



Gambling With **FORGIVENESS**



LENTEN GUIDE 2022

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**Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.
Luke 23:34 NLT**

”

From the Desk of

Rev. Dr. Eric W. Lee, Jr.

Rev. Dr. Eric W. Lee, Sr.
Senior Pastor, Springfield Baptist Church

Words do not adequately convey the image of Jesus the Christ hanging from a wooden cross. Yet, we are compelled by God the Father in the holy scriptures to see the Son in his most broken moments. Jesus is stripped naked; his tortured body is mutilated and bloodied; his pierced side is evidence of lacerated major organs; his breathing is labored. The nerve endings in his hands and feet respond to the trauma caused by hardware affixing him to the cross.

His body weight is working against him as every shift shoots guttural pain up and down his spine. As if the punishment were not enough, his only article of clothing was a crown of thorns. And yet, his remaining disciples refuse to leave him; they are reluctant witnesses of his suffering. God the Father wants his suffering Son on public display.

Mamie Till changed America in 1955. When the world handed her the brutalized, tortured, lynched body of her 14-year old son, she compelled the world to view Emmet Till's body. A devout Christian, Mamie Till was no doubt inspired by the posture of her God. Transformation requires the world to be witnesses of the wounded, suffering Son. For six hours, the assembled witnesses see Jesus at his absolute worst AND at his absolute best at the same time.

While all eyes are on his wounds, Jesus then manages to utter a few words. And these are the words that Jesus leads with, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” What?!?! Forgive them? Now? While they’re doing it? Without confession? Without remorse? Without repentance? Jesus is advocating for the forgiveness of his lynching during the lynching! This is the original OMG moment of the Gospel.

As confounding as this reality may be, perhaps it makes better sense when we realize that the executioners are not the only ones at the cross who need to be forgiven. The disciples, the ones that were present and the ones that were in hiding, all needed forgiveness. The disciples, those who love Jesus, and the executioners, those who hate Jesus, are united by this need for forgiveness. For what sins do they need forgiveness?

Ignoring Jesus (Bible Study 3/9/22)

Using Jesus (Bible Study 3/16/22)

Betraying Jesus (Bible Study 3/23/22)

Neglecting Jesus (Bible Study 3/30/22)

Denying Jesus (Bible Study 4/7/22)

Mocking Jesus (Bible Study 4/14/22)

Lent 2022 has arrived. At the time of this writing, we are encumbered by an international military conflict in eastern Europe.

A global pandemic continues to rage. The nation is divided by politics and race. The wealth gap is widening. Violence continues to claim lives. 10 years after Trayvon and two year after Ahmad, black lives are still undervalued. The Christian faith is in decline. In our politics, our social media posts, and in our daily lives, Jesus is largely ignored, used, betrayed, neglected, denied and mocked. Yet, Jesus while wearing nothing but a crown of bloody thorns declares, “Father forgive them!”

We serve a God who sent his only Son that we might be forgiven. There is forgiveness for those who have ignored, used, betrayed, neglected, denied and mocked Jesus. Soon after the petition for forgiveness, the crowd irreverently gambled for his garments. Lent 2022, asks the question, “Are you grateful for His forgiveness or are you gambling with His forgiveness?”. This guide is designed for people who are grateful for God’s forgiveness.



WHAT IS LENT?

Lent has its origins in the 4th century AD in the Catholic Church. Lent is a season on the Christian calendar that spans 40 weekdays beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Resurrection Sunday.

It is distinguished as a time of prayer and preparation prior to the Resurrection.

Lent connotes that there can be no complete appreciation or celebration of Resurrection without acknowledging the process of discipline, sacrifice and faith that Christ exhibited during crucifixion.

The number 40 is connected with many biblical events, but most aptly with the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness facing temptations that sought to persuade him to abandon his mission and calling.

Christians today use this period of Lent as a time for introspection, self-examination, self-denial and repentance.

Many Christian churches engage in prayer, fasting and penance, contemplating the need for God's grace.

Lent is a journey of preparation that allows believers to celebrate God's marvelous redemption at Resurrection and to recommit to living a victorious life.

