

‘And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.’ (Matthew 3:2).

LSB 418 - LSB 418 - O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days
(Verse 1 of this week’s hymn served as inspiration for today’s devotion.)

I remember growing up during the 1960s in an Irish Catholic family and the importance my family stressed upon ‘giving up’ something for Lent. My grandmother would quiz us kids and if our ‘sacrifice’ did not meet her standards “WHACK!” You learned to be very serious about what you gave up for Lent with my grandmother around. Although we were not permitted to offer our own thoughts regarding the season of Lent and what it meant to us, I did learn that there are things that are more important to keep vs. giving up.

As our Lord Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to fulfill the Father’s will and face the devil head-on, He did not permit Himself to ‘give-up’ nor ‘give-in’ to the temptations of the flesh! For years, I always thought it was just hyperbole that Jesus would fast for forty days and forty nights. I had never known or seen anyone that ever fasted for that long. In fact, I thought something like that was not even humanly possible and fasting that long must have been an exaggeration.

However, I would learn that it was absolutely true and Jesus in showing complete obedience to the Father would demonstrate that with God all things are possible. Jesus, without resorting to using any of His divinity, would suffer the pangs of hunger in His humility and humanity for us; fulfilling what was spoken to Moses to instruct God’s people saying “man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” Jesus kept the fast, He kept the Commandments and everything else we have been unable to keep to fulfill the righteous requirements for our salvation.

As praying and fasting are now a very important part of my Lenten discipline, I’d like to think that my grandmother would be pleased to know that I learned that some things are just as important to keep than to give up.

Prayer

Loving Father, thank You for sustaining us who hunger and thirst for righteousness. May our hearts be set free to obey Your Commandments that we may also inspire others to repentance and forgiveness in Jesus’ name, Amen.