

Contemplating Lent

By [Rev. Bill Spanjer, Jr.](#)

Lent is a season in the church's calendar, one of fasting and the contemplation of our sin and frailty. It serves to prepare our hearts for the celebration of the death and resurrection of our Lord. Whether or not you "give something up for Lent" it is a worthwhile thing to spend time reflecting on such deep and important matters.

For one, it is crucial for us to recall that we are dust. As the Bible tells us, we were created from the dust of the Earth. A humbling reality but essential for us to understand given that we were also blessed above every other creature, being created in the image of God himself. With a treasure like this given to us, it is fitting that we be jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7) and important for us to be acknowledge our makeup lest we be tempted to think of *ourselves* as the treasure. By fasting during Lent, we are reminded of our frailty, and we remember our dependence upon the gifts of God for life.

It is also important to remember that we will one day *return* to the dust. This uncomfortable reality is one easily suppressed if we do not take the time to uncover it and confront it. Lent allows us the time to do so. Of course, the point is not to be morbid, but to be grounded (pun intended) and sober minded lest we cling to the fleeting realities of this life and miss the lasting treasure of Christ and His kingdom. In Psalm 90, the Psalmist asks God to "teach us to number our days that we might gain wisdom." The author of Ecclesiastes says a shocking thing when he says, "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting," better in other words, to deal with the hard realities than to delude yourself with pleasure and distraction. This is not to say that we can never feast or enjoy pleasure, but it is all the more reason for setting aside seasons to ensure the time for such contemplation.

Finally, it is important to remember that we are not just dust, but sinful dust. The Psalmist asks in Psalm 8, "what is man that thou art mindful of him?" Great question. One many in our day would not conceive to ask. We think we are worthy of attention. Just look at so much social media. *Why wouldn't* God consider us, we ask. The Psalmist is not so self-admiring. He wonders why God would give such love and care to dust? But the situation is even more perplexing than it first appears, because we are not merely dust, but treasonous dust. Dust does not raise itself up against its God in high rebellion, but we have. That is, we have raised our fists to him and said, "not your will, but ours be done." We have sought to unseat Him as Lord of our lives and take the authority for ourselves. Perhaps you do not feel that this is true of you and your sin, but if not, I believe you are in deep need of the season of Lent. R.C. Sproul, my professor

throughout seminary, referred to sin as, “Cosmic Treason.” I have always loved that quote and I have my students put it to memory. It cuts through all the justifications and rationalizations that attempt to make our sin more palatable. It calls sin what it is in its essence, an attempt to seize the reigns and be God ourselves. From the least to the greatest offense, it is essential that we deal with the true nature of our actions. Only then will we be in the right place to confess and fall before our Holy God and be in the proper place to receive the grace of God. Only then will we be able to truly call God’s grace amazing.

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