



Today is Ash Wednesday, the day when many consider the Easter season to begin. It marks forty “non-Sunday” days before Easter—Sundays are not counted because every Sunday is a “mini-Easter,” a celebration of the resurrection. This season is known as “Lent,” after an old English word meaning “lengthen.” It refers to this time of year when the amount of daylight increases and nighttime decreases with each passing day.

It is an opportunity for each of us to reflect on what Christ accomplished in securing our salvation and His victory over sin and the grave through His resurrection. While the entire year should be characterized by a discipline of self-denial and repentance, this period provides a meaningful opportunity to take intentional steps to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7).

These forty days remind us of Jesus’ preparation for ministry during His forty-day fast in the wilderness. Many people will give something up during this season—a “fast” from something they really enjoy and will genuinely miss. This self-denial serves as a constant reminder of what Christ sacrificed. Every craving for the thing given up can become a prompt to pray, providing focus and clarity by setting aside things that often cloud our desire for the Lord.

When the temporary fast is broken on Easter, you may even experience renewed joy as you once again enjoy something meaningful that you surrendered for a season.

I would encourage you to participate. Maybe your “fast” will be social media or the news. Maybe it will be a favorite food or beverage. Whatever your fast might be, let it be something you will think about often and truly miss (“You thought I was giving up ‘extra fries’? I said ‘exercise!’”). Giving up something you would not miss will not provide the reminder and focus that fasting from something significant can bring.

Use this time as an intentional season of focus to grow in your Christian walk. Use it to remember all He has done for you—and all He has given you to enjoy. Use it as a season leading up to the resurrection that draws you closer to the Lord.