

This month at New Life Community, we join with millions of Jesus followers around the world—across cultures, languages, and traditions—in setting our hearts and minds on the coordinates of the cross, and just beyond it, the empty tomb of Resurrection Sunday.

As the season of anticipation leading into Christmas has a certain flavor and themes to it that we celebrate in Advent, so too many Christians have prepared themselves to celebrate the joy of Resurrection in the season of Lent, which traditionally begins with Ash Wednesday and leads all the way up to Easter Sunday. This time of year is often marked by an attitude and posture of repentance—often practiced in forms of fasting (giving up something) or adding in something God-honoring during this season.

While I did not personally grow up with this tradition, I have grown to appreciate this annual season of reflection, reevaluation, and repentance that helps me remember and take to heart the incredible mercy of Jesus in His saving life, death, and resurrection.

One phrase that traditionally begins this Lent season is: “Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

These words come from Jesus Himself in His very first sermon recorded in the Gospel according to Mark (which is likely the first of the Gospels to have been recorded). The first “red-letter” line in Mark reads like this:

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” – Jesus (Mark 1:15, NIV)

In other words, this annual call repeated at Lent echoes the original gospel (good news) proclamation that Jesus chose to begin His earthly ministry with—which winds up being the proclamation that He would be willing to die for out of love for our broken world.

Every year, I find that I need to hear this challenge in a fresh way. There are areas in my life where Christ continues to call me to repent (literally, to turn away from distraction, temptation, and sin), in order that I might receive more of His grace and truth, healing and forgiveness.

The incredibly concise length of this sermon (which is what—maybe 10 seconds long, like a YouTube ad or half a TikTok video!) highlights the urgency that this message should spark in us. As the old adage goes, “The best time to start was yesterday. The second-best time is right now.” This is clearly what Jesus means when He says, “The time has come,” and the kingdom of God is near (or at hand, like you could reach out and touch it).

This brings us from what we are to repent of or turn from, to what we are to believe: namely, the gospel. I don’t know about you, but I often feel bombarded with bad news—stories of growing division, mistrust, hurt, abuse, and deceit. The algorithms feed on that and keep serving it up. But what we cannot lose sight of, as Jesus followers, is our belief in the reality of good news—the gospel story of Jesus’ perfect provision for our hurts, and His victory over sin, death, and the devil. This remains breaking news in our broken world.

So I am thankful for this season of Lent and the road that leads to the cross and the empty tomb. This month, may we all be led by the Spirit to continue repenting and believing the gospel.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Brad

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New Life Community

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service & Communion 5 PM Youth Group 6:30 PM GriefShare	2 Sermon Series: "The Road Less Traveled: Journeying with Jesus to the Cross"	3 6 AM Men's Bible Study 2:35 Good News Club at Jefferson 6:30 PM Healing Room Prayer	4 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	5 6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery	6	7 
8 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 5 PM Youth Group 6:30 PM GriefShare	9 3	10 6 AM Men's Bible Study 9 AM LIFT Women's Bible Study 2:35 GNC 6:30 PM Healing Room	11 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	12 6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery	13	14  5:15 PM Tacos on the Patio 6-7:15 Youth Worship Night
15 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service (guest Archie Copeland) 5 PM Youth Group 6:30 PM GriefShare	16	17 6 AM Men's Bible Study 2:35 Good News Club at Jefferson 6:30 PM Healing Room Prayer	18 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	19 6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery	20	21
22 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 11:30 New Members' Class 5 PM Youth Group 6:30 PM GriefShare	23	24 6 AM Men's Study 9 AM LIFT Women's Bible Study 2:35 Good News Club at Jefferson	25 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	26 6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery	27	28
29 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 11:15 Family Meal 5 PM Youth Group 6:30 PM GriefShare		31 6 AM Men's Bible Study 2:35 Good News Club at Jefferson	1 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	2 6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery	3 Good Friday; 5-7 PM "Created New" Kids' Art Event (Time TBA) Good Friday Observance	4
<i>Memory Verse for this month:</i> Luke 9:51	<i>"As the time approached for Him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."</i>	NOTES APRIL PREVIEW: 5--Easter Sunday; 8--Wednesday Discipleship Group begins (6 weeks); 10 & 11--MCC Relief Sale in Fresno; 12--Women's Baked Potato Bar Fundraiser; 14--Final Good News Club meeting at Jefferson; 19--Mennonite Men's Chorus Concert in Reedley Calendar accurate as of 2/24/26-- most events also on website calendar at www.newlifedinuba.org				