

What is Lent. Ive got a video for us to watch in a minute from Immanuel Anglican's in Chicago, its the same video we showed on Ash Wednesday. It is powerful and relevant to what's going on in not only our society but also within our humanity. You will also notice that Ive done a display for Lent here in front of the Altar. I encourage you to come up and look at it. See if you can notice the Lenten tone, and enter into it, prayerfully or solemnly even thoughtfully. See what you can notice. This Lent is about, not only all the normal Lenten themes, but its also about noticing.

I don't know about you, but we walk around in this life with not only blinkers on, which funnel our vision to only what we choose to see, but also blinders, which blind us to some truths, we absolutely refuse to see. Lent is a time to remove some of those things which perhaps distract us and truly see what's about to come, what is already come and where the potential is for us to connect anew with God. Lent is a time of deliverance, and salvation. It's a time to remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return, but also that we are screaming to be saved, redeemed and loved, whilst presenting a pleasant external persona to the world. God is desperately trying to break through the nice exterior we present. God is desperate to break down the polite wall we place over our lives and affect us. This is not coming from words, or images, or prayer, or fasting or even discomfort. The temptations of the devil are much more subtle than even that. They are not from murdered, rapist, serial offenders, or any other narcissistic crimes. It is much

more insidious than murder. We are tempted by apathy, by sameness, by not changing, not growing, not speaking, not feeling. And our souls scream out to God, save us, deliver us, bring us to this place, where we can rebuke evil and tell the devil where to go, because we have survived time and have chosen God.

Listen to this MP3. Ill warn you, its loud, confusing and chaotic and it might help to close your eyes and focus on it and really listen.

*Listen to deliver us.*

Save us Lord.

Deliver us Lord.

But, how?

So what is Lent for you? What can it be? What can it be in St Peter's, in Wynnum, in 2019, because I don't know about you, but I feel this year, something must shift, something must change. If we refuse to change, to grow and to move, just as sure as Easter is only 6 Sundays away, we run the real risk of being dead in the water in 10 years. Our posture has to change, we have to think about it. And I know that mostly, you don't want to.

I can see that you're tired. Maybe its time to listen to God and figure out what to do differently. Maybe this Lent is time to breathe in and move away from the problem and see it from a new perspective. Or maybe this Lent is

about breathing out, and coming in closer to the centre of who we are and who God calls us to be and see what the Holy Spirit is asking.

Ask yourselves, where is your heart beat for God. Look at the image of a heartbeat.

Where are we?

Every year, Lent rolls around, and the same old, same old becomes the norm. What if this year was different? What if this year, our posture really does shift? What if this year, you approach me and offer yourselves for something, instead of me trying to coax you into something I believe will help. Every year, the liturgy and music take on essentially the same tone or focus, because they are trying to illicit the same response. They are trying to tap into the same place. They are building on the fact that you've done this before. That this is not your first rodeo, that this is not your first Lent and that you know what's coming. But do you? What if this year, we do these 40 days differently.

What if you changed your mindset? Not very Anglican I know! But hear me out. What if, instead of giving up the obligatory chocolate bar, or glass of wine, you tried a real discipline which forced you think about Jesus life and journey to the cross, in a real and personal way, for you in your time of life, right now. What about, if instead of patting yourself on the back for

managing no sugar, or sweets, or treats, or booze, or 'fill in the blank here' for 40 days, what would it be like to make yourself vulnerable to another person. What would it look like if you actually lived out the belief you speak of each week in church. What about if you shared your ideas about how, when and where you think St Peter's corporately is going to be in 10 years and how we're going to get there. What if when you give something up, you make the giving a prayer for discernment and focus on the body of Christ in this place.

If you believe in this living God, who is always creating and re-creating, then we shouldn't expect the same old, same old, we should expect something new, and then live in that expectation. Perhaps there's a way for you to enter into this time with fresh eyes, with a new perspective. Perhaps it would be helpful to notice if you're tired, notice if you're despondent, notice if you're not in a great mood, or time, or place. Perhaps it would be helpful to notice the burdens you carry every day. Especially the ones you never think about, but carry none the less. What about if you noticed your stuff around you as a burden and did something about it. Perhaps God is asking you to change your posture, to reflect objectively and separately on what's going on for you, at this moment, or at this juncture in your life. Perhaps God is asking you to look at your life from the outside in, and notice that which you refuse to see.

I think in its simplest manifestation, Lent is a time of time. And Lent is a time to use, notice and recognise, the passing of time.

40 days of time. 40 days of life. 40 days of opportunity. 40 days of prayer. 40 days of giving something up or over. 40 days of taking on a new burden or discipline, designed to keep you focused. 40 days of connecting to God, perhaps for the first time, perhaps for the zillionth time. It's 40 days of changing your posture, shifting your weight, adjusting your perspective. It's 40 days of living with the temptation of whatever it is your tempted by, with, or for. Perhaps its even 40 days of figuring out, what it is your tempted by and then repenting; turning away from it. Turning away from what it is that is tempting you is far easier, that turning back to God, but turning from your temptations will naturally lead you back to God. God wins and so do you. It's not just turning to God, but turning away from the devil in all its human temptations, purchases, indulgences, comforts, and excuses.

It's 40 days of finding, discovering, realising, and embracing the simplicity of love. It's 40 days of taking the simplicity of that deep joy of resurrection and recreation, which resides inside all of us, on a cellular, atomic level and letting it lead. It's 40 days of noticing our deep, human need for God; for God's love and companionship in our souls. Its 40 days of death and 40 days of resurrection.

Lent, what is Lent for you? It's 40 days of remembering that we are dust and to dust we shall return.

*Watch video*