

# What is "Journey to the Cross"?

## The Journey of Jesus

Luke 9:51 says, "*When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.*" Essentially Luke is saying, Jesus knew what he had to do, and he set his eyes on the cross. Amazing! Jesus knew full well what was in front of him and he resolutely set himself towards that goal. We see all through the life of Christ that Jesus was on an intentional mission, he was on an intentional journey straight to the cross. Part of the "Journey to the Cross" will be intently considering Jesus as he walked his long, troubled road to the cross.

## Our Journey

Our lives are full of stories; we watch TV shows, we go to the movies, we read books. But the best stories are the ones that pull us in, the ones that show us how we are a part of the story. As a church we long, just as Jesus did, to set our faces toward the cross. Often we reach Resurrection Sunday and parachute into the story, but that's a bit like trying to enjoy a good book when you've only read the final chapters. Our desire is to share with Christ in his journey. We hope you will contemplate suffering and pain and sacrifice and love in a new way.

## What is Good Friday?

Good Friday is the Friday before Resurrection Sunday, memorializing the day of Jesus' death on the cross. It is typically a very somber day. But just like Ash Wednesday, Good Friday is a day that reminds us of why Sunday is such a great day. There are many traditions and customs that have been passed down through the years, and we encourage you to be a part of our Good Friday evening this year.

## Do I have to fast?

Traditionally, fasting and prayer have been central components to the season of Lent. Fasting is the discipline of abstaining. In a fast, the believer chooses, for a set time, to do without something that is hard to do without. When we understand and use fasting in the right way, it can open up pathways to growth that are unique. While we believe that fasting will posture you to hear from God, it should never be required or forced.

## What do I fast from?

You can fast from practically anything! Most common is a fast from food. But the Bible speaks about fasting from things that are sinful, things like sexual immorality, slander, greed, etc. Whatever you choose to fast from, it should lead to a deeper intimacy with God through prayer. In its very nature, fasting can lend itself to a works oriented faith (thinking that we can somehow work our way to God). But this is not the purpose of fasting. Fasting should be a way to posture ourselves to experience the love of God more richly. The whole idea behind fasting is that when you desire what you are fasting from, you would instead turn to God in prayer.

## Things you could fast from

Swearing	Coffee	Consumerism	Sugar
Internet	Alcohol	Tobacco	Movies
TV	Fast Food	Snacking	Envy

# A Dummies Guide to Lent

## What is Lent?

## What is Ash Wednesday?

## What is Good Friday?

## Do I have to fast?

## Why should I care?



## What is Lent?

The tradition of Lent originated in the early church. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 40 days (excluding Sundays) before Resurrection Sunday. The Number 40 reminds us of the days that it rained while Noah was in the ark, the time that Israel wandered in the wilderness, and the days that Jesus spent in the desert after his baptism and prior to his ministry. Many people associate fasting with Lent because historically the church has encouraged some form of fasting throughout Lent. Many of you will see Lent through the lens of your experience at another church while others of you have never even heard the word. Either way, we'd love to invite you into this purposeful time of anticipating the resurrection of Christ.

## What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is a tradition that churches have held for many years. In the Old Testament ashes were used as a sign of humility and mortality and also as a sign of sorrow and repentance for sin. Similarly, our Ash Wednesday is used to contemplate not only death, but also sin.

Take the illustration used earlier about reading the last few chapters of a book ... well, in many ways, contemplating our own sin and how it leads to death are the opening chapters of our story. If we don't understand our own sin and its consequence of death, we will never understand why Jesus would even be on a journey towards his own death. So it's fitting that our 40 day Journey would start here on Ash Wednesday.