

Chris Ewing  
February 26, 2008

When I was younger, I never really understood what Lent was about, and, being still relatively young, I still don't to some extent. Sometimes Lent can seem like merely a time of self inflicted suffering, when we try to re-enact Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness by giving up candy. This intense sugar-deprivation can sometimes cause us to forget what the season of Lent is about or what we can learn from constant active observance of a church season. Having given up sweets this year, whenever I get a sudden sugar craving, I try to remember why I am denying myself, which always leads to the same question: why did Jesus deny himself those 40 days in the wilderness, or why did Jesus suffer at all? The answer that always seems to make the most sense for me is because of his love for us. Jesus denied temptation in the wilderness so that he might begin his ministry as the son of God. Jesus suffered and died on the cross so that he might save us from original sin. He endured all this because he loved us, and the only thing he asked for in return was that we love God and each other. Innate in this love is forgiveness. Jesus forgave us our sins and asked only that we forgive others as he forgave us. This concept makes complete sense. How can we not treat others as the kingdom of heaven has treated us? If Jesus was able to

forgive our sins, and was even willing to be crucified for them, shouldn't we be able to forgive others in the same way, especially if no imminent execution is involved? Of course, we are after all, only human, and therefore subject to grudges, resentments, and an array of different emotions which make forgiving difficult. However, I try to view these hindrances as similar to the crucifixion. Jesus had the threat of a painful death encumbering him from forgiving us of our sins, and we have a few complicated emotions. Suddenly, forgiveness doesn't seem quite as difficult to me. Lent puts things into perspective in a similar way. If Jesus was able to fast in the wilderness for 40 days to show his love for us, shouldn't we be able to give up sugar for the same amount of time to show our love for him and each other? In doing so, not only can we show our love, but be reminded to think about what this love means. For me it means forgiveness, it means that no matter how much someone has wronged me, I must still forgive them, no matter how hard it might be. And, if we can find it in our hearts to act out what love means for us, then maybe we can begin to live up to what Jesus asked us to do.