHIP MEETING

Leadership meeting next Sunday at 3:00.



Time Change! Don't forget to move your clocks forward this coming weekend!



YOUTH GOALS:

- **Haden Senn** can quote Gen 1:1
- **Stetson Harris** knows the 5 Acts of Worship
- **Ryder Killebrew** can quote Gen 1:1
- **Brody Harris** knows the Days of Creation



YOUTH DEVO

There will be a youth devo this afternoon immediately following morning services. Boys bring pop, girls bring desserts. You will need a change of clothes to play volleyball or other activities. This will last until about 4:30, in time for them to get ready for the 5:00 evening service. For questions see Haden.

CHILI COOK OFF

The blue ribbon went to Richard Senn at the chili cook off last weekend! Congratulations! Dennis Robinson won the Fire Alarm, Brianna Harris won Not So Hot, Darla Edwards won Manly Man, Virginia Burrus won Most Beautiful and Valerie Whittlesey won One of a Kind. Congrats to all!

SOUND BOOTH

If you wish to be involved with the sound booth please come to the sound booth training at 4:00 on Sunday, March 19.

PARKING

We are running short on parking spaces. If you would please use the area behind the garage that would be helpful. It is packed with gravel and not muddy. Many thanks!

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Marcia Riggs, Mar 5

Jerry & Nola Buller, Mar 6

Barbara Vaughan, Mar 6

Robert & Marcia Hill, Mar 7

David Shelby, Mar 7

Mary Causby, Mar 8

Billy & Andrea Russell, Mar 11

Bruce & Lilia Rothell, Mar 12

Julia Talley, Mar 13

Carson Hallsted, Mar 15

Shirley Hood, Mar 15

Melinda & Steven Jones, Mar 16

Sarah Jones, Mar 17

Ryan McCafferty, Mar 17

Jack Lierly, Mar 18

SUNDAY AM WORSHIP

Song Leader	Matt Caldwell
Opening Prayer	Keith Riggs
Table	1. Wes Wadkins 2. Randy Crawford 3. Bobby Hill 4. Dennis Robinson 5. Jeff Bullinger 6. Hayden Bullinger
Scripture Reading	Zac Caldwell
Closing Prayer	Larry Killebrew

SUNDAY PM DEVOTIONAL

Song Leader	Matt Caldwell
Opening Prayer	Carl Burrus
Table	1. Bobby Hill 2. Randy Crawford
Closing Prayer	Larry Neal

WEDNESDAY DEVOTIONAL

Song Leader	Joseph Whittlesey
Opening Prayer	Bill Hamrick
Devotional	Haden Brill
Closing Prayer	Ben Williams

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Sunday Contribution	\$4,730
Budget	\$4,755
Over Budget	\$4,892

LAST WEEK'S ATTENDANCE

Sunday Bible Classes	169
Sunday AM Worship	224
Sunday PM Worship	146
Wednesday Bible Classes	103

COMMUNION PREPARATION

3/5	Marcia Riggs
3/12	Dana Kent
3/19	Earline Lierly
3/26	Cathy Burcham
4/2	Sarah Hallsted

NURSERY ATTENDANTS

3/5	Tammy C. & Dana
3/12	Jennifer W. & Renee
3/19	Melissa & McKenzie
3/26	Deb & Sandy
4/2	Yvonne & Becky S.

SUNDAY MORNING

Bible Classes / 9:30 am
 Worship / 10:30 am

SUNDAY EVENING

Devotional & Classes / 5:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
 Devotional & Classes / 7:00 pm

Sermon Series: Holy History

“Adam: The History of Sin”

Romans 5:12-19

Benjamin Williams

Sunday Evening Devotional: Psalm 129

Sunday Evening Classes:

Evangelism (Bruce Rothell)

Gospel Stories (Benjamin Williams)