

LOST | FOUND

Easter

Preparing for Easter
TSF 2021



At TSF, our values are summarized by the statement that we are becoming a family of faith, living life, and giving hope. As we pursue this goal, we want to be anchored in the Bible. The Bible reveals who we are, where we are lacking, and the power of God to transform us to really be more like Jesus every day. We trust that the Bible can reveal truth to our individual stories and make us into a strong family of faith!

As we go through the weeks between Ash Wednesday and Easter (traditionally the Lenten season), we want to be anchored in Scripture. We want you to experience the love and truth of God in Psalm 139 to prepare our hearts for Easter Sunday Celebration together.

During this time, we are encouraging you to skip at least one meal each week and to spend time and maybe some resources in pursuing Jesus. Not only will this help you put aside some of the clutter of this world, it will also direct your heart toward God and his complete ability to satisfy you. It will remind you of what is LOST when we wander in sin and will drive you to what is FOUND in Christ. And it will remind you of the great cost and sacrifice that was paid for your sins by Christ. Let's prepare to worship the Lord together on Easter for his great grace on the cross!

Turn your hearts toward Christ!

Pastor Joe and TSF Pastors and Leadership

Week 1 - February 22

Fast- Choose one meal that you normally eat and skip it once or multiple times this week. During that time, read the following Scriptures and meditate on them. Write down any thoughts you have, anything the Spirit reveals to you about anything. Let the Scripture fill your heart and mind and listen to the Spirit!

Scripture- Psalm 139

- 1) When does it feel like God can't see you? Have you ever felt like God isn't where you are, like you've done something so bad that its taken you far from God?
- 2) What are some things, actions, thoughts, etc., you might "lose" btn now and Easter so you might "find" more closeness and intimacy with God?

Confess- Trust the Lord's goodness! Know that the completed work of Christ on the cross has taken away your sins. Think about any actions, thoughts, words, etc, that keep you distant from God or the people in your life and ask God for strength and courage to remove them from your life. Talk to God about your sins and ask for his intimate presence to be known more in your life.

Week 2 - March 1

Fast- Choose one meal that you normally eat and skip it once or multiple times this week. During that time, read the following Scriptures and meditate on them. Think about some objects from your home that you could donate to a charity, then do it and let it remind you that we lose things to find our lives in Christ! Let the Scripture fill your heart and mind and listen to the Spirit!

Scripture- Psalm 139:1-3

- 1) Do you have some habit in action or thinking that causes you to feel like you would lose God's love if he really knew what you were like? Write down some of those things now and begin confessing them to God.
- 2) Is it comforting to know that God does now and he loves you anyway? Because of Jesus, we can rest in God's love that knows us intimately and loves us anyway!

Confess- Trust the Lord's goodness! Know that the completed work of Christ on the cross have taken away your sins. Talk to God about the times when you are unsure of God's love because of your sinfulness and wandering. Thank God for the cross of Jesus and that his love for us is forever insured because of Easter!

Week 3 - March 8

Fast- Choose one meal that you normally eat and skip it once or multiple times this week. During that time, read the following Scriptures and meditate on them. Give a gift card to someone or give a meal to a homeless person- lose a little money to remind you that you find life and satisfaction in Christ!

Scripture- Psalm 139:7-10

- 1) Are you doing anything in your life right now that is really an attempt to hide from God? Avoiding a certain person that reminds you of God? Slipping from attending church? Failing to spend any time in prayer and the Word? Write down some thoughts and talk to God about it now.
- 2) What have you lost in your life with others or with God because you are trying to flee from the Spirit of God? Write them down and confess them.

Confess- With all your heart, desire to submit to God. Whether he corrects you or leads you immediately to healing and wholeness- confess and ask for forgiveness. Ask God for his joy as you discover him to be abounding in kindness and mercy. Pray for courage to run to God instead of trying to flee from his Spirit- remember he loves you!

Week 4 - March 15

Fast- Choose one meal that you normally eat and skip it once or multiple times this week. During that time, read the following Scriptures and meditate on them. Write down any thoughts you have, anything the Spirit reveals to you about anything. Let the Scripture fill your heart and mind and listen to the Spirit!

