

Healing – Week of March 15

There is a lot of illness in our world today. Sickness happens for a myriad of reasons. We can spend a life-time tracking down why. Our focus as believers is on the healing. How we communicate God's grace and power in the world comes through what we believe about the sickness. Let us share the power of Jesus' ministry by sharing positive healing scriptures and prayers as a means to combat the sickness and disease in our world. Especially let our speech be healing. With the tongue, we can speak cursing and blessing; death and life. We must have authority over the tongue to use words that are pleasing and words that bring healing to broken situations. Speak life in all areas of your life, and watch God's Spirit move.

Sacrifice – No starch, potatoes, rice, flour, bread, pasta. If you are a Vegan increase your sacrifice.

Exercise – Find a family, friend, co-worker or neighbor that is in need of healing and speak life into them. Share scripture and prayer with them each day. Additionally, If you are in conversation with anyone that speaks about a sickness and disease offer them healing through your speech.

Daily Scriptures -- Matthew 4:23; James 5:14-15; Psalm 34:19; Isaiah 58:8; I Peter 2:24; Matthew 21:22; Isaiah 53:5

Encouragement – Week of March 22

Encouragement is especially important among the body of Christ. Many people within the church have walls and we put on our Sunday best and hide behind the walls. Beneath the surface many of us are hurting and need to hear an encouraging word. Our children, our friends, and relatives need to know that when we are all working together toward the same goal, we can make it with a gentle word or a kind gesture. Join the Blvd. as we strive to be an even more welcoming community.

Sacrifice – Eat fruits and vegetables only.

Exercise -- Make it a point this week to show encouragement wherever you go; even if it is the clerk at the grocery store or the mail carrier. You may be just the boost someone needs to press on toward the prize.

Daily Scripture Readings -- Isaiah 41:7; Isaiah 1:17; Acts 9:31; Romans 12:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:25

Love – Week of March 29

During this fast-paced, busy lifestyle, it is easy to brush our friends and loved ones to the side. We take people for granted until it is too late. Do we really need to work late or attend extra meetings? Take time to really sit down and talk to one another. Make eye contact. Find out what is really on another person's heart and mind. Take a walk in the park with your friend, child, or spouse. Gather the family around the table for dinner and have meaningful conversation. When we take time to really care for each other, we are showing the love that God has shown in Jesus Christ.

Sacrifice -- Fast from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m..

Exercise -- Go out of your way to show love to someone this week. Call a long lost friend or send a card to reconnect.

Daily Scriptures -- John 15:12; Deuteronomy 6:5 ; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Lamentations 3:22; Matthew 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:20

Silence – Week of April 5

The week before Easter is called Holy Week. It is the time we remember and reflect on Jesus' coming to Jerusalem on a donkey (Palm Sunday), the last supper, his time in the Garden of Gethsemane, His trial, his crucifixion and his resurrection. If we think about it long enough we really have more questions than answers regarding Holy Week. What motivated Mary to pour expensive perfume on Jesus' feet? What caused Judas to betray Jesus? I'm sure you have your own set of questions and answers. So, what do those responses mean to you today, and how does that shape your following Jesus?

You have to get in a place of silence to answer those questions. Like Jesus, we need to take some serious time to pray and figure out where God is in our lives, and where God is calling us to serve.

Sacrifice -- Fast from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m..

Exercise -- Take time to really be silent each day and reflect on what you want to do differently to follow Christ after Easter. Journal your questions and responses each day, then find a prayer partner to hold you accountable for your new commitment to discipleship.

Daily Scriptures -- Mark 11:1-19; John 12:1-8; Matthew 25:31-46; Matthew 26:20-30; Matthew 26:36-56; Matthew 27:27-61; John 20:1-23



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THE BLVD'S 2009 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL



DR. FRANK A. THOMAS
SENIOR SERVANT

Lenten Devotional

“Follow Me” (Mark 8:34)

-Jesus

Introduction

This year the church is focusing on, “Transforming The BLVD by re-claiming the family one person at a time.” We are part of an amazing family. As part of the family each of us must do our part in the work of transformation. Lent offers us a chance for transformation – a time to radically open ourselves to the power of God. Lent is about re-centering our lives through the discipline of fasting, almsgiving, prayer, conversion, and a change of heart.

