



**PASTOR'S MESSAGE:**

Yes, we have arrived at the season of Lent, that period of the church year in which people figure we are supposed to feel miserable. After all, just prior to Ash Wednesday we ran into Fat Tuesday - *Mardi Gras* in French - a time of joy and revelry which stands in stark contrast to the observance that begins the next day. The fun stops. At least that is the popular understanding. It is strange. The word "Lent" originally meant "springtime," not misery. Because the church season always fell at this time of year, the name came to apply to the ecclesiastical observance as well.

The Lenten observance has changed over the centuries. The early church celebrated Lent only for a few days before Easter. Over time, the length of the season grew until it was several weeks long. In the excluding Sundays seventh century, the church set the period of Lent at forty days in order to remind people of the duration of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

The Lenten observance began as a time of purification and preparation. In the early church, baptism was only performed on Easter Sunday - an entire year's worth of converts to the faith would be baptized and brought into the church on that day. Lent was the time before Easter in which these converts would fast and pray, preparing themselves to be members of Christ's church. As years went by, the church began to baptize and confirm people on days other than Easter Sunday. Lent was no longer a time of preparation for these events, but it remained as a special time of prayer and fasting. After the Reformation, the discipline of fasting became unpopular (and it has never regained much favor). Thus, as a way of preserving Lent as a time of self-sacrifice, the church leaders encouraged people to give up something they enjoyed during Lent, not necessarily food. Lent is a time that should lead us to courageous living. For most of us, courageous living shows itself through our faith in relatively modest ways, since we don't live in danger of physical persecution. However, there are many Christians in this world that are being persecuted by others. But we are to be judged not on the basis of what we would do in some hypothetical situation, but on what we do in the places where we live, study, work, and play. Most of us will acknowledge that we sometimes compromise our principles for the sake of business, social advancement, or public recognition. Lent is an ideal time to examine our daily conduct, to perceive those settings and circumstances where we ought to demonstrate more moral and intellectual courage. Charles Wesley said, "A charge to keep I have, A God to glorify." So, too, do you and I.

For the most part, I always prefer the details of Matthew, Mark and Luke. But, when it comes to Jesus' arrest, crucifixion and resurrection I prefer JOHN. In Matthew, Mark and Luke they describe Jesus' arrest, the focus is on Jesus' agony. But John doesn't include any

of this. He merely says “Jesus went out with his disciples and crossed over to the other side of the Kidron valley. He and his disciples entered a garden there.” Why doesn’t John include the story of Jesus’ anguish in the garden? It’s because, in contrast to the Synoptic Gospels’ focus on Jesus’ humanity, John’s Gospel stresses Jesus’ divinity. John does not show Jesus in agony in the garden. He was a King firmly in control of his destiny. He was the Divine who, with strength and dignity, approached his destiny. John tells us that there were a cohort of armed soldiers (six hundred) to arrest the unarmed Jesus. Jesus knew everything that was to happen to him, so he went out and asked “who are you looking for?” They answered “Jesus the Nazarene.” He said to them, “I AM” When he said, I AM,” they shrank back and fell to the ground.” (18:4-6). The Greek word for “I AM” is Yahweh--a personal name for GOD. Jesus was identifying with GOD and at his words the soldiers retreated in fear. By depicting the scene in this way, John captures the authority, courage, and hidden identity of Jesus. John’s account depicts Jesus as a King whose Kingdom is not like those of this world. It is a Kingdom that transcends geographic, and even, time. It is a Kingdom made up of all who believe in him, follow him, and seek to love God and neighbor. It is a Kingdom of truth, light, and life.

A few questions for us to ponder:

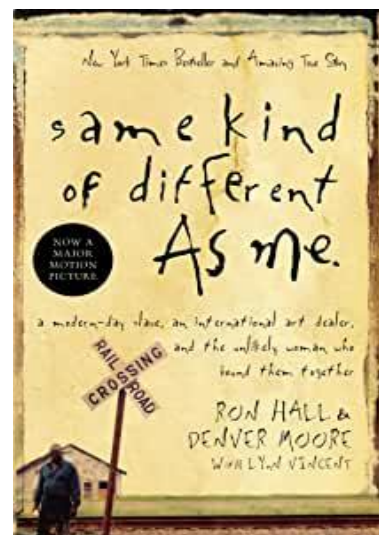
What was it about Jesus’ dying that was more persuasive than his living and teaching?

Most of our tests of spiritual courage can’t be compared to what happens in areas and times when to be a Christian may mean punishment and sometimes death. Nevertheless, we too must live the faith with courage. When have you had to find courage to be true to your faith?

Some say that the prevailing culture in America is becoming increasingly hostile to Christianity and its values. What have you observed that would support or disprove this view? If the level of hostility is rising, what tests of courage may await us as Christians?

Your Loving Servant

Pastor Dan



Pastor Dan’s suggested Book for March



**Jimmy & Barbara Acree**

Moved to Greers Ferry in October 2017. We have been married for 40 years. Jimmy still works in Jacksonville but is to retire soon. Barbara retired from Cabot schools 4 years ago. We have 2 children, Amber who lives close by and Justin and family live in Northwest Arkansas. Two beautiful granddaughters Cady and Addison. We Love our church family.

*Happy Birthday!*

- 3/3 Becky Bailey
- 3/9 Linda Varnadore
- 3/10 Mark Johnson
- 3/10 Spencer Stroud
- 3/13 Shirley Johnson
- 3/19 Lilly Stevens
- 3/28 Clay Yeager
- 3/29 Destiny George

*Happy Anniversary*

- 3/3 Lee & Lynne Fulbright
- 3/15 H.T. & Catherine Graddy
- 3/17 Larry & Teresa Hudgens
- 3/26 Ron & Jan Crouch

## Welcome our new Members



Mark Barrett & Charlene Lane



Shane & Lynn McClary



**HOLIDAY HILLS UMC NEWSLINK  
MARCH 2020**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 9:30am Sunday School 10:50 am Worship Communion 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9:30-10:30 am CLASS	<b>4</b> 8 am Prayer group UMW Meeting 3:30pm Choir 5 pm Prayer Group 6 pm Bible Study	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 
<b>Pastor Dan and Ruth Anne will be on vacation</b>						
<b>8</b> 9:30am Sunday School 10:50am Worship Potluck 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent	<b>9</b> 6 pm G.A.L.S.	<b>10</b> 9:30-10:30am CLASS	<b>11</b> 8 am Prayer group 8-2 pm Care Caps Workshop 9-11 am Storehouse 3:30pm Choir 5 pm Prayer Group 6 pm Bible Study	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9-11am Storehouse 1 pm Ed Ross Memorial Service
<b>Pastor Dan on Vacation</b>						
<b>15</b> 9:30am Sunday School 10:50am Worship 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent	<b>16</b> 4 pm Yacht Club 	<b>17</b> 9:30-10:30am CLASS  ST Patrick's Day	<b>18</b> 8 am UMM Breakfast at Bentley's 11am Food Prep-The Call 3:30pm Choir 5 pm Prayer Group 6 pm Bible Study	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:30am Sunday School 10:50am Worship 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent	<b>23</b> 6 pm Game Night 	<b>24</b> 9:30-10:30 am CLASS	<b>25</b> 8 am Prayer group 10am-4 pm Quilters 3:30pm Choir 5 pm Prayer Group 6 pm Bible Study	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:30am Sunday School 10:50am Worship 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent	<b>30</b> 5:30 pm Walk to Emmaus Reunion	<b>31</b> 9:30-10:30am CLASS	 <b>Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup></b>			