

# Sermon – Relentless

**Pastor Ed Blonski | February 22, 2023**

*“For dust you are and to dust you will return.”* - Genesis 3:19c

With these words, we begin the Church season of Lent.

Lent is the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Holy Saturday (day before Easter) – but not counting the Sundays as they are considered “little Easters” – a day each week to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are many traditions surrounding Lent.

Ashes on the forehead (or back of the hand), for one.

Giving something up is another tradition.

This tradition started long ago as people imitated Jesus Christ who fasted forty days in the wilderness.

“Giving up” something for Lent can remind us that we will, someday, give up our lives. We will die. All people die. And Ash Wednesday is a day that we remember that we are dust and one day we will return to the dust – “ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” Lent is a time to remember that we will die because we are all sinners.

Death is relentless. It is in all our futures.

*“For the wages of sin is death,”* The Bible says.

Lent is also a time to remember what God did about our sin – He sent Jesus Christ to live and to die for us.

This year, we are going to explore several aspects of the “Re-Lent-Less” road to Holy Week.



We will look at:

## Relentless Temptation

Matthew 4:1

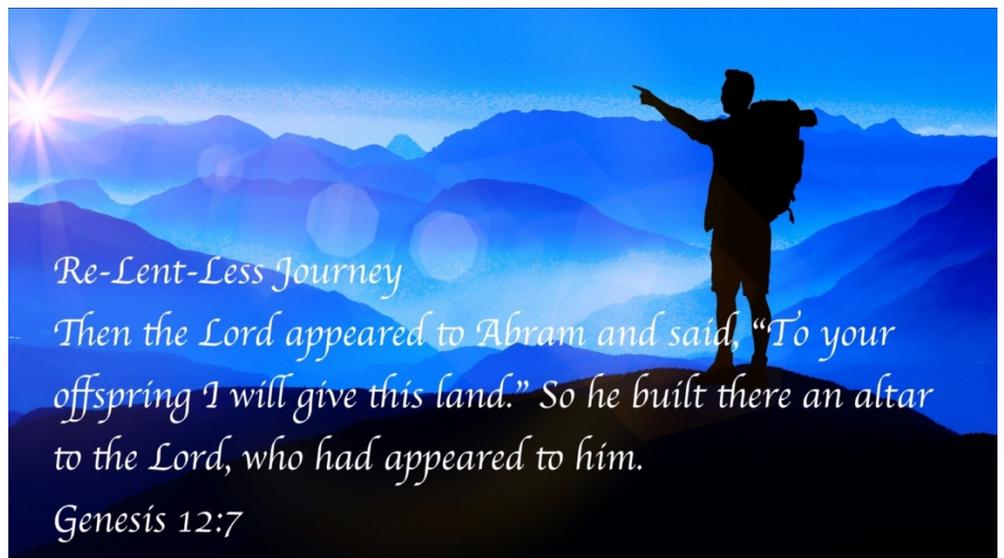
*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*



## Relentless Journey

Genesis 12:7

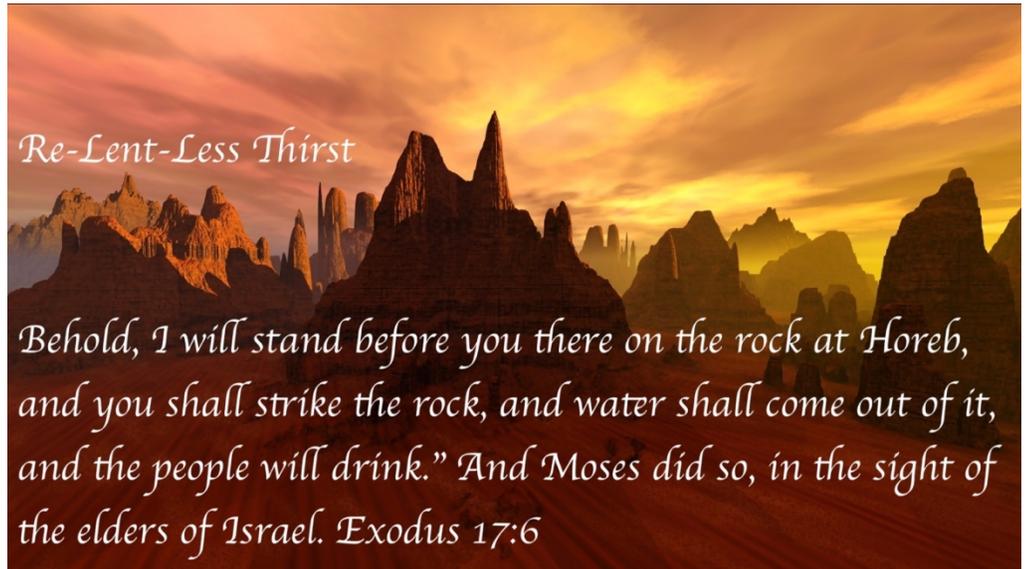
*Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.*



