



THE  
**JOURNEY  
TO EASTER**

A LENTEN GUIDE

# *A Lenten Invitation*

FROM PASTOR VANCE

I first became acquainted with Lent when I was in seminary. As a kid, I had seen peers who came to school with ashes on their foreheads one day and we went to all the local fish fries that came up every Friday. In seminary, most of my peers were Methodist and they all talked about what they were “giving up” for Lent. This was new language for me and watching my good friends complain about not getting to drink Dr. Pepper or eat chocolate until Easter didn’t help it make any sense to me. But as I learned and studied more about Lent, I came to find that it was not about deprivation but about preparation.

To define it simply, Lent is the 40 days before Easter (actually 46, Sundays aren’t counted). Throughout Scripture, 40 days is a common timeframe used for preparation. Twice, Moses spent 40 days on Mt. Sinai with God. Elijah traveled 40 days to meet with God at Mt. Sinai. Jesus wandered in the wilderness for 40 days before he began his ministry. All of them fasted in that timeframe. It is this 40 days that is the basis of the symbolism of Lent - 40 days leading to Easter to prepare us for the new life that we receive because of Jesus’ resurrection.

In the early church, this time began as a way to teach new converts leading into Easter baptism and would later become a time of restoration for everyone involving repentance, fasting, and prayer. We now utilize all of these different historical elements to celebrate everything that Jesus has done for us leading up to Easter.

This guide is meant to lead you in a season of personal repentance, renewal, and celebration in a way that points us to the cross and the empty tomb in your life. How you utilize it devotionally and prayerfully, whether you fast or don’t fast, and the time spent with it is all up to you. Take this as an opportunity to prepare your heart and life to fully embrace the promise of Easter – the hope of new life found only in Jesus Christ.



# Return to the Lord

FEBRUARY 18 - FEBRUARY 24

## February 18 | Psalm 51:10

*Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.*

**Prayer:** Lord, begin this Lent by cleansing my heart and renewing my spirit.

## February 19 | Joel 2:13

*Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.*

**Prayer:** Father, draw me back to You with a repentant and willing heart.

## February 20 | 1 John 1:9

*But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

**Prayer:** Jesus, I confess my sin and receive Your faithful forgiveness.

## February 21 | James 4:6

*And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

**Prayer:** Lord, humble my pride and clothe me in Your grace.

## February 22 | Psalm 139:23-24

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

**Prayer:** Holy Spirit, reveal what in me needs to change.

## February 23 | Proverbs 16:18

*Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.*

**Prayer:** God, guard me from pride and self-exaltation.

## February 24 | Isaiah 30:15

*This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it."*

**Prayer:** Teach me to rest in You instead of striving for control.



# *Surrender and Sacrifice*

FEBRUARY 25 - MARCH 3

## **February 25 | Luke 9:23**

*Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.*

**Prayer:** Jesus, help me deny myself and follow You today.

## **February 26 | Romans 12:1**

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

**Prayer:** Lord, I offer You my whole life as worship.

## **February 27 | Galatians 2:20**

*My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Prayer:** May Your life be seen in me more than my own.

## **February 28 | Matthew 6:21**

*Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.*

**Prayer:** Reorder my loves so You are my greatest treasure.

## **March 1 | Philippians 2:3**

*Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.*

**Prayer:** Free me from selfish motives and grow true humility in me.

## **March 2 | Psalm 37:5**

*Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you.*

**Prayer:** I surrender my plans and trust You with the outcome.

## **March 3 | Hebrews 12:11**

*No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.*

**Prayer:** Shape me through sacrifice into righteousness and peace.

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# Repentance in Practice

MARCH 4 - MARCH 10

## March 4 | Ephesians 4:29

*Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*

**Prayer:** Guard my words and make them life-giving.

## March 5 | Matthew 6:1

*Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.*

**Prayer:** Purify my motives when I do good.

## March 6 | Colossians 3:8

*But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.*

**Prayer:** Remove bitterness and anger from my heart.

## March 7 | 1 Thessalonians 5:18

*Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*

**Prayer:** Forgive my complaining spirit and teach me gratitude.

## March 8 | Matthew 5:44

*But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!*

**Prayer:** Help me forgive those who have hurt me.

## March 9 | 1 Timothy 6:6

*Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.*

**Prayer:** Free me from envy and teach me contentment.

## March 10 | Psalm 90:12

*Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.*

**Prayer:** Help me use my time wisely for eternal things.

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# Mercy and Grace

MARCH 11 - MARCH 17

## **March 11 | Lamentations 3:22-23**

*The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

**Prayer:** Thank You that Your mercy is new this morning.

## **March 12 | Romans 5:8**

*But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

**Prayer:** Let Your love soften my hardened places.

## **March 13 | Micah 7:18**

*Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love.*

**Prayer:** I praise You for delighting in mercy.

## **March 14 | Psalm 103:12**

*He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.*

**Prayer:** Help me live forgiven and free.

## **March 15 | Titus 3:5**

*He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.*

**Prayer:** Anchor me in grace, not performance.

## **March 16 | Ephesians 2:8**

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.*

**Prayer:** Keep me dependent on grace alone.

## **March 17 | John 8:11**

*"No, Lord," she said. And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."*

**Prayer:** Thank You for mercy that calls me to holiness.

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# Renewal and Obedience

MARCH 18 - MARCH 29

## **March 18 | Ezekiel 36:26**

*And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.*

**Prayer:** Replace my stubborn heart with one responsive to You.

## **March 19 | 2 Corinthians 5:17**

*This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

**Prayer:** Help me live as someone made new.

## **March 20 | Psalm 119:36**

*Give me an eagerness for your laws rather than a love for money!*

**Prayer:** Bend my desires toward Your Word.

## **March 21 | John 15:5**

*Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*

**Prayer:** Keep me abiding in You daily.

## **March 22 | Hebrews 10:23**

*Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.*

**Prayer:** Strengthen me to persevere in faith.

## **March 23 | Matthew 5:16**

*In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

**Prayer:** Make my life reflect Your glory.

## **March 24 | Psalm 34:8**

*Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!*

**Prayer:** Renew my joy in knowing You.

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# Renewal and Obedience

MARCH 18 - MARCH 29

## **March 25 | Isaiah 40:31**

*But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

**Prayer:** Teach me to wait patiently for Your strength.

## **March 26 | Philippians 1:6**

*And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

**Prayer:** Finish what You have started in me.

## **March 27 | 1 Peter 1:15**

*But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.*

**Prayer:** Shape every part of my life into holiness.

## **March 28 | Psalm 27:14**

*Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.*

**Prayer:** Make me courageous in seasons of waiting.

## **March 29 | Hebrews 13:20-21**

*Now may the God of peace— who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood— may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen.*

**Prayer:** Equip me to do Your will with joy.

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# Holy Week

MARCH 30 - APRIL 4

## **March 30 | Matthew 21:9**

*Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!"*

**Prayer:** I welcome You as King over my life.

## **March 31 | Mark 11:17**

*He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves."*

**Prayer:** Cleanse my heart and make it a house of prayer.

## **April 1 | John 13:14–15**

*And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.*

**Prayer:** Teach me to serve with humility and love.

## **April 2 | Luke 22:42**

*Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.*

**Prayer:** Strengthen me to surrender like You did.

## **April 3 | Luke 23:46**

*Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" And with those words he breathed his last.*

**Prayer:** I entrust my life fully into Your hands.

## **April 4 | Psalm 130:5**

*I am counting on the Lord; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word.*

**Prayer:** In the silence and sorrow, teach me to wait with hope.

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