



CROSS-WORD

LENT



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Honest Repentance

During Lent, we often talk about a return to repentance, or at least to an increased focus on repentance. As we think about the suffering our Lord went through to accomplish our salvation, we too suffer in the Christian life, and part of this involves repentance. That being said, “repentance” is one of those church words we throw around often that could become a little confusing... So, what is it?

This Lent at Holy Cross, our midweek services are centered on the theme of “Honest Repentance,” inspired by the work of Rev. Dr. David Maxwell of Concordia Seminary. The Greek word *metanoia*, from which we get the word “repentance,” refers to a turning, a change, and a transformation. Specifically, one’s mind and heart (you could also include our soul and strength—see Luke 10), are changed and transformed from love of sin and love of self to love of God and love of others. One of our Lutheran Confessions, the Augsburg Confession, says: Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.” In other words, repentance is godly sorrow over our sins.

This is very different from how some view repentance. Some say the effectiveness of repentance is based on the good you do after contrition and faith. Certainly, there is a desire to abide in Christ and His Word and do as He commands. However, the effectiveness of repentance doesn't hang on how perfect your actions are. No, it hung on Christ on Calvary's cross and the promise Jesus has given to forgive and restore. As we are brought to our knees by the weight of the law and experience sorrow for our sins (contrition), our proper response is only to cry out in faith, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." As we hear those blessed words, "You are forgiven! You are mine!" we are led by the Spirit to bear those good works as the fruit of repentance.

As we journey through this season of Lent, let us remember the role of repentance. It's about being honest before God and ourselves as to who we are. Sin wants us to hide; repentance encourages honesty. Repentance also looks to Jesus' promise to forgive, even as our faith is both challenged on many sides including society, our own particularities, and sometimes even by God Himself. Finally, Maxwell reminds us that repentance is about becoming more human, not less. It's not holiness that stifles our humanity, but sin. As we journey toward the cross once more, we recall our baptism, through which the old Adam in us is daily drowned and the new man arises in Christ. Death and resurrection. Contrition and Faith. Honest Repentance looks to Jesus.

*In Christ,
Pastor Craig*



Lenten

Meal & Services



Lent continues throughout March. We will have our Midweek Lenten Meal on Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. followed by the Midweek Lenten Service at 6:00 p.m. on March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.

Would you like to prepare a meal? Please sign up on the sheet on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

Thank you!





**Remember to set your clocks
AHEAD one hour before going
to bed on Saturday night,
March 11,
as we **SPRING FORWARD** to
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME!**

PERRY COUNTY
LUTHERAN CHORALE



Save the date!

*On the evening of
Palm Sunday, April 2,
the Perry County Lutheran
Chorale will be performing at
Holy Cross at 6:00 p.m.*

*Light refreshments will be
served following the
performance.*



LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter Article • March 2023

Lenten Discipline: Denying the Self

We are at the beginning of Lent. During the Lenten season, the church calls to our attention the sufficiency of what God gives. It points to the sufficiency of God's grace in the atoning work of Jesus. It shows us the sufficiency of faith in Jesus' work for us. It makes known the sufficiency of God's Word in faith and life.

But Lent doesn't just remind us of the sufficiency of God's spiritual gifts — the gifts that pertain to our redemption and salvation. Lent also reminds us of the sufficiency of the physical, temporal gifts of God which pertain to this body and life. In other words, it reminds us of the importance of godly contentment and of outward discipline and training of the body.

This outward training of the body teaches us not to give in to every desire of our flesh, but to learn to say no to them. And it does this in such a way that if you fail, it is no sin. It is a way to practice without putting yourself into a compromising situation.

Fasting is a good example of this outward training. When you fast, you are practicing saying no to the desires of your body. But if you fail in this, if you break your fast, you have not sinned. But you have learned something about how your flesh works, how difficult it is to fight against it, and how you need help from above to discipline the desires of your body.

Another example is almsgiving. An increase in giving to the church and its mission during Lent is also a form of outward training. We all know that our flesh finds security in money and stuff. By committing to give more to the church, you are training your flesh. You are, by this outward discipline, training yourself to be content with what God gives. You are practicing saying "no" to your desires.

Again, if you fail, you have not sinned. But you've learned just how powerful your flesh is — it leads you instead of you leading it. You've learned how you need help from above in being content with what God gives.

This is why St. Paul instructs young Pastor Timothy in this way:

But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. (1 Tim. 6:6–10)

Our sufficiency is not of ourselves; it is in God. Let us learn this without sin by training our flesh this Lenten season.

– **LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://www.lcms.org/stewardship)**



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod





Are We There Yet?



Now it happened that as He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him. And He asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.” Then He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.” And He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (Luke 9:18-22)

Jesus wants to know what people think of His identity because that will tell Him how much time He has left in His mission. Jesus knows He’s headed to the cross; and the more people start talking publicly about Him being the Messiah—well, the quicker that trip is going to be. The religious and political leaders are bound to be upset, and they will join forces to destroy Him.

And so Jesus put the brakes on—“Don’t tell anybody who I am.” Why? Because Jesus still has things to do before that happens. He is teaching and healing and preaching; He is training the future leaders of the church, and He has all too short a time to do it in.

Even when we’re talking about suffering and death, Jesus is in control. Nothing will happen against His Father’s will. This is true for us, too. When we go through grief and trouble and fear and sadness, Jesus is with us, helping us, walking with us through it. He knows the road; He has been down it before, to save us. And because of God’s mercy, it ends in resurrection—first Jesus’, then ours.



"I AM"



When day came, the assembly of the elders ... said, "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." So they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from His own lips." (Luke 22:66a, 67-71)

To English-speaking ears, it looks like Jesus is dancing around the question. Partly it's because different languages have different ways of saying "yes" and "no," and not everybody does it with a single straightforward word. But there's more going on.

This conversation comes to a climax with them asking, "Are You the Son of God, then?" and Jesus says, "You say that **I am**." Pay attention to those last two words. They are a Greek rendering of the name of God Himself, "**I AM**"—which in the Old Testament would translate either as "YHWH" or "LORD." Proper Jews were not supposed to say this name out loud. The grammar of Greek lets you avoid it...if you really want to. But Jesus doesn't. He says it right out. By phrasing the way He did, He didn't just say "Yes" to them; He also claimed to be God. No wonder they were upset!

At this point, it's crystal clear. Jesus has claimed to be God—the Holy One of Israel, the Savior of His people. How will they respond? How will we respond?

Is Jesus truly God, as He says? If so, God Himself has loved you enough to come to you as a human being—to lay down His life for you on a shameful cross—and to rise from the dead, all for you. God Himself. Not an angel, not a holy man. **God**.

How will you respond to that?

SEARCH-A-WORD PUZZLE

"LENT"

P A S H C A L V A R Y Q C
S Y E W C B B H D P S B R
S R Q P R E W H P G R C O
E E Y A D S E N D E W E S
N W K T T A O R X N R X S
E E E O V I L O V E T L N
V M D E S C T H T S Q I N
I Y N S M N Z M Q K I M P
G U A P E V X M B R Z K C
R P T L W I P S U S E J U
O C R U C I F I X I O N E
F S H O L Y E U K P U B U
I D K B B A D J K V P D G

LENT

ASH

WEDNESDAY

HOLY

PASSION

LOVE

CALVARY

CROSS

CRUCIFIXION

FORGIVENESS

HEAVEN

JESUS

Holy Cross

Lutheran Church