Scripture- Psalm 139:13-16

- 1) Do you sometimes think that no one really knows you? That even God isn't aware of who you really are; your unique struggles, your deeply personal and private insecurities and failures? Have the courage to write some of them down and start talking to God about them; not to inform him (he knows!), but to start trusting him with those things.
- 2) Thank God that he knows and loves you. Pray for people on your Front Row or your One that God would use you to show them his love for them, too. Think about how you will invite you to join your family at TSF this Easter.

Confess- Thank God that even when it feels like your sins have taken you far away from God, he has and will always know and love you. Confess your sins that keep you thinking that God doesn't know who you are or what you're going through.

Week 5 - March 22

Fast- Choose one meal that you normally eat and skip it once or multiple times this week. During that time, read the following Scriptures and meditate on them. Write down any thoughts you have, anything the Spirit reveals to you about anything. Let the Scripture fill your heart and mind and listen to the Spirit!

Scripture- Psalm 139:19-22

- 1) Sin can cause us to believe that God doesn't care about our problems. What difficulties are you facing and it has been hard for you to trust that God cares about them? What sins might be clouding your thinking about God?
- 2) What sinful attitudes toward others might you confess? How have you doubted God's care for you and his ability to deal your problems or problem people? Confess those things to God and trust him to enter into and provide resources for all of your problems, no matter how threatening they are.

Confess- Confess how you have sought to take care of your problems without God. Ask God to reinforce his power, care and ability to resolve the difficulties in your life. Ask God for the courage and strength to put aside these sins and to live a courageous and humble life because of his loving care for your problems.

Week 6 - March 29

Fast- Choose one meal that you normally eat and skip it once or multiple times this week. During that time, read the following Scriptures and meditate on them. What is something you could LOSE/intentionally take out of your life so that you can FIND/purposefully seek a treasure from the Lord?

Scripture- Psalm 139:23-24

- 1) Sin makes us want to hide, to try and keep things from God. What sins are causing you to lose the security of being fully known by God? What secrets are you trying to keep from God?
- 2) In what areas of your life, mind, heart, thoughts, actions, etc, do you need to think clearly about yourself?

Confess- Confess that you have too often forgotten that you belong to God. Confess that your sins have caused you to think you'd be better off being dishonest to yourself about yourself. Ask God to reveal the truth of you to you, to give you courage to face it, to give you faith to trust Him with your struggles, and to change your heart so you truly want what God wants. Thank God that Jesus has died for you and made it possible for you to be known, loved and transformed by grace!

Ash Wednesday with My Children

Use this tool to talk with your children about what we do at church on Ash Wednesday, during Communion, and about their walk with God.

Ritual vs Reality

There are a lot of things that we do in church on a regular basis. We sing, we read God's Word, we pray, we share communion, we baptize people. They help us express our faith in God, understand Him better, and worship Him with each other. Anyone can do these things, but doing them doesn't make you a Christian or a Christ-follower.

I heard a pastor say it this way once: If you sleep in your garage, if you eat your meals and change your clothes in your garage, does that make you a car? No, of course not. You can take communion, go to church, put ashes on your forehead...but none of that makes you a Christian.

We do these things with other Christ-followers that celebrate God's love for us, but we don't trust them to bring us to God because they can't- only God can bring us to know and love him through Jesus! (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 7:22-23)
continued:

Why Do We Use Ashes?

Christians started using ashes in churches in around 980 AD. It became an important time of talking to God about our sins and asking for his forgiveness. The ashes often come from palm branches. In the Bible, people used palm branches to celebrate when Jesus came into Jerusalem. They laid them on the dirty road so he didn't have to walk on the dirt. They thought Jesus was coming to free them from slavery and the Romans who abused them. They didn't understand he was coming to die for their sins.

So we take palm branches and burn them to remind us to lay ourselves down at Christ's feet, to ask him for forgiveness, to confess our sins in sorrow. We burn them to remind us to come to Jesus for the greatest freedom there is- freedom from our sins and freedom to real life! We take the ashes and put them on our head or hands to remind us that we are in a loving relationship with God, that Jesus paid the whole price for our sins on the cross, and that its only when he applies his grace to us that we are forgiven.

What about you?

Can you put the ashes on your head? Can you eat communion? The bigger question is- Have you received the forgiveness for your sins that come through Christ? Is Christ your Lord, Master, Savior? If you are a follower of Christ, ask your mom and dad for help with the ashes! Ask them to let you have communion! If you haven't, talk to your parents about what it means to trust Jesus to save you from your sins!