



“As we enter into this Lenten season, let's do so with a goal of having a change of mind, leaving our sin behind and making room to love God with a whole and longing heart.”

SCRIPTURE I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. — Acts 26:20

REFLECTION Since the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a 40 day season of spiritual preparation. Today, we begin that 40 day season called Lent. Lent is a season of self-examination and repentance by prayer, fasting, reading and meditating on Scripture. And to mark the beginning, Ash Wednesday is that moment when we remember our own mortality and reflect on the ways we have not been the people that we ought to have been.

In the Bible, the word repent means “to change one's mind.” It's not just about feeling remorseful about something we did or said, but about examining how we think so as to have a change of mind. True repentance will result in a change of action. In fact, the Apostle Paul said his whole life was about preaching so “that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.” Genuine repentance is motivated by a desire to please God, to move away from thinking that leads to sin and move toward thinking that lines up with God desires for us. A person who has truly repents of their sin and exercises faith in Christ will give evidence of a changed life.

Repenting doesn't have to be a somber act but it does need to be intentional. So as we enter into this Lenten season, let's do so with a goal of having a change of mind, leaving our sin behind and making room to love God with a whole and longing heart. We need this new season to rest, reconcile, refocus and renew so that we can repent, change our minds, and be ready to claim the gift of Easter.

PRAYER Dear Lord, forgive me when I fall into the cycle of rescue, repent, and repeat and for treating Your forgiveness so casually. Help me to have a change of mind that results in a change of actions. I give you permission to have your way with my heart so it will be completely restored toward You. In Jesus' Name, **AMEN.**