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# *Journeying Through the Gospels in Lent*

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**ASH WEDNESDAY  
March 5<sup>th</sup> 2014**

## Daily Devotional

*"Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare your praise*

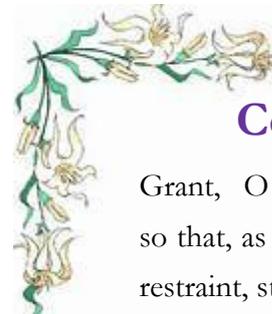
Dear fellow believer, the Peace of the Lord is extended to you as I welcome you to join me in this journey of Prayer, Fasting, Meditation, Visualization, Gratitude and Inspiration as we experience the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord as expressed in the Gospels.

I challenge you to a greater sense of self-discipline as you seek to improve your devotion to God and the life he has called you to live in His Kingdom. If you journeyed with me during the season of 2013, you would have experience a replenishing of your spirit and a greater sense of spiritual strength and direction. Thank you for journeying with me.

Today, Ash Wednesday, serves as an introduction to our Lenten journey. Before we begin the first full week of Lent, we have a powerful set of readings about our life of Prayer, Repentance, Almsgiving and Fasting. As Christians we are called to place ashes on our foreheads and learn about the meaning of death and life. Over two days we pray over the powerful challenge of Isaiah 58. Jesus is reminding us that he is inviting us to a "change of heart."

We often make every effort to purify and make clean and sweet our physical bodies. So during this Lenten season I am inviting you to join me as we engage in a (4) four step program of daily washing our minds as we give up negative thoughts and emotions, so that we may experience greater health.

- ✓ **Meditation** [5 minutes of quiet reflection]
  - ✓ **Visualization** See what your day will be, with conviction declare how you want your day to unfold and your intentions toward God, his creation and other people who you will be privileged to meet today.
  - ✓ **Gratitude:** (Thankful for the good happenings in your life. Appreciate where you are NOW from where you were.
  - ✓ **Inspirational Reading:** Read an article of a situation or person that will inspire you today.
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## Collect:

Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils in our lives, we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint, steadfastness and victory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

## Scripture Reading

We shall open our Bibles and read the following passages of Scripture: Psalm 51: 3 - 17; 2 Cor. 5: 20 - 6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

## Daily Meditation:

Today is a very special day. We begin our Lenten journey aware of where we are going. We want to enter into the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus more fully. That is the purpose of our journey. It is why we mark our heads with his cross. It is why we fast today and abstain from meat. Our Lenten program is not an effort to save ourselves. We have been saved by the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Our self-denial helps us, in the darkness that surrounds us, to prepare ourselves to receive his light. For this is a journey to the Easter font, where we will renew the promises of our Baptism, remembering that in dying with him in the waters of Baptism, we are re-born with him to everlasting life. This year's journey begins today. Yet even now, our LORD says.....

*... return to me with your whole heart,  
with fasting, and weeping, and mourning;  
Rend your hearts, not your garments,  
and return to the LORD, your God.  
For he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, rich in kindness,  
and relenting in punishment.*

- Joel 2:12-13

## Today's Daily Reflection

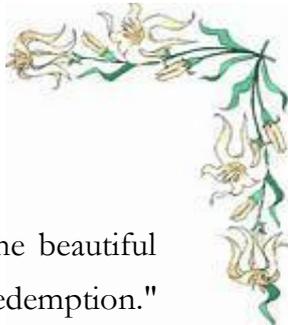
Today, God our Father brings us to the beginning of Lent. We pray that in this time of salvation he will fill us with the Holy Spirit, purify our hearts, and strengthen us in love.

Let us humbly ask him:

*Lord, give us your Holy Spirit. May we be filled and satisfied, by the word which you give us. Teach us to be loving not only in great and exceptional moments, but above all in the ordinary events of daily life. May we abstain from what we do not really need, and help our brothers and sisters in distress.*

*May we bear the wounds of your Son in our bodies, for through his body he gave us life.*





## Closing Prayer:

Lord, it feels like we are embarking on a Lenten journey together, you and I. The beautiful words in the today's prayer talk about the "quiet remembrance of my need for redemption." That feels like what I am looking for - or what you are looking for in me. I want to remember how much I need you in my life and how much my life needs redemption. I want to remember it clearly and in the background of my day today and all through Lent.

On this special day, Ash Wednesday, may my small sacrifices in fasting, meditating, reflecting and inspiration be a way to clear away the clutter in my life to see you more clearly. May my longing for meat and other food, help me to focus my life today more outside myself. Let me be aware of those who are in so much more suffering than I am and may I be aware of them as the brothers and sisters you have placed in my life. Lord, I know there is darkness within me and around me. Bless these days with your Word. Let your Light shine in my darkness and ignorance. Help me long for that Light until we celebrate it at the resurrection. And most of all Lord, help me to honor this day with the ashes on my forehead. They help me remember where I have come from and where I am going. May I acknowledge to you my sins and my deep need for your loving forgiveness and grace. I pray that this Lenten season will make me so much more aware of how much I need your healing and living presence in my life.

*May the Lord bless us,  
protect us from all evil  
and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.*

I wish you a blessed and prayer-filled Lenten Season

*Rev. Keith B. Lewis*

