



#39

Theme: Lent

Scripture: Acts 10:34-43 (NIV) Partial segments

Then Peter began to speak: 38) *“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised from the dead, on the third day and caused him to be seen....43b) that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*

A Thought:

Lent is upon us. The 40 days leading up to Easter is observed by many Christians as a time for reflection on the what, why, and where that turned the world metaphorically on its axis. The world would never be the same again. Lent is a season of fasting, penance and abstaining from stuff that you enjoy. You commit to these disciplines with purpose to reflect and test your endurance with all your being (heart, body and soul) on behalf of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. Forty days to absorb the passion and suffering of Jesus prior and during the crucifixion. This observance is not practiced by all denominations. Though I found in my research there seems to be a movement by a few to embrace the season again. Some Christians have a problem with Lent. They state that as believers observance of our Lord should be daily and not just for 40 days (Matthew 16:24) Then Jesus said to his disciples, *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* One particular writer stated that *“If you live a life of repentance and holiness before God all year long, then Lent has meaning and sends a powerful testimony to the world about the truth of God’s amazing grace.”* Amen! Though I submit that many believers find comfort by way of fasting, praying and a purposeful self-examination before God during the 40 days leading up to one of the most transforming events of human history...the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! The ultimate sacrifice was for us....read, contemplate, reflect and pray. (John 6:38-40)

Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

Talk to yourself:

- From your perspective - what is the meaning of Lent?
- How often do you go before the Lord and repent?
- Familiarize yourself with the chronology of the 40 days:
- What is the significance of fasting? Why is it important?

Scriptures to read:

Joel 2:12-14; Matthew 4:1-11, 6:16-18; Mark 1:13;1 Peter 5:6; Etc. 3:20; Gen. 3:19

Quote: Charles Spurgeon, Christian Writer and Theologian

“A high calling to aspire this Lenten season. May this season of penitence and seeking the Lord produce this Christ-likeness in us.”

Bottom Line: Well, I decided that I would deny myself a few pleasures during the Lenten season (it's been awhile). Last evening my wife and I went out for dinner at a local eatery and the first thing I did was order a soft drink. Oops! A quick shout out to the waiter... *“Hold it, I'll have some water instead.”* Hello Mr. Spiritual...wow! In less than a day I forgot that I had promised the Lord that I would abstain from cold drinks and sweets. Focus man! Listen to a wise thought by Campus Crusade founder, Dr. Bill Bright, *“Fasting is the most powerful spiritual discipline of all the Christian disciplines. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life.”* Lesson learned. We have this obsession for “instant gratification.” Deliberately delaying a pleasure is difficult in a world of “instant.” It was not so instant for our Lord. In the three years of His ministry our Lord suffered greatly. He fasted in the wilderness and overcame three of Satan's temptations. In His final week on earth Jesus was humiliated, beaten and nailed to the cross - for our sins! Yes, for our sins! A cautionary note - be careful not to fall into the spiritual trap of the Pharisees. In one of my readings referring to Matthew 9:14...their fasting was called *“conspicuous piety.”* Phony actions are plain phony. In closing...Paul's letter to the Romans 5:7-8 (NIV) *“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though of a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* Remember gents - fasting without prayer is a diet. Happy Easter!

NOW.....THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE. Spiritual Dabbler, Your bro, Ray

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