Most of us think of Lent as a time for giving up something. The other side of Lent is doing more, or saying yes. Lent is a call to grow in your personal discipleship. The forty day journey (not including Sundays) prepares us to celebrate with greater passion and love the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our daily habits/disciplines, to pray more deeply, experience true repentance for what we’ve done and failed to do by sacrificing through fasting, and to become more generous in our commitment to becoming a Servant Church.

This year’s Lenten Guide, *“Follow Me,”* provides thoughtful insights and practical guidance for moving forward each day this Lent. The challenge is to make our journey with Christ count. Use the devotional to follow Jesus **daily** by:

- Reading the Scriptures (or the entire chapter) for each day and reflect on the readings
- Praying after you read the scripture
- Discerning where you are in your sacrifice (fasting commitment)
- Working on living out the exercise for each day

Please mark the following Lenten dates on your calendars:

- **Ash Wednesday** – February 25
- **CSI** – Mid Week Series (Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.)
March 4 thru April 1
- **Palm Sunday** – April 5
- **Maundy Thursday** – April 9

Fasting – Week of February 25

Are you currently in a point in time where you feel that you really need to hear from God? Do you feel as if what you are going through is hopeless because there seems to be no end in sight. Take a moment to reflect on how God has moved in your life in the past. Know that if you can recall that God has done something for you in the past, God is able and willing to do it again.

Sometimes in our daily living we get so bogged down with the stresses of the day that we almost forget who God is and what He can do. There comes a time in our lives when we have to remove ourselves from distractions of this fast paced life so that we can truly hear from God. Often times we have to commit ourselves to fasting and praying to discern God’s voice and place ourselves in the receiving position. Some things that we want from the Lord only come from fasting and praying.

Sacrifice – Fast from sweets and breads, excessive media (tv, internet), unnecessary shopping, etc..

Exercise - Each day this week, purpose in your heart to give God your undivided attention, fast in order to strengthen your relationship with Him. At the end of each day, journal your results of your fast. If you don’t have a prayer partner choose one and pray with them during Lent. On the final day, journal what you have learned from this experience and how God has moved in your life this week.

Daily Scripture Readings -- Matthew 4; Acts 13; Mark 9; Joel 2; Isaiah 58; Psalms 35; and Daniel 9.

Prayer – Week of March 1

Spending time with those we love is essential for a relationship to be vital. So too is our prayer life. It speaks to the intentional time we spend with God. As Christians, we have to nurture our prayer life and establish a relationship with God that is unshakable. So many times people tend to pray to God when they are in a crisis or they have a physical need, but God wants an intimate relationship with us. God wants to be trusted with every aspect of our lives. In order for that trust to take place within us, we have to make God a priority in our lives everyday.

Sacrifice – Fast from your favorite food, excessive media and unnecessary shopping.

Exercise -- Find yourself a secret place and take a journal with you. Take 3 minutes each day this week and write down (journal) what you want God to change in you that will make you a better servant. Take 2 minutes to reflect on what you have written and what you want God to change about you that will make you more like Christ. Take 5 minutes to hear from God, don’t speak.

Daily Scripture Readings -- II Chronicles 7; Isaiah 38; James 5:13-20; Luke 18; Mark 11; Job 42; I Samuel 1

Planning -- Week of March 8

Noted author Mark Twain hit it on the head when he said, “The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable ones — then starting on the first one.” So why is planning so important to this process? Planning leverages time. It provides the method for informed decision making. By planning what you are going to do you will be establishing a framework and will be able to make smarter and more proactive choices about how to use your time. Planning also allows for the interruptions.

Throughout life, there will be interruptions when we do not understand why certain circumstances occur in our lives. We did a great job of planning, but life happened. As we encounter unexpected setbacks in life, we can look to God because we know that the setbacks have the potential to make us stronger and wiser than we were before. We are God’s children and God will keep us safe in the palm of His hands.

Sacrifice – Fast from meat & poultry. If you are not a meat eater fast from your substitute for meat.

Exercise – Review your life goals or write new ones. Review your goals each day this week and see how they are connected to your commitment to God and kingdom building. Edit your goals as God gives you new insight.

Daily Scripture Readings -- Jeremiah 29:11; Job 42:2; Psalms 140:4; Proverbs 21:30; Isaiah 8:10; Ephesians 1:11-12; Proverbs 16:3

... *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*

Mark 8:34 NIV