

Into The Wilderness || A Series Through Lent

Spiritual Disciplines

Sermon Synopsis: Lent is for training the habits to catch up with the heart through the spiritual disciplines

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (ESV)

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Why are we the way that we are?

You are what you eat!¹

This idea that what goes into you, forms you.

This is true on many levels. What you think, what you do, what's been done to you, what you value, and continually give practice to...these form you little by little.

MacD's everyday. Just because it's not immediate, doesn't mean it's not impactful

Some of the most significant things about you took root over a long period of time, through habits, and repeated behaviors.

You can't opt out of the spiritual life—you are already in it!

1 Corinthians 9:24 (ESV)

Do you not know that in a race **all the runners run, but only one receives the prize?**

All of us are forming at every moment. But we're not always forming well. "Stuck"

Why can't I change?

Romans 7:18 (ESV)

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For **I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability** to carry it out.

Problem: the flesh (your range of natural human impulses, abilities, resources)

Flesh is not bad, but rather "sin in the flesh"²—or relying on our own human resources and abilities

Paul: my habits have not caught up with my heart³

Only Christ can change us!

Romans 8:3 (NLT)

The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. **And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins**

Romans 6:6 (NLT)

We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. **We are no longer slaves to sin.**

Romans 8:11 (ESV)

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies** through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Christ can transform the *whole* person (body, mind, heart). But we must respond to it.

A Way Forward

We need: (keep previous points up as new appear)

1. Vision

So run that you may obtain it. (1 Corinthians 9:24a, ESV) – “imperishable” (v25c)

You need a vision for how this is a better way to live.

Do you not have this yet? That's why you hate Lent.

Colossians 2:23 (NLT)

These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

Be born again. Then feast on words of Jesus, til you can't NOT have it.

2. Intention

So **I do not run aimlessly**; I do not box as one beating the air. (1 Cor 9:26, ESV)

How does he run? How should we run?

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

3. Means

But **I discipline my body** and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:26, ESV)

Hence *Lent*. But see why the first two are so important?

Practice without passion is oppression

What are the “means” offered at Lent?

- Detoxing (cravings, noise, material resources)
- Reorienting (what spaces are these currently taking that Christ can have?)

Ask, “God, what do you want me to release during this season?”

Begin listening to how God wants to fill those voids with Himself

¹ “Ninety per cent of the diseases known to man are caused by cheap foodstuffs. You are what you eat.” Coined by the nutritionist Victor Lindlahr in the 1920’s-30’s and used by mom’s everywhere.
<https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/you-are-what-you-eat.html>

² For example, Paul says that “it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me,” (Rom 7:17) therefore Christ came to condemn “sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3)

³ Matthew 26:41 “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”