

## Lent

**Ash Wednesday** begins the 40-day period historically called “**Lent,**” during which Christians recognize that God's forgiveness comes at an infinite price – the death of Jesus the Messiah on a cross on our behalf. It is not meant as a time of false humility or prideful self-sacrifice. It reminds us that our sin separates us from God, who “*shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8).

During **Lent**, Christians contemplate their sinfulness, they repent, and then ask God’s forgiveness. It is a time of quiet meditation, but not despair ... a brief season of preparation, aiming toward Passion Week and culminating in the victory of Jesus over death on **Resurrection Sunday**.

Traditionally, Christians invest this period of time in special instruction in Christian doctrine, and in the practice of responsible Christian lifestyle:

- ❖ Some Christians abstain from a normal part of their daily routine during **Lent** to remind them of the sacrifice of Christ. For example, some refrain from eating certain favorite foods, while others refrain from frivolous entertainment.
- ❖ Still others commit to a sacrifice that will benefit the less fortunate, such as not eating out during **Lent** and then donating those funds to a local soup kitchen or food bank.
- ❖ Some churches or small groups dedicate the Saturdays of **Lent** to a volunteer community project, such as refurbishing senior members’ houses, or cleaning up a local park, or serving meals to the needy.

No matter the specific practice during **Lent**, the key is to remember the instruction of the apostle Paul to the Christians at Ephesus: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” (Ephesians 2:8-10)