It's the perfect opportunity for G.R.O.W.T.H.



..there can be no complete appreciation or celebration of Resurrection without acknowledging the process of discipline, sacrifice and faith that Christ exhibited during crucifixion.

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SUPPLEMENTAL READING & ACTIVITIES DURING LENT

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Both Books Available on: Amazon, Kindle & Audible 



Are you a sugar addict? Do you run to the pantry each afternoon, rather than running to Christ to get you through your day?

Do you turn to Starbucks for a sweet latte, rather than turning to the satisfying sweetness of God's Word?

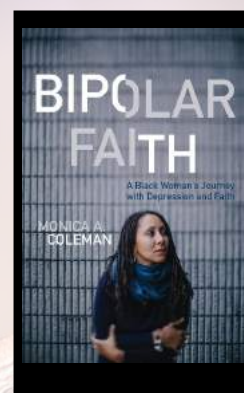
Do you eat out of boredom or as a reward?

Do you struggle with emotional meltdowns each time your children meltdown?

Join thousands of others who have experienced both physical and spiritual renewal as you fast from sugar and ask the Lord to set you free from strongholds in your life!

Let's fast from sugar and discover together that Christ is sweet enough!

**Get the 40-day Sugar Fast
Where Physical Detox Meets Spiritual
Transformation**



Bipolar Faith is both a spiritual autobiography and a memoir of mental illness.

In this powerful book, Monica Coleman shares her life-long dance with trauma, depression, and the threat of death. Only as she was able to face her illness was she able to live faithfully with bipolar.

And in the process, she discovered a new and liberating vision of God.

“And in the process, she discovered a new and liberating vision of God. ”

**Get Bipolar Faith A Black Woman's
Journey with Depression and Faith.**

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Join us each Wednesday Night @ 7pm - G.R.O.W.T.H. University Bible Study!
Tune in on Facebook, YouTube & sbcgrowth.church

March 18-22 - Virtual 5K Woods Stroke Awareness Run/Walk

Gather your family and friends and walk together in support of stroke awareness. Let's get moving to promote heart health. Check Realm for additional information.

March 22 - Join the discussion during **Women's History Month** on mental health. Plan to attend the virtual program Providing Healing, Promoting Hope - Rejuvenating Mind, Body, & Spirit - Hosted by W.O.V.V.E.N. The zoom information will be available in Realm and www.sbcgrowth.church.

G.R.O.W.T.H. ACTIVITIES

Take the time to plant a tree, flower or **start your own garden**. [Click here](#) to learn more about how to start a garden.

If you are not involved in Servolution, **we invite you to volunteer at our March Food Pantry events - March 12 & 26**. Please check Realm for volunteer information.

FASTING DURING LENT

STAGE 1

Wednesday, March 2-Friday, March 11

Eliminate ALL pork, sweets (cookies, candies, desserts), fried foods, breads and ALL dairy (milk, cheese, ice cream). Beverages only from 7 PM - 7 AM or whichever 12-hour period you designate. Drink 64+ ounces of water daily unless otherwise advised by your physician. Other drinks include herbal teas, protein smoothies and reduced sugar beverages AFTER athletic workouts (Gatorade G2, Vitamin Water Zero, Powerade Zero). Vitamins and supplements are allowed and encouraged.

STAGE 3

Tuesday, March 22-Thursday, March 31

In ADDITION to Stages 1 & 2, consume only 1 hot meal per day. Raw vegetables, fruits, nuts are allowed. Vitamins and supplements are allowed and encouraged.



STAGE 2

Saturday, March 12-Monday, March 21

In ADDITION to Stage 1, limit all meals to what is commonly known as the "Daniel Fast". Vegetables, fruits, nuts and liquids are allowed. Vitamins and supplements are allowed and encouraged.



STAGE 4

Friday, April 1-Sunday, April 10

For those that are physically, mentally and spiritually directed, this stage is liquid only. Vitamins and supplements are allowed and encouraged.



*Disclaimer:

"If you are under the care of a physician, or have a pre-existing health condition, please check with your physician prior to beginning this fasting regimen."

