

Friday, 3/17

Read **Hebrews 1:1-14** and contrast Christ's glory with the shame He endured for us.

Consider fasting today as an aid to your prayers.

Pray, "O Jesus, who wept over the death of Lazarus, be with all who grieve.

O Jesus, who wept over the state of Jerusalem, be with our cities, our villages, our centers of worship. O Jesus, who wept alone in Gethsemane, be with all who feel alone, all who face difficult decisions. O Jesus, who cried, 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?' be with all who are tortured, all who are victims. O Jesus, who offered up prayers with loud cries and tears, hear our prayers . . . Amen."

Come to the weekly prayer meeting *this morning at 6:30*.

Saturday, 3/18

Read tomorrow's sermon passage **Matthew 26:47-56**.

Prepare today for the gathered worship service tomorrow.

Pray for God to direct you and us as a community of faith in real repentance.

Sing a song of praise to God and ask Him to make it true of your heart.

## A Word About Lent and Fasting

Many have misunderstood the foundation of biblical fasting and as a result have slipped into all sorts of error. Fasting does not curry favor with God. Even in our most sincere attempts at piety, we are stained with our unrighteousness. We fast out of gratitude and love, not in an attempt for merit. By giving up something that is essential for our life, we are demonstrating our dependence upon God. He is our life. Without Him we cannot survive. He is more necessary than food and drink.

Many who fast today refrain from luxuries like chocolate or television and not from necessities like food and drink. While this may be an appropriate *starting* place, it is not what is intended by the biblical admonitions to fast and pray. Fasting is going without food as a way of entering into the reality that we need God more than sustenance. While it may be that we need to realize our need for God is greater than for candy or entertainment, that misses the depth of our true dependency.

We also fast to identify with Christ in His suffering. We must see that Christ has not saved us for our comfort, but for His own glory. This is a much-neglected truth in the American Church today. We do not suffer for the sake of suffering, but we acknowledge that Christ has called us to a life of suffering together with Him, and we seek to enter into that gladly knowing that to be *with Him* in pain or trial or torture is far greater than being rich and comfortable without Him.

Let us pray for one another to enter into this season of prayer and fasting out of love for our Savior and for His glory alone.



CHRIST the  
REDEEMER  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## APPROACHING THE CROSS

**Matthew 26:31-46**

Sermon notes from 3/12/06

Rev. Per Almuquist

Outline

**The Credentials of the King**—*Who is Jesus?* Focus during Advent  
1:1-4:11 Genealogy, Virgin Birth, adoration by Magi, rescue out of Egypt, baptism, temptation and purity all point to His spotless resume as King.

**The King's Deeds and Words**—*What He Did and Said to Show that He is King*

4-7 Kingdom Beginnings  
8-10 Kingdom Order  
11-13 Kingdom Mysteries  
14-18 Kingdom Authority  
19-25 Kingdoms in Conflict

**The Death and Resurrection of the King**—focus during Lent

26:6-13 Alabaster jar—preparing for sacrificial death  
26:14-30 Jesus, Judas, and Communion—betrayed at His own table  
**26:31-46 Gethsemane—facing the reality of death**  
26:47-56 Peter's sword—two ways of fighting death  
26:57-68 Sanhedrin trial—a mockery of death  
26:69-27:10 Peter & Judas—the hope of resurrection  
27:11-26 Pilate—the king's confession  
27:27-61 Crucifixion—the death of the King  
27:62-28:10 Resurrection—the King's victory for His brothers  
28:11-20 Great Commission

Message

I. How do we approach the cross?

II. Our approach: in pride and failure

III. Christ's approach: in agony and obedience

Application

Please consider the following, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you:

1. Where are you telling the king, "Not me Lord!"?
2. Do you feel the agony as you look at what your sins deserve?
3. In what way does your life express the necessity of the cross for you?
4. Which garden do you live in? The garden of our failure or the garden of Jesus' obedience?