## Relentless Thirst

Exodus 17:6

*Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.*



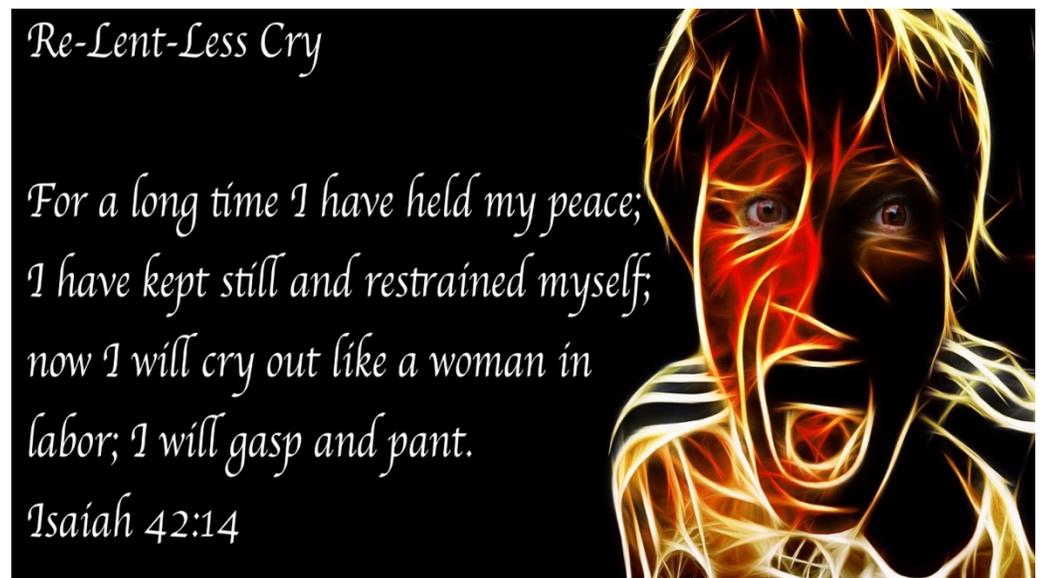
*Re-Lent-Less Thirst*

*Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. Exodus 17:6*

## Relentless Cry

Isaiah 42:14

*For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant.*



*Re-Lent-Less Cry*

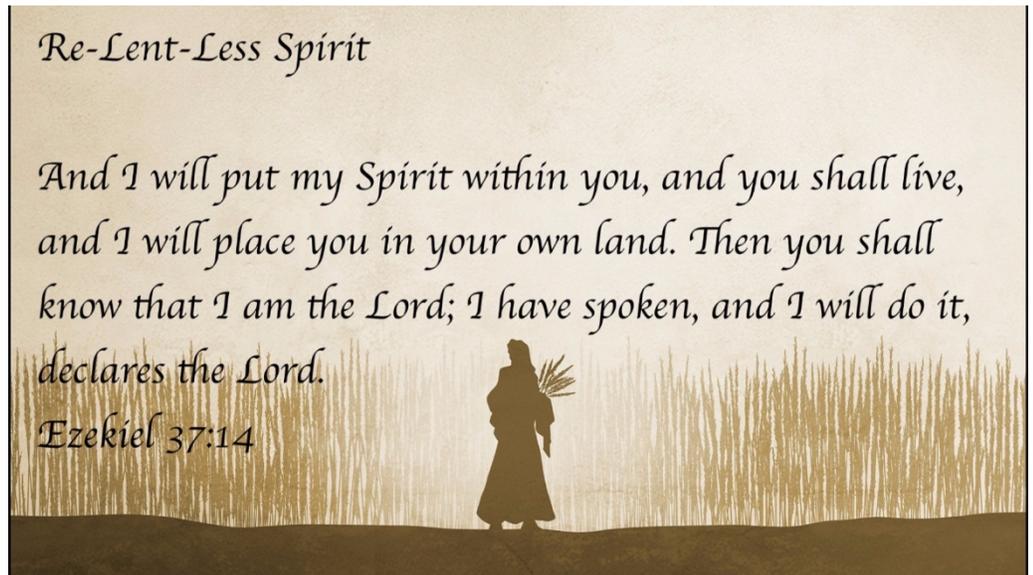
*For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant.*

