

**Lent 1**  
**25 February 2007**

**Psalm 91:1-11**

**Deuteronomy 26:1-11.** Honouring memories and history: recall

**Romans 10:8b-13.** If you confess lips and believe heart you will be saved. Everyone, whole world.

Refresh

**Luke 4:1-13.** temptations

Lent is gloom and self-denial. WRONG.

- George Herbert, Lent as a feast, and so it is.
- festival of growth.
- lengthening, spring growth..

Lent opportunity **recall, reflect and renew ourselves,**

- renewal always involves some kind of growth. Just as the desert period did for Our Lord.

In biology, shedding of something we no longer need. And that's the origin of giving up something for Lent.

- If we give up something we like, self denial, only to gorge ourselves on it later, then we are being rather silly. There's no point in making ourselves miserable.
- I'm not giving up chocolate, or crisps, or anything else like that. And certainly not gin.
- Lent abstinence approached this way is surely rather silly.

If I really want to emulate Our Lord's period in the desert, I will try to give up

- **unwanted attitudes**
- things that tether me to old ways of thinking.
- Prevent growth.

If you want to do something really productive –

- try to see ourselves as others see us.
- And then try to shed the attitude or way of thinking or behaving that shocks us the most about what we have seen about ourselves.
- If we imagine that there's nothing to get rid of, we deceive ourselves .....

That would lead to growth.

- Shedding.
- Discarding old skin, like a reptile.
- insect coming out of chrysalis, biological
- Metamorphosis is the word Paul uses to describe changing from glory to glory
- Last week, Easter
- Wesley

Jesus transformed approaches resurrection.

We too can approach Christ as we

- cooperate with his will
- align our will with his,
- work according to his teaching.
  
- This is Penitence. turning again to god,
- can mean hating for god Trevor Huddleston used to say that Christians need to know how to hate.
- It was easy for him to see the enemy. Ours is more subtle, more difficult to see
  - Lying deceit
  - Choice
  - Advertising

**Penitence** is gateway of grace

- So not a stage through which we pass, but permanent state of mind.
- Refocussing
- Ask yourself: is it God that I seek, or is it some part of me that I dress up as God.
- It is easy to fool myself

**Penitence** is not about feeling miserable.

We don't need to kill ourselves, make ourselves feel guilty. It is about feeling authentically human  
God became man so that man might become god  
So being authentically human is to approach .....

We do not need to hide our light under a bushel

It is not our light to hide – we have a duty to shine, so long as

'There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.' *Marianne Williamson Return to Love*

Rather than concentrating, as the gloomier versions of Christianity so often do, on self denial and guilt and thinking about what we are saved **from**, we instead keep our eyes and intentions fixed on what we are saved **to**. Glory, radiance, joy.

Make the next six weeks an opportunity to clear out the rubbish in your soul that is clouding your vision.  
Preventing your growth

Then we too will be changed from glory into glory. We will, like the caterpillar become the butterfly.

So when you look in Paul's mirror you will see not so much an image as if through a glass darkly, but an image of glory.

**George Herbert can have the last word.**

**Teach me**

A man that looks on glass, on it may stay his eye, or if he pleaseth, through it pass, and then the heavens espy.

**If he pleaseth** – the road is open to all. All we have to do is to want to travel along it. Then we too will be transfigured.

Amen.