

SERMON NOTES:



5th March, 2026

Lent Part 4
Renunciation

Pastor Mick Spann

We Are Being Shaped Every Day

- We live in a culture that disciplines us daily.
- The question isn't "Are we being disciplined?" but "Who or what is disciplining us?"
- Some researchers suggest we see up to 10,000 advertisements a day.
- These messages tell us:
 - You don't have enough.
 - You need more.
 - You deserve more.

Lent: A Place of Renunciation

- The wilderness becomes a place where we loosen our grip on material things.
- A place where we learn the freedom of saying no.

Treasure and the Heart

- Matthew 6:19–21
 - “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...
 - But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...
 - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
- Jesus links treasure and heart.
- Our hearts follow what we treasure.
 - Fragile treasure → anxious heart.
 - Temporary treasure → unstable joy.

Two Masters

- Matthew 6:24
 - “No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve both God and money.”
- Jesus uses the word Mammonas (wealth, possessions).
- Accumulation can become a rival master.

The Rich Young Ruler

- Mark 10 — Jesus tells a rich young ruler:
 - “Go, sell everything you have... Then come, follow me.”
- Jesus didn't say this to everyone.
- He said it to this man because his possessions possessed him.
- Something was blocking his surrender.

Living in Babylon

- In Revelation, John calls the Roman system “Babylon.”
- Babylon represents a culture opposed to God.
- We still live inside a system that pushes for values that don’t align with God’s Kingdom.
- If we do nothing, we WILL drift with the current.

The Lie of More

- Small indulgences promise happiness.
- Over time, they require more and more.
- The law of diminishing returns:
 - More accumulation - Less satisfaction.
- This pattern is seen in addictions.
- Humanity has never found life by taking more.

Nothing New Under the Sun

- Genesis (Adam and Eve) — They reached out to seize what wasn’t theirs.
- Instead of becoming like God, they lost rest in Him.
- What makes us whole cannot be seized, it must be received.

True Treasure

- Our souls long for rest, security, peace and wholeness
- All these things are found in God through Christ Jesus.
- Matthew 6:19–21 reminds us that eternal treasure is secure in Him.

Practices That Resist Materialism and the god of self.

- Simplicity
- Thanksgiving
 - Materialism says: “You don’t have enough.”
 - Gratitude says: “Look again.”
 - Gratitude restores joy in simple gifts.
- Sabbath
 - Rest from work, and attaining more.
 - A reminder that God sustains the world.
 - A brilliant opportunity to celebrate the bounty God has already given to us.

Renunciation Is Freedom

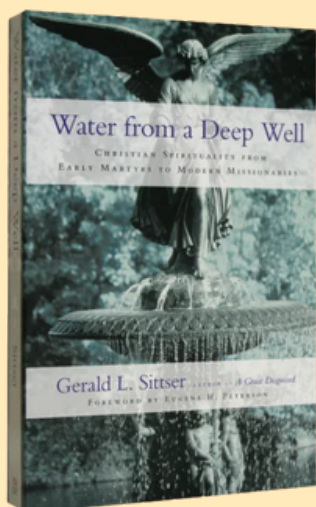
- Renunciation is not loss. It is lightening the load.
 - It leads to freedom from: Anxiety, Comparison, the endless pursuit of more.
 - When our treasure is secure in heaven, our hearts can rest.

This series is based upon resources lovingly provided by Lectio 365 and the 24-7 Prayer Movement. The companion study guide on the next page is designed for small groups to consider each weekly theme more personally.

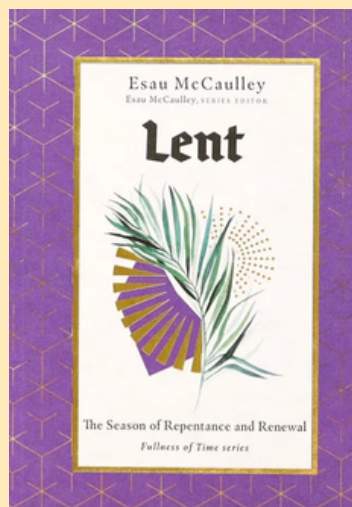
The Lectio 365 App provides daily guided prayers, in the style of meditative lectio divina. Over the next 40 days, the App will focus specifically upon these themes of Lent.



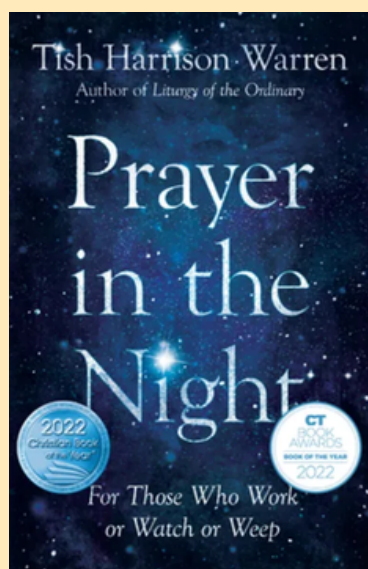
In preparation for this series, Mick has found these books to be very good:



Water from a Deep Well
by Gerald L. Sittser



Lent
by Esau McCauley



Prayer in the Night
by Tish Harrison Warren



Sabbath as Resistance
Walter Brueggemann





Week 4

(The third week after Ash Wednesday)

The Freedom of Renunciation

The Desert as a Place of Self-Denial and Austerity

Icebreaker Question

What is the best gift you have ever received? Why did it mean so much to you?

Watch



lectio365.com/desertresources

Week 4: Syncletica of Alexandria

Read



Matthew 6:19–24

Mark 10:21

Discuss

1. In the video, Pete mentioned his wrestle with the Desert Fathers and Mothers and how sometimes they seem “disturbing, confusing or downright weird”. Now that you have started studying their lives and teachings, how do you feel? Do they seem extreme and over the top, or do you find their examples inspiring and convicting?
2. Jesus talks about how we cannot serve two masters: both money/wealth (mammon) and God (Matthew 6:24). What do you think he means by “serving” money or having it be a “master” over you. Can you think of any ways you feel this pull in your own life?
3. Which areas of your life do you find most difficult to surrender to God?
4. In Luke 12:27–28, we are told that God will provide for all of our needs. In which areas of your life do you find it hardest to trust this promise?
5. Dallas Willard points out that, although following Jesus is immensely costly, there is an even greater cost to non-discipleship: “Non-discipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated