

Lenten Asking with Fasting  
2020 Guide



## Blessed

is the one who  
*trusts* in the **LORD**,  
whose *confidence*  
is in Him.

Jeremiah 17:7



*The elders are inviting the congregation to a season of corporate prayer and fasting to seek the Lord's plans and purpose for our church in this city, in this nation, and in the world. At this particular time in our church history, we sense that God is inviting us to hear a fresh sense of His call for the next season of church life. As we pray we are also asking that the Lord would reveal the specific attributes needed among our current and future leadership to fulfill His purposes for COSC. May we all encounter afresh the wonderful shepherding of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### Corporate Gatherings

Whatever you determine will be your practice of fasting this season, we are designating Wednesdays during Lent as particular corporate fasting days. You are invited to join us as you feel led by the Lord. Additionally, there are a number of opportunities to join together in agreement before the Lord in prayer:

- ✓ **Saturday, March 7** - 7pm to 11pm
- ✓ **Wednesday, March 18** - 7:30 pm to 9 pm
- ✓ **Sunday Service March 29**
- ✓ **Saturday, April 4** - 7 pm to 11pm
- ✓ **Maundy Thursday, April 9**

## Scriptural Notes on Fasting

In Jesus' definitive teaching on the Sermon on the Mount He said, "When you give to the needy (alms) ... when you pray ... when you fast." (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16) The use of the word *when*, rather than *if*, leads us to believe He expected these things to be normative in our devotional life. However, He graciously gives us the freedom to determine what that looks like for each one of us. So, we begin from the perspective that fasting and prayer should not be legalistic requirements, carrying any sense of obligation or guilt, running the risk of making them "a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5), or merely religious practices. The decisions for each one of us should be made prayerfully. "*Do whatever He tells you.*"

## Fasting Preparation

*Checklist from "God's Chosen Fast" by Arthur Wallis.*

- Am I confident that this desire to fast is God-given? Would He have me undertake a normal or just a partial fast?

*"Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."*

- Are my motives right? Is there any hidden desire to impress others?

*"Your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*

- What are my spiritual objectives in this fast?

- Personal sanctification or consecration?
- Intercession?
- What special burdens?
- Divine intervention, guidance, blessing?
- Spirit's fullness for self or others?
- To loose the captives?
- To stay divine wrath, bring revival?

*"I press on towards the goal!"*

- Do my objectives tend to be self-centered? Is my desire for personal blessing balanced by genuine concern for others?

*"Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others."*

- Am I determined above all else to minister to the Lord in this fast?

*"They were worshipping the Lord and fasting."*



**Luke 15:4-7** | What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

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**1 Peter 2:25** | For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

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**John 10:1-42** | Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

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**Jeremiah 23:4** | "I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD

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**Luke 12:32** | Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

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**Hebrews 13:20-21** | Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen

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**Revelation 7:17** | For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

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## Other Notes



# GOD as Head of Church

March 4-March 10

**Head of Church** -- When we talk about the head of the church, it is perhaps useful to remember that in English, the word "head" has multiple meanings. Its most basic meaning is the extremity that sits on top of one's shoulders, where the brain, the eyes, ears, nose, etc. are located. But it also means the person who occupies the foremost position, the leader, chief or director.

*So when scripture describes Christ as being the head and the church being his body, it brings up two complementary images. Jesus is the "head" and the church is the "body," and together they make up an inseparable whole, each needing the other to function. Jesus is also the leader of the church and has authority over it; the church is under his leadership and authority.*

## Scriptures for Meditation

**Psalms 118:22** | The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

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**Colossians 1:17-18** | And he [Christ] is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church.

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**Ephesians 1-22-23** | And he [God] put all things under his [Jesus'] feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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**Ephesians 4:15-16** | Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

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- How do you see yourself as a member of a body of which Jesus is the head?
  
- How do you see your relationship with the other members of the body?
  
- How do you react knowing that Jesus needs us as members of his body just as much as we need him as head?
  
- What implications does Christ's headship over his church have for Christ Our Shepherd Church, for its future direction and for the leadership of COSC?

