

A Faithful Presence

Lent 2020

Our theme of **PRESENCE**:

Being in the Presence of God, and being
in the Presence of one another.

Hello to our Livestreamers!

A Common Perception of Lent: a season
for us to stay in Jesus' presence.

Discussion Question:

What are some the ways that you try to stay in God's presence?

Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”

But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same. (Matthew 26:33-35)

The Impressive Resume of Apostle Peter

- Taught by Jesus, witnessed many miracles
- Counted among Jesus' closest disciples
- Peter's confession of Jesus
- Called to be a founder of the church
- A forceful will and personality
- Has left everything to follow Jesus

After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.”

Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!”

Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26:73-75)

Lent is not actually an illustration of how we can stay in Jesus' presence.

Lent is an illustration of our complete inability to do so.

Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. (John 21:2-3)

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. (John 21:4-7)

Yes, Lent is an illustration of our
fallenness, and our inability to be faithful
to God...

...But more importantly, it is an illustration
of God's faithfulness to all of us!

During Lent, our focus should be less on how we are able to stay in Jesus' presence, and more on how Jesus is already present with us.

Why is this a better focus? Because it's more consistent with the Biblical story.

“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.” (Hosea 11:8)

Why is this a better focus? Because it makes God's presence dependent on God's faithfulness and not our own.

If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

Why is this a better focus? Because it reminds us of the truth that God is always with us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

The practices and disciplines of Lent don't prove that we are faithful. Instead, they make us more aware of God's faithful presence which is all around us.

Back to our Discussion Questions:

What are some ways this Lent that you can become more aware of God's faithful presence all around you?