

MONDAY | MAY 13

We can come to our devotions hurried and with distractions on our minds. Take some time to be still, and ask God to speak to you through His Word today and during this season.

Read Joel 2:1-17. Verses 1-11 describe the coming of an army against God's people in judgment. How does this affect the way you read the call to repentance in verses 12-17?

How would you describe the repentance that verses 12-17 calls for? What words from these verses stand out to you?

Verse 13 says, "*rend your heart, not your garments.*" In other words, repentance is a change of heart, not just an expression of religious piety. It's about motives. So we need to turn not only from those things we've done wrong, but those things we've done right for the wrong reasons. With that in mind, what will real repentance look like for you?

Take some time to ask the Lord if there are areas in your life where you need to practice repentance today. You may consider reviewing the questions above.

TUESDAY | MAY 14

Before reading the passage below, take a moment to define the word, "**repentance**." What is repentance, and what does it look like to you?

Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-13. How does this passage define repentance? Consider the words regret, sorrow, and the term repentance in coming up with your definition.

In verse 11, Paul tells us what repentance looked like for the Corinthians. He says, "See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter." What would real repentance look like in your life? What would it look like in our church's life?

When Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses (talking points) on the door at Wittenberg Castle in 1517, the first one read: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said 'Repent,' he intended that the entire life of believers should be one of repentance." Why is it so difficult to make repentance a life style?

Take some time to ask God to grow you in your understanding of repentance. Are there any areas where you are slow to repent, or resist repentance?

WEDNESDAY | MAY 15

Read Matthew 6:16-18. According to this passage, what is the true "reward" of fasting?

Joel 2:12 says, "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning." Why do you think God called his people to repent with fasting? What difference, do you suppose, will going without food for a short time make in your relationship with God?

As we enter into this period of preparation, take some time to consider what God would have you fast in order to be more focused on him. Remember there are different ways to fast: it may mean skipping a meal a week or eating no dessert for the next 25 days. It may also mean taking a break from TV or social media. The question is: What will help my heart focus more fully on the Lord?

THURSDAY | MAY 16

Read Isaiah 58. According to this passage, what kind of fasting is pleasing to the Lord?

In our church wide assessment, CCC is described as having poor conflict resolution skills. In some cases, some people seem to be conflict avoidant. How have you been conflict avoidant?

Take some time, in light of the kind of repentance that is called for in Isaiah 58, to confess areas of poor conflict practice, and any related issues. As you do, remember that God responds to us with grace as we come to him in brokenness. "Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am'" (Isaiah 58:9).

FRIDAY | MAY 17

Read Romans 8:1-13. According to this passage, how do we put to death "the things of the flesh?"

The following issues may be the reason a church should practice Sacred Assembly. Take some time to prayerfully reflect on these things and ask God to reveal to you any that you need to repent of. Then ask the Holy Spirit to help you overcome these sins, through the power of the gospel in the years ahead.

☐ arguing ☐ rebellion ☐ luke-warmness ☐ selfish ambition ☐ conflict ☐ bitterness
☐ lying/gossip ☐ legalism ☐ arrogance ☐ division ☐ immorality ☐ unforgiveness
☐ complaining ☐ greed ☐ insolence ☐ malice ☐ unbelief ☐ idolatry ☐ perversion
☐ extortion ☐ adultery ☐ anger ☐ coercion

SATURDAY/SUNDAY | MAY 18/19

Spend some time meditating on **2 Corinthians 7:8-16**, in anticipation of today's sermon, or in light of today's sermon. What do you think God is saying to CCC, or to you, through this passage?