



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Messenger

625 W. Gibson Road, Woodland, CA * Phone 662-1935 * February 2017

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear St. Paul's,

I know it is February, but Lent is around the corner and it begins on March 1st with Ash Wednesday. I bring this up now to give you a chance to think about what you might want to give up for Lent. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and self-denial. Most of these things happen in the course of the worship service, but self-denial is a practice unique to Lent.

Many Christians may give up dessert, or drinking soda, alcohol or something they may enjoy. When I was in my first year of college in Seward NE, I gave up the use of my fork for Lent. I think some people thought I was trying to be funny, but I wasn't. What is one of the things that you want to do during Lent? Remembering the sacrifice the Lord made by sending his son, and remembering the obedience that Christ had following his fathers will. A fork does not compare to this sacrifice God made on my behalf. But, forty days of eating, and every bite I am being reminded of what Christ has done for me, that changed me.

It was not the sacrifice but the thoughtful reflection on what it is that Christ has done for me. Christ's death and resurrection is for us. A silly practice can get you to think, and to consider something bigger, something amazing. Christ has an amazing love for us! The act of avoiding sin is a good practice to get into. (see Ps 1:1-3) The practice of thinking on the Lord, and letting the Lord occupy your thoughts throughout the day (see Ps 86:11) can open your eyes to God's will and his ways. This process is called sanctification. Sanctification is "the state of proper functioning." To sanctify someone or something is to "set that person or thing apart for the use intended by its designer." God has a purpose, a plan, for us as a church. As Lent approaches prepare your heart for what God has intended for you.

May the Lord be with you all,

Pastor David Hardin