*Isaiah 42:14*

## Relentless Spirit

Ezekiel 37:14

*And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.*



*Re-Lent-Less Spirit*

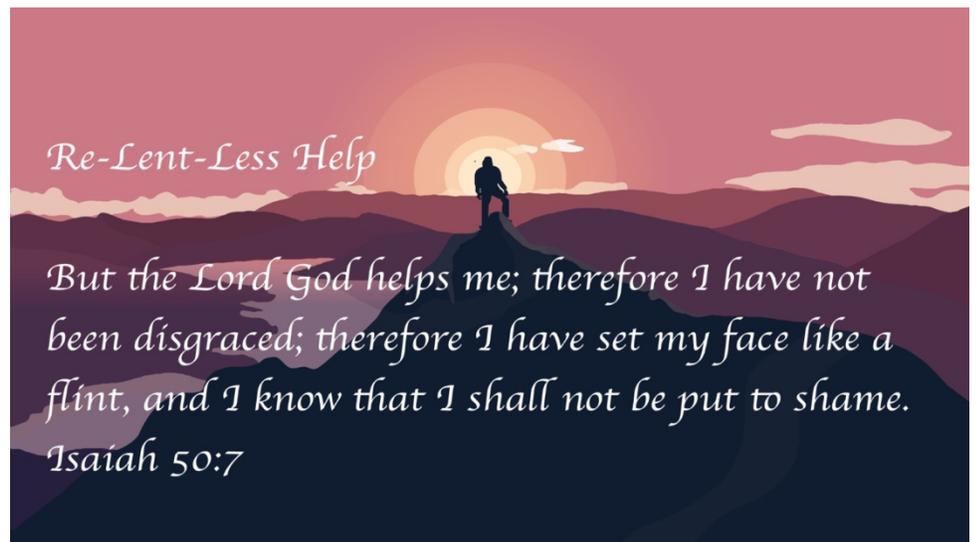
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*Ezekiel 37:14*

## Relentless Help

Isaiah 50:7

*But the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.*



*Re-Lent-Less Help*

*But the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.*

*Isaiah 50:7*

The point of this is that while it feels like sin, the devil, and death are relentlessly hounding us day after day, it is God who is actually relentless.

God is relentless in His love for us.

God is relentless in His salvation of us.

God is relentless in drawing us closer to Him so that we can live with boundless hope in heaven forever!

God's relentless love for us is His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus relentlessly pursued us to save us from our sins – a pursuit that took Him all the way to the cross to suffer and die so that we could be free and live!

God's relentless salvation of us is the Means of Grace.

His Holy Word that binds us together as a church and fills our souls with exactly what we need.

His sacraments of Baptism and Communion strengthens our faith as He gives us anew the forgiveness of our sins.

As we travel relentlessly to Holy Week, let us see again the blessing that God gives us.

As we have turned and repented of our sins, each week we can receive the grain offering of the Lord's Body and the drink offering of the Lord's blood for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father. We acknowledge that we are sinners and that one day we will return to the dust of the earth. I ask You to forgive our sin for the sake of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because of His death and resurrection, our death will be the entrance to eternal life. Bless us as we relentlessly travel this Lent to Holy Week and the celebration that awaits us. In Jesus' name, amen.