

WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 10, 2016

LENT 101

Joel 2:12-13 "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful."

Besides Advent, the season of Lent is my favorite part of the year. Lent is a season of the Christian year when we are invited to simplify our lives in order to focus on our relationship with Christ. During Lent, we study both the life and death of Jesus as we prepare for Easter Sunday. Lent is a solemn season and therefore does not get much attention from most Christians. We love to celebrate the birth of Christ and His resurrection; however, we do not like to think about His suffering and death. Lent calls us to evaluate our own lives and examine the ways we need to change so we can better follow Christ. Lent reminds us that before there can be Easter (resurrection), we must first deny ourselves and pick up our cross (no wonder most people don't like Lent). Yet, Jesus promises us that we will gain true life when we lay down our old one. Resurrection can only happen after there is death. How can we have new life if we do not die to our old one? I encourage you this Lenten season to return to the Lord with all your heart. Lay down the things holding you back, and press on toward the goal of holiness!

- Rev. Brandon Dasinger/ Teaching Pastor and Director of Missions

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 11, 2016

THE GOOD NEWS OF HOLINESS

1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."

In our culture words like law, obedience, and holiness have a negative connotation. Thus, we tend to see God's laws and commands as a heavy burden. We see holiness as an ideal that is unattainable. However, scripture doesn't have this view. Jesus and the apostles saw these words a bit differently. They understood obedience to God's commands as a good thing...a really good thing. Holiness is the amazing truth that God not only forgives our sin, but also gives us the power to overcome sin. This is good news! And if we really think about it, scripture is right, "Wouldn't our relationships be better if we were free from things like pride, selfishness, and hate? Wouldn't it be great to be delivered from strongholds like lust and anger? What a relief it would be to be set free from all that plagues us." As Methodists, we believe it is possible to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is what it means to have an undivided heart. This is what holiness is all about. God in His grace frees us from our past mistakes. God in His grace gives us the ability to live a new life. God's Word was not given to us to burden us or to restrict us. God's Word is our path to freedom. God made us good. Sin messed it up. Holiness is the promise that He can make us good again. That is good news!

- Rev. Brandon Dasinger/ Teaching Pastor and Director of Missions

FRIDAY

FEBRUARY 12, 2016

A DIFFERENT KIND OF POWER

Ephesians 3:20 "Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope!"

The darkness and pain of this world seems overwhelming at times. It's hard to follow Jesus in a culture full of idols. Temptation is everywhere. The line between right and wrong has become increasingly blurred. Sin and addiction is devastating families. Do our young people even stand a chance? Do we stand a chance? And yet, there is a love locked in our hearts waiting to empower us with strength beyond our imagining. We have the power to overcome evil with good. We can choose love over hate. We can choose peace over violence. But most of us keep this amazing power locked away, and we die having never dared to use it. I pray for a generation that dares to be different. I pray for a generation who dares to do more. God's grace is sufficient. His power is unlimited.

-- Rev. Brandon Dasinger/ Teaching Pastor and Director of Missions

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 13, 2016

Do You Believe?

Titus 2:11-12 " For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."

The movie, Do you Believe, is about 12 people who are confronted with the cross of Jesus Christ. The story begins with an old street preacher asking a young man if he believes in the cross of Jesus Christ. The young man, the pastor of a local church, says, "I'm a pastor." The street preacher responds, "That isn't what I asked. I asked, 'Do you believe in the cross of Jesus Christ?'" And with passion, the street preacher continues, "The cross is where Jesus loved you. The cross is where Jesus shed His blood for you and died. The cross is where Jesus forgave your sins and gave you His life – new life. And if you REALLY BELIEVE in the cross of Jesus Christ – the cross is where Jesus NOW DEMANDS something out of you." With increasing fervor the old man shouts, "You can't believe in the cross without a response! Now, DO YOU BELIEVE in the cross of Jesus Christ?!" We should all be troubled by this question. Is God Ok with our lives? We are Christians. We read the Bible – go to church. Yet, are our lives living up to the demands of the cross of Christ? Jesus gave EVERYTHING on the cross. How are we responding? Is Jesus demanding MORE of our lives, but we have gotten comfortable in our 'enough-ness?' Like the street preacher says, "If you believe in the cross of Jesus, then know the cross of Jesus Christ demands something from you."

