

LENT PART 1: RETURN, REPENT, AND REALIGN

Big Idea: Lent is a call to choose God over the world through repentance, surrender, and a transformed heart.

Theme: True transformation happens not by what we give up externally, but by what God changes internally.

I. What Is Lent? A Call to Return

"It's time to return to me."

Lent is a 40-day journey leading to Easter where God invites us to refocus and restore our relationship with Him.

Scriptures:

- Joel 2:12–13 – Return to Me with all your heart
- James 4:8 – Draw near to God and He will draw near to you

II. Three Ways People Live

1. Worldly Life – Self-led and independent of God
2. God-Centered Life – Spirit-led and surrendered
3. Divided Life – One foot in both worlds (impossible)

Scripture:

- Matthew 6:24 – Cannot serve two masters

III. Ash Wednesday: Realizing Our Need

Ash Wednesday reminds us of our mortality and need for a Savior.

Scriptures:

- Genesis 2:7 – Created from dust
- Romans 3:23 – All have sinned
- Romans 6:23 – Need redemption

IV. Jesus in the Wilderness

After baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness and tempted.

Scripture:

- Matthew 4:1–11 – Jesus resists temptation

Jesus chose God over hunger, power, and comfort.

V. You Are Following Something

Everyone follows something—habits, culture, or God.

Scriptures:

- Luke 9:23 – Follow Me
- Psalm 119:105 – God’s Word guides us

VI. Fasting: From Physical to Spiritual

Fasting shifts our dependence from physical needs to God’s presence.

Scriptures:

- Matthew 6:16–18 – Fasting instructions
- Deuteronomy 8:3 – Man does not live by bread alone

VII. From Fixes to Faith

We replace quick fixes with lasting faith in God.

Scriptures:

- Matthew 6:19–20 – Store treasure in heaven
- Psalm 16:11 – Fullness of joy in God

VIII. Repentance: The Heart of Lent

Repentance is not just feeling sorry—it is changing direction.

Scriptures:

- Acts 3:19 – Repent and be refreshed
- Psalm 51:10 – Create a clean heart

IX. The Heart Matters Most

God cares about inward transformation, not outward performance.

Scriptures:

- Joel 2:13 – Rend your heart
- Luke 15 – Prodigal Son

X. God Meets You in Repentance

God restores those who return to Him.

Scriptures:

- Luke 15:20 – Father runs to son
- 1 John 1:9 – God forgives

XI. The Goal of Lent: A New Heart

Lent is about transformation from the inside out.

Scriptures:

- Ezekiel 36:26 – New heart
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 – New creation

Small Group Discussion Questions

- Which path are you walking?
- What are you truly following?
- What 'fix' needs to become faith?
- What does real repentance look like?
- What is God changing in your heart?

Closing Prayer

Father, create in me a clean heart. Help me fully follow You. Transform me from the inside out. In Jesus' name, Amen.