

The Fast I Choose: *Living with Intentionality*

Gifts

Weekly Lenten Prayer Service

Please see your Lenten Orders for Praise & Prayer booklet.

Check in

Participants are invited to share a bit of their soul each week by answering this check-in question.

What's the one thing you cannot live without?

Sermon Focus

Participants should take turns reading the section below.

This story of Jesus turning the tables in the temple is a big deal. In many ways, it's a Jesus we don't see anywhere else in the Gospel. His activist use of performance art as an intentional disruption of the "every day business" of the temple has been well documented by scholars. Jesus' violence is an act of creative resistance and disruption.

The temple, a holy place that was meant to serve God, had become a money-making machine that exploited the poorest among their community. And we understand what that can be like. We've all seen religious leaders on TV who promise us a better spot in heaven or a wave of riches and abundance if we just give more to them.

We know that the systems of this world exploit people and that the wealth gap is getting bigger and bigger.

But that's what's so different about giving to the church – about being the church. It's a different movement. The world's ideas of giving and receiving are turned on their heads and we can do and be different.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it look like to intentionally participate in the life of the church by our *gifts*?
2. Does your financial discipleship matter to you? Why or why not?
3. How can our church better weave generosity into all that we do as disciples of Jesus (as opposed to a yearly pledge drive)?

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Spiritual Practice

Each week of Lent we will participate in a different prayer practice.

Fasting is another ancient spiritual practice of many religions, including Christians. Fasting is a common practice during Lent. Some people fast from food (desserts, for example). Some people fast from technology. Some people fast from spending money on non-necessities, like skipping the coffee bought at the coffee shop and giving that money to the poor. This week we are all going to fast from something.

The length and fast is your choice. As you experience the natural sensation of wanting *that thing* that you are giving up, remember what God has given you. Reflect also on your financial discipleship and the sharing/giving/returning of your gifts to God's work done collectively through our congregation and the body of Christ.

Feel free to document your experience in your Prayer Journal if you feel called.

Closing Prayer

Have a new person lead the prayer each week.

Abundant Creator, teach us your ways. Teach us to turn from a mindset of scarcity to that of *enough*. Help us to release that which we do not need. Guide us in our financial discipleship and make the use of our money more toward the goals of your kingdom every day. **Amen.**