- Virginia Thompson

CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

WESLEY HALL - FEBRUARY 7, 2016

WORSHIP GUIDE & DAILY DEVOTIONS

SERMON SERIES BEGINNING NEXT WEEK:

CRUX

- Week 1– Choose Grace
- Week 2 – Choose Humility
- Week 3 – Choose Truth
- Week 4 – Choose Trust
- Week 5 – Choose Sacrifice
- Week 6 – Choose Forgiveness



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Prayer: Our Greatest Weapon

How to Fight in Spiritual Warfare

- **Be Aware of the Battle. (Ephesians 6:10-12)**
 - There is a spiritual war and we have a spiritual enemy.
 - Realize the war has already been won and rely on God's strength.

- **Be Equipped with God's Armor. (Ephesians 6:13-17)**
 - Belt of Truth
 - Breastplate of Righteousness
 - The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace
 - Shield of Faith
 - Helmet of Salvation
 - Sword of the Spirit.

- **Be Devoted to Prayer. (Ephesians 6:18-19)**
 - Prayer is at the heart of spiritual warfare.
 - We pray because...
 - We are dependent on God's power. (Philippians 4:13)
 - We are desperate for God's grace. (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)
 - We are devoted to God's mission. (Acts 20:24)
 - We pray to...
 - The God who loves every person in this world. (John 3:16-17)
 - The God who supplies everything we need. (Philippians 4:19-20)

- We pray for...
 - The success of God's Word. (Ephesians 6:19-20)
 - The needs of each other and the world. (1 Timothy 2:1-6)
 - The spread of God's glory. (Ephesians 3:14-21)

— Rev. Brandon Dasinger

Teaching Pastor and Director of Missions

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Go Deeper:

- Spend some time looking up the scripture references from the outline. Which passage stood out to you the most? How can you apply it to your life this week?
- What idea or truth from this message on prayer has the greatest potential for changing your prayer life?
- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this message? What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?

Watch today's sermon on WFRZ-TV, online at frazerumc.org/media or download the podcast at frazerumc.org/podcast. You may also order a CD of today's service at the Connection Point desk.

PEOPLE FIRST

James 2:8-9 "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers."

A few months ago, we shared the story about the sweet birth announcement from friends regarding the birth of their son, Walt, who was born with Down's Syndrome. A friend recently asked Liz, "What can our family do to be the best with Walt?" Liz first cried, thankful that there would be people in their lives who would make every effort to learn how to love Walt well. Later, Liz asked her friend to use People First Language with Walt. Liz had learned about People First Language while working at a children's summer camp. People First Language teaches a person how to talk about and talk to Walt and other children and adults with special needs. It puts the person first then their diagnosis. For example, Walt is a child with Down syndrome. NOT Walt is a Down syndrome child. People First puts Walt as a child first then his diagnosis. This way of talking allows for the person to be valued as a person, not as his diagnosis. God wants us to put all people first. And God wants Christians to ask Him, "What can I do to love this person well?" and God would tell us, "Use People First Language." See them first as a unique person – made in My image – see them first as people – before you see their skin color, their clothes, their tattoos, or their income. Value them because I made them."

- Virginia Thompson

MICROTUGS

Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures"

Ken Roach introduced me this week to something I did not know. Engineers at Stanford University have designed tiny robots which they have called microtugs that can drag objects hundreds of times their weight. A nine gram microtug, for example, can pull a 2.2 lb load vertically up glass. That is equivalent to a human climbing a skyscraper while carrying an elephant. The secret of the microtug's pulling power is their sticky feet. If you have ever played tug-o-war, you know it is not how strong your arms are but how much traction you can get with your feet. If you feel like you are slipping and sliding and getting pulled down by the weight of this life, don't focus on increasing your own strength. Focus on planting your feet firmly in the word of God. Isaiah reminds us that even if everything else around us is falling, the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God endures forever." When your feet are set by faith, you can be like a microtug and you can pull more than you had ever imagined possible."

- Dr. Tim Thompson, Senior Pastor