# GOD as Giver

March 11-March 17

*Gift Giver* -- God is the great gift giver and we need to be careful to give Him thanks for His many gifts. And we need to do this especially when we are in this season of seeking and asking to be a more fruitful body that brings Him more glory.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes about the crucial role that gratitude plays in the formation of Christian community in his book Life Together. "We prevent God from giving us the great spiritual gifts He has in store for us, because we do not give thanks for daily gifts. ... We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the ordinary, small (and yet really not small) gifts.... If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed.....then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ."*

## Scriptures for Meditation

**Luke 17:11-19** | As he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

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**1Thessalonians 5:17-18** | Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

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**Philippians 4:5-7** | The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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**Colossians 3:15-17** | And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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**Psalm 103** | Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his  
benefits,

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**Psalm 100**

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

Serve the LORD with gladness!  
Come into his presence with singing!

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Know that the LORD, he is God!  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep  
of his pasture.

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Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise!  
Give thanks to him; bless his name!

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For the LORD is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

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## Other Notes

# GOD as Revealer

March 18-March 24

**Revealer** -- Throughout scripture God is shown as Revealer. His self-revelation is seen from the beginning as the One who created the heavens and the earth, who walked and talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden.

*God continues to reveal his plan and purposes from Abraham, to Moses, to the prophets, to the revelation of God himself through Jesus, our Lord, "the image of the invisible God." Col. 15. In answer to Thomas' question "...how can we know the way"? "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life...". By His power we aim to walk in righteousness for His namesake as we continue to seek His justice for our cities and nation. We ask Jesus to continue to make His plans known to us through prayer, scripture, His word, and yes, even through visions and dreams at times. Since God is our Revelation, our response is to seek His presence and His purpose with grateful hearts for all He has revealed and all He will reveal to us as we ask for His purposes to be manifested in this this new season of consecration.*

## Scriptures for Meditation

**Daniel 2:22** | "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness. And the light dwells with Him."

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**Psalm 25:14** | “The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and He makes known to them His covenant.”

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**John 15:15** | “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

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**John 1:1-5** | In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

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**Isaiah 55:8** | “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord”

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**Acts 2:17** | “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

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**2 Peter 1:21** | “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

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**2 Peter 3:9** | “The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

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## Other Notes

# GOD as *Provider*

March 25-March 31

*Provider & Equipper* -- Jehovah Jireh in Hebrew means: The Lord will provide. The God Almighty, The Living God, The Creator of everything that exists in the universe and in the heavens.

*God has always supplied the needs of His people. As God reveals His plans and vision for COSC in the next season of church life. We believe He will also supply both the leadership and the equipping that we as a congregation will need to carry out His plans.*

## Scriptures for Meditation

**Psalms 78:14-16** | He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night. He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

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**Exodus 31: 1-6** | [God gave instructions and plans for the tabernacle]. Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you.

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**Ephesians 4:7, 11-13** | But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it... So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

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**2 Timothy 3:16-17** | All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

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**Hebrews 13:20-21** | Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen

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**Philippians 4:19** | And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

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- What wisdom and understanding might God want to give us as a congregation, so that we can fulfill His calling in this next season?
- What spiritual gifts might God want to release through you to help supply every need of this body?
- Who might God be sending to COSC to help carry out His plans for this body?
- How might God want to equip you personally, through the power of His Word, for the things He might call you to do for the body of Christ in this city?

## Other Notes

# GOD as Sanctifier

April 1 - April 8

**Sanctify**—to cleanse, to purify internally by renewing the soul.

*Jesus calls us to Himself so that we may live in fellowship with Him. In the light of His mercies and His sacrifice for us, we are called to submit our wills to His will. As we yield to the Holy Spirit working within us, we are made more like Christ. We trust in God's promise that this ongoing work of sanctification will bring God glory in our lives, in the church and in the world.*

## Scriptures for Meditation

**John 7:37-39** | . . . Jesus stood and cried out, saying, " If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive . . .

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**Hebrews 12:1-2** | Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the-author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.

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**1 Peter 1:13-16 , 22-23** | Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

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**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** | Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

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**Philippians 1:6** | For I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

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**Matthew 5:3-9**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

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Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.

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Blessed are those who hunger and  
thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

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Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

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Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.

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Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

- Thank Father God for His Holy Spirit who fills, sanctifies, and empowers His people
  
- What encumbrance or weight in your life is Jesus calling you to lay aside, so that you may better run your race or fix your eyes on Him?
  
- What have you heard from the Lord regarding what will be required of you in this next season of church life?

For further meditation  
Phil 2:5-8, Romans 8: 12—17

## Other Notes