# Taking Gathered Worship Home—Family and Individual Devotions

**A**s we read, study, and meditate upon *Matthew* let us learn of our Savior. He is the One to whom we sing our songs of lament and hymns of rejoicing. He is not only the object of our songs, but the One who has sung the Psalms first so that we might join the chorus with Him and the rest of His body. Let us as a congregation consider the misery He endured and grieve together over our sin that He might renew us.

## A Brief History of Lent

Lent is the period of days from Ash Wednesday to Easter, Ash Wednesday being the seventh Wednesday before Easter Sunday. It is a time of fasting and penitence in anticipation of the celebration of the resurrection. Lent began simply as a time of fasting from Friday at the ninth hour to Sunday morning, commemorating the time of Christ's death. Though not universally applied in the early centuries, this forty-hour fast was widely recognized as identifying oneself with Christ. Some practiced this fast on a weekly basis (which is where the Roman Catholic practice of refraining from meat on Fridays arose), while others only fasted once a year.

By the fourth century, the annual feast of Easter was in a further state of development, and the forty hours had become forty days during which a period of fasting was emphasized (though still not practiced universally by the church). The forty days not only commemorated the forty hours that Christ was in the tomb, but also recalled the forty-day fasts by Moses and Elijah, in addition to the forty days that Jesus was in the wilderness prior to his earthly ministry.

## How Do We Observe Lent?

Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church observes Lent primarily as a preparation time before Easter. It is a time when we consider the depth of our sin and misery to which the good news of the Gospel is the answer. The good news will be all the more sweet as we recognize our need for a Savior. We also look forward in anticipation to the celebration of His resurrection. Because of this, we encourage people to fast during times of this season – inasmuch as they are able. This is not to be done legalistically, but in recognition of our desperate need for Christ's salvation. In addition, we have prepared family worship liturgies based on the Ten Commandments. One of the primary functions of the law is to point us to our sinful nature and our need for salvation, and so we believe that this is highly appropriate during this season.

We would like to emphasize that even during this recognition of our sinfulness and desperate need for Christ's love and forgiveness, that we do have a hope in our salvation—Christ has come and borne our sins – and so, even during this time, there is great hope.

**Sunday, 3/12** Read the context for this morning's sermon: **Matthew 26:31-75**.

**Discuss** the sermon. How do you approach the cross? From which garden?

**Sing** one of the songs from this morning's worship service.

**Pray** for those who worship at CTR that we would worship Christ.

**Monday, 3/13** Read **Psalm 75:1-10** and consider what it meant for Jesus to drink the cup of wrath meant for the wicked.

**Grieve** the pain that sin causes. What does it mean to have godly sorrow about this fallen world? What does it mean to be sorry for *your* sin?

**Pray** for God to direct you and us as a community of faith in real repentance.

**Sing** one of the songs from this morning's worship service.

**Tuesday, 3/14** Read **Psalm 23:1-6** and consider the cup of blessing secured for us by Christ.

**Meditate** on Christ's goodness in walking with us through the valley of the shadow of death now and our confidence knowing He has faced death for us.

**Consider** fasting and praying during a mealtime today. *See article below.*

**Pray** for Christ to awaken people in Portland to the reality of our sin. Ask Him to bring conviction and repentance throughout our city.

**Wednesday, 3/15** Read **Matthew 26:31-46**.  
**Meditate** on Christ's perfect obedience.

**Mourn** for the ways we take His sacrifice lightly.

**Pray** that the people of Portland would rightly see His glory and give Him praise and honor for it.

**Thursday, 3/16** Read **Psalm 31:1-24** and discuss how Jesus was put to shame so that we could take refuge in Him.

**Consider** fasting and praying during a mealtime today.

**Pray**, "O Lord God, You led Your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. So guide us that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever more. Amen."

## Scripture Memory for the Week

Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. —Psalm 31:9