

## The Journey of Lent: 02-15-15

### **Psalm 51:1-10 (ERV below)**

“God, be merciful to me  
because of your faithful love.  
Because of your great compassion,  
erase all the wrongs I have done.  
Scrub away my guilt. Wash me clean from my sin.  
I know I have done wrong.  
I remember that sin all the time.  
I did what you said is wrong.  
You are the one I have sinned against.  
I say this so that people will know  
that I am wrong and you are right.  
What you decided is fair.  
I was born to do wrong,  
a sinner before I left my mother’s womb.  
You want me to be completely loyal,  
so put true wisdom deep inside of me.  
Remove my sin and make me pure.  
Wash me until I am whiter than snow!  
Let me hear sounds of joy and happiness again.  
Let the bones you crushed be happy again.  
Don’t look at my sins. Erase them all.  
God, create a pure heart in me,  
and make my spirit strong again.”

### **Slide 1: Ps. 139:1**

“O Lord You have examined my heart, and know everything about me...

### **Slide 2: Ps. 139:23**

“search me, O God, and know my heart”

### **History and background**

- inward journey for 40 days (Jesus’ fast and Moses)
- Early Church didn’t fast on Sundays due to Ressurrection
- 46 days with them, minus 6 = 40 days of lent

### **What do we do?**

**Pray, Fast, & Repent**

### **Slide: Prayer is talking to God & listening**

- Directly or by using the Scriptures

- Reading a passage and making it “yours”

**Slide: What about Fasting? What is it / isn't it???**

(diet, lose weight, 'giving up')

**Slide: Fasting: purifies our heart**

**Our will against our appetites / drives**

**Helps us to hear God (goal: not just talking!)**

### **A. True Fasting:**

1. Should:

- have an object or goal in mind
- involve some sort of denial
- lead us to change in our hearts

### **B. Problem in Isaiah's Day:**

1. 'Our way' vs. God's was

- God's people were just **going through the motions:**

Question is: **Are we, too? Coasting, auto pilot, life is a routine...often I hear people saying, “I'm good!” when actually they are not.**

**God says in Isaiah**, “Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.

**<sup>4</sup>Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,  
and in striking each other with wicked fists.**

**You cannot fast as you do today  
and expect your voice to be heard on high.”**

**—Is. 58:4, NIV**

(outwardly they were being 'religious', yet at home were arguing; at work, they were fighting; they were mean at home, but humble in public. It's as if their faith was dead.)

**2. God says true fasting involves self-denial**

***Vs. 3: “in the day of your fast you find pleasure”***

-true fasting involves denial. No denial, no fast is taking place. **Denial wasn't popular then, definitely isn't today!**

**3. True fasting should bring a desire to change my ways. This is Repentance.**

“Don’t look at my sins. Erase them all. God, create a pure heart in me, and make my spirit strong again.”  
-Psalm 51:9-10

Jesus: “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

**C. If God is calling you to journey through Lent, will you deny yourself in order to serve God more these 40 days?**

**D. Seek God for the City**

- Daily Bible Readings
- Specific prayer goals daily
- Pray for others outside our country
- We are stronger together!
- FMA luncheons and devotions
- The 1<sup>st</sup> one is here Wed. at Noon

**E. How is your heart today?**

- Your real heart?
- The innermost place where you and God exist. Where he knows your:
  1. attitudes / your desires;
  2. your shortcomings, your triumphs;
  3. your ‘High Fives’ / your failures;
  4. your true faith / your appearance of godliness
  5. Repent and believe the good news: God loves you and wants you to work with Him as He rescues our community. Will you accept the challenge today?