



MARCH 8, 2025

Text: Acts 3:19-21

Repent therefore and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus, who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets.

The Devotion:

After His baptism and before the start of His ministry on earth, the incarnate Son of God walked into the wilderness, no food or drink in hand. As hard as it might be to imagine scripture tells us that Jesus fasted forty days and nights and that it was during that time that "the tempter approached him."

Satan's offerings to our Lord were not all that surprising. Jesus was tempted to take hold of power, to test the Father's love for Him, and to make for Himself a feast of bread to quench His weakening body. However, instead of reaching out for what the world would say He needed, Jesus clung to what He couldn't live without: "He answered, 'It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" In other words, rather than yielding to evil's enticements, Jesus yielded Himself to the Father and glorified Him: "Worship the Lord your God and serve only him."

I wonder what is it that we cling to? What is it that we couldn't live without?

In today's world our culture often views empty handedness as the lowliest of conditions. In fact, we're trained to find our worth in usefulness and status, and to seek joy in our possessions. And on the off chance we look down to find our hands empty, we quickly scoop up something to hold on to—some bit of work or wealth, some duty or distraction to busy our bodies and entertain our minds. But sadly, this hands-full approach to life doesn't always allow us the opportunity to grab hold of our Savior and all that he brings to our lives. Sometimes we are so absorbed and preoccupied with all the stuff that we cling too that we end up missing that which is most important when it comes to our relationship with Christ.

May this Lenten season be an opportunity for us to let go. An awakening of sorts where we can realize that foundational truth that tells us that our hope and strength are found in nothing but the cross of Christ. May we find the time to intentionally engage in daily Scripture reading, prayer, confession, and repentance as we journey to the cross and embrace the salvation we cannot earn. May we find the strength to lay down all that needs to be released so that we might take hold of the only One who can truly satisfy our heart's deepest longings.

And finally, may we bear first-hand witness to the love and acceptance of our Heavenly Father, and the gift of His forgiveness. A true refreshment for our souls!

The Prayer:

Gracious God, guide us through this season making visible all that needs to be seen.

Help us to let go of all that stands in the way of your presence so that we might realize the power of your love and forgiveness.

Amen