Giving Up

A Lenten Sermon Series at Verona UMC -
What are you giving up for Lent?

FEBRUARY 26
CONTROL
MARCH 4
EXPECTATIONS
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SUPERIORITY
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OUR LIVES
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DEATH
CONTROL
Giving It Up
From Adam and Eve to Abraham to Moses to David to Mary and Joseph to Jesus, the story of the Bible is a story of CONTROL
In Matthew 4:1-11, the Devil creates a series of temptations to sway Jesus, weakened by hunger, to take control of his life away from his Heavenly Father.
After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”
Giving up control of our lives begins with a desire for God’s Word and the acknowledgement that true life can only be sustained through that Word.
Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:
“‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
Giving up control means having trusting faith that relies on God without putting God to the test.
Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”
Giving up control means rejecting our false idols and goals... the ones we choose and use for our own ends...

“What shall it profit a man...” (Matt. 16:26)
The first step to becoming a follower of Christ is to give up the illusion of control, the idea that we hold our lives in our hands.
A practical atheist is someone who, regardless of his doctrinal beliefs, approaches life as if he were the only resource available.
Then Jesus said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Jesus never asks us to do anything he hasn’t already done.
In the temptations in the Wilderness, Jesus doesn’t attack his enemy. He doesn’t rage. He simply quotes Scripture. Calmly.
Further, he doesn’t feel the need to exert control. Trusting in the Word of God is Enough.
Further, he doesn’t feel the need to exert control. The eternal Word of God is in control.
SELF-CONTROL (EGKRATEIA) IS FOUND 3 TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

Egkrateia from Kratos = Strength

Acts 24:25 included along with "righteousness" and "discernment"

Galatians 5:23 a fruit of the Spirit

2 Peter 1:6 knowledge must be accompanied by self-control
Our call today is not to give up that control rooted in God’s Spirit, but that “self-centered control,” rooted in the desires of the flesh and in our sinful natures.
The signs and fruits of self-centered control apart from God’s Spirit:

1) Increased anxiety and frustration
2) Alienation
3) Projection of Superiority
4) Hypocrisy
5) Self-loathing
The signs and fruits of Spirit-led and fed self-control
1) Continually seeking the leading of God’s Spirit
2) Cooperative attitude
3) Other fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5)
4) A calm spirit marked by joy and a desire to serve others
5) Sincerity of purpose
The **self-centered** person seeks control by any means possible.

The **Spirit-controlled** person seeks the reign of God in the world through God’s power alone.
In the hardest trial of all, Jesus left control in the Father’s hands:

"Abba Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet, not what I will, but what you will."
Paul saw this same trait in Jesus when he said:

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;"
"rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

Philippians 2:5-8
Our profession of faith is a surrender of control of our lives to the God who created us.

In that profession we join with Jesus in the wilderness and we renounce the evil forces of this world.
CONTROL

...Give It Up!