



# Fresh Oil



February 2008 (reprise 2018)

Dear Fellow Servants,

I want to talk with you this month about the season of Lent, which this year begins on February 14th. This is the 40 day period leading up to Easter Sunday, the celebration of our Lord's resurrection. For many, it is an opportunity to reflect on what Christ has done for us and to "deny one's self" in an effort to draw more closely to the Saviour during this time. Consider what Jesus said in Luke 9:23:

***"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."***

I want us to look more closely at the word "deny" in this verse. It means to "disown, abstain, deny utterly, refuse." In fact, it has the notion of affirming that one has no connection with that which he is denying. Whoa, baby! Depending on what it is you're denying, this can be very difficult, indeed!

As a child growing up, we were encouraged by my mother to 'give something up' for Lent. It was usually something we liked, such as chocolate or potato chips (we tried giving up chores and broccoli, but she wasn't buying it!). However, this verse clearly states, and it's Jesus doing the talking, that *self* is what we are to deny. Being a follower of Jesus is going to cost us something, folks. Our world is constantly pounding out its message of 'looking out for #1' (which is self), but that is not the way of the cross.

You may have heard the saying, 'each of us has his own cross to bear.' This is true. It does not include the things Jesus already bore in His own body on His cross (sin, sickness, and the things associated with them). It does, however, involve persecution for being a Christian, as the apostle Paul warns in 2 Timothy 3:12:

***"And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."***

Jesus makes the point even firmer in Matthew 10:38:

***"And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."***

Lent is a great season of time in the church year to refocus and re-examine ourselves as followers of Jesus Christ. Let's take this opportunity to do just that.

Your Fellow Servant,

*Pastor Brian*

*... I have been anointed with fresh oil*

PSALM 92:10

