

Message for March 10, 2019

A Not-To-Do List

There are some numbers revealed in the Bible that has specific meanings:

There is 777 associated with God.

666 the mark of the beast.

There is another number that has great significance in the Bible. The number 40.

It's used nearly 150 times...

The great flood involving Noah lasted 40 days.

**Moses spent 40 years in Egypt,
40 years in the Sinai desert,
and then 40 years leading the people of Israel.**

He also spent 40 days on the Mountain when he received the Ten Commandments, 2x.

40 years often represents one generation.

Jonah preached repentance to Nineveh for 40 days.

The prophet Elijah fasted for 40 days.

Jesus spent 40 days fasting and praying in the wilderness facing temptation and preparing for His public ministry.

And then, Jesus walked on earth for 40 days following His resurrection before returning to heaven.

40 is God's Number for Life-Change" and so we begin the season of Lent.

There are 40 days from Ash Wednesday, (not counting Sundays) until Easter.

It is a time of fasting, prayer, self-denial, reflection and repentance, and preparation. A testing ground.

During the Lenten season we are very good at making a “NOT-to-do” list, you know the things you want to give up.

But what if the most important one we could make is a “To Do-List” like adding to the list the things we would like to start doing and incorporate that as part of our “Life Change”?

For most of us, that is exactly what we need. And what better time to explore this for your life than during Lent - the ancient spiritual practice of marking the 40 days prior to the celebration of Easter by focusing on inward change through outward denial.

Could there be a simple “denial” of some things while adding other things that would result in making room for a lasting life change?

“Lent,” has the potential to move our spiritual life forward.

Does giving up chocolate for 40 days really help me grow spiritually? Since after Lent you probably will return to chocolate.

As Christians, we sometimes lose focus on why we observe Lent. Some people may give up their favorite food or drink, commit to spending less money, or laying our devices down, fasting from social media, both from posting and reading.

Probably all these things are good and for some represent real sacrifice, and maybe should be on your “NOT-To-Do-List.

What God really wants for us during this season is to draw closer to Him and that often means giving up certain things, so we can add spiritual disciplines to our Christian walk.

The things that help draw us closer to God.

By giving up the things that keep us in its grip, we become much more mindful of His presence and of how He is working in our lives.

It is a great time when we can grow in our spiritual life through thinking about God, thanking Him, talking to Him through prayer and listening to Him through His word.

How will you strengthen your relationship with God this Lenten season?

Now let's look at our text... These are the Scriptures that Brandon read to us Wednesday evening. These are the things we want on our To-Do-Lists.

Matthew 6:1-4 (NLT) Teaches us about Giving to the Needy

Matthew 6:5-6 (NLT) Teaches us about Prayer

Matthew 6:16-18 (NLT) Teaches us about Fasting

Matthew 6:19-21 (NLT) Teaches us about Money and Possessions

Matthew chapter 6:

Matthew 6:1-4 New Living Translation (NLT)

Teaching about Giving to the Needy

6 “Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. 2 When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. 3 But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. 4 Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Matthew 6:5-6 New Living Translation (NLT)

Teaching about Prayer...

5 “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. 6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

A... adoration, praising God for who He is.

C... confession, admitting to God who I am.

T... thanksgiving, thanking God for all He's done.

S... supplication, making my requests known to God.

Some like to jump right to the “S” but there is a protocol.

Matthew 6:16-18 New Living Translation (NLT)

Teaching about Fasting

¹⁶“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

(Here is the last thing to add to our “TO DO LIST”.

Matthew 6:19-21 New Living Translation (NLT)

Teaching about Money and Possessions

¹⁹“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

Remember who you are and to whom you belong

AMEN