

GIVING UP TO MAKE ROOM

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

-Luke 5:15

"*erēmos* (ἐρημός), [is] the Greek word translated desert, wilderness, or uninhabited place. And it occurs to me that if Jesus needed the *erēmos*, we shouldn't assume we can live without it...as optional luxuries for the unusually disciplined or especially spiritual, because the wilderness is much less a day-spa for the soul than it is a place where our distractions are set aside and we must reckon with our disordered heart."

- Mike Woodruff



THE INVITATION

In our Colossians series, we have been saturating ourselves in the beauty and glory of Jesus's character and work. Starting this week, Paul's letter will transition over to practical implications and application of those truths.

Paul will give us exhortations against legalism and spiritual pride, and he will also instruct us in how to live rightly. He questions why we would submit to the rules of the world since we have died to its basic principles, but then later instructs us to submit to one another. This shows us it is not submission that is to be avoided, but that we require wisdom as to what we submit to. It also shows us that rules and works are not to be avoided but that we require wisdom as to what we do and why we do it.

As a Christian, the practices we participate in and the things we reject are never a means of earning God's favor. None of these things makes us closer to God. We are already made close through Christ's work on our behalf. He has removed all separation between us. (Col 1:20-22, Eph 2:11-16) We have full and confident access to His presence. (Hebrews 4:16) We have the Holy Spirit living inside us. (Romans 8)

WE HAVE BEEN SET FREE!

The thing is, we are always worshiping something and we are being discipled and are also discipling others into something. That's not the question. The question is what that something is. How much of that something is of the world and how much is of Jesus? The internet, the news, the content we consume - it clouds things. Whether we have become a sourdough bread making connoisseur or are fostering a particular political bent, our perspectives and priorities are being shaped. This invitation is to help us take a step back and set apart time to withdraw from the world, its rules, perspectives and priorities, so that we can make space for the primary influence in our heart to be our Shepherd and His upside down Kingdom. (Matthew 5:7)



FOR THE NEXT 40 DAYS WE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO JOIN THE LEADERSHIP OF GRACE IN A TECH FAST.

This is not the traditional fast of giving up food spoken of in scripture nor is it a traditional practice of Lent. This invitation is in the vein of seeking "what will help me run my race?" (Hebrews 12:1-3) **We will begin Feb 18**

In his commentary on the book of Colossians, David Guzak¹ writes; "[Paul] knew that discouraged, downcast Christians are easy prey for the world, the flesh, and the devil." And also "there are few things more dangerous among Christians than spiritual pride and arrogance." And so this invitation is extended to encourage, strengthen, and embolden us, and not at all to fuel spiritual pride. It's not about getting a pat on the back for being above the need for technology, but about recognizing where technology is hindering our experience of Jesus' love and our understanding of His kingdom perspectives and priorities. We give up for the purpose of making room. Choose what will create hunger – and let that hunger drive you to your Savior to be filled. Here are some ideas:

GIVING UP

- Social media, podcasts
- News, sports apps, Reddit, Substack, YouTube
- Tv, movies, video games, phone games
- All screen time save what's required for work/school, pairing down to the bare minimum
- Keep your phone in airplane mode.

TO MAKE ROOM

- Listen to the Pathways of Grace series
- Listen to Scripture
- Read through Colossians each day/week
- Read through the Gospels or the book of Acts
- Go on a prayer walk, spend time outside
- Stare out your window and talk to God about what you see
- Keep a gratitude list or God's attribute list

¹ David Guzak, Study Guide for Colossians 2, blueletterbible.org

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Expect restlessness as your body and brain adjust to going without something you are accustomed to.

Expect to realize your weakness and need for Jesus. Any fast we endeavor to undertake is more about recognizing our dependence than our power.

Expect Jesus' grace to be sufficient, His power to be made perfect in our weakness. (2 Corin 12:9)

Expect to need support. Share your plan with your small group, a friend, or participate as a family.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR FAMILIES:

More than perfect execution, your kids will remember seeing you make a commitment and being invited into doing something together as a family and as a church family. Your modeling of Christ's worth will not go to waste!

- Do regular check-ins. Be honest about how challenging it is and how hungry for their tech they feel. This is a different form of hunger than hunger for food. Talk about it.
- Make the most of opportunities that arise to have spiritual conversations and point to grace.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- **Celebrate and worship!** On Sunday celebrate the week's wins and recalibrate looking ahead to our ultimate celebration on Easter!!
- **Remember the purpose** behind the fast; who we are becoming/what we are being discipled to.
- **Remember the freedom** we have in Christ - return often to the reality of that freedom and the gift of unmerited, unearned favor.
- **Ask;** "What do I need from Jesus today?"
- **Seek;** "When I hunger for what I have given up, help me to remember that You alone can truly satisfy, In You I have everything I need."
- **Knock;** "Where truths about God's grace have become dull, restore to me the Joy of Your salvation, and grant a willing spirit to sustain me. Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me."



MY PLAN:

Who will join me?

What we will give up:

What we will replace it with:

How we will celebrate our wins:

How we will help each other through the hard:



FINAL THOUGHTS

As you conclude your season of fasting and return to regular rhythms, be encouraged to incorporate regular times of *giving up to make room* into your life with Jesus as a way to reset and refocus on what's most important. You've shown yourself that you can do it and hopefully have experienced a deepened level of Jesus' Grace as a result.

In Matthew we read these words Jesus spoke to his disciples:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

May we go forth prioritizing loving others and making disciples. May we rest our hope, faith, and joy **fully** on His promise to be with us always.

Graphics used from the Queen Mary to remind us of Pastor Erik's object lesson on making room. This was given during his sermon: [Know Christ & Make Him Known](#), Sunday 1/4/2026

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