

FEBRUARY 18, 2018



# FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



GENESIS 9:8-15

PSALM 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 PETER 3:18-22

MARK 1:12-15

## REFLECTION

When high school students know they are committed to something, they work really hard to improve. For example, I knew high school students on the swim team. They would get up early and have an hour of swim practice from 6:30 AM to 7:30 AM before school started. They would have another practice after school for an hour or two. When I asked these young people about why they would do this, their response was typically, "Because I love to swim and want to get better at it."

I often compared this attitude from swimmers to the attitude I heard from many young people about requirements of service for Confirmation. I heard many complaints about having to do a few hours of service. Many simply didn't do the service or did it in a way that was basically meaningless. When young people were highly committed to something they could put in tremendous time and effort. But if they were not committed to something, then it was very hard for them to just do it. I have learned that this applies to adults too. It seems to be universally true that we put more effort into those things we are committed to.

This leads to the essential question for the First Sunday of Lent. How committed are you to grow in your faith this Lenten season? Are you like the swimmer who is committed to practicing and improving? Or not?

## ACTION

If you are committed to growing in your faith this Lent, then an important question is, how will your Lenten practices help you grow in your relationship with God? Lately, my own Lenten practices do not involve giving up candy or soda, but involve reading a chapter from Scripture each day. I then pick out a word or phrase for the day that I try to think about all day. I do this because I think reading the Bible helps me remember God's covenant with me and all people. It often reminds me of God's committed love. I've been tweeting out my chapter and word each day. I invite you to join me in this daily Lenten practice of reading a chapter in the Bible and tweeting out a word to ponder each day using #ytmword.

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- How committed are you to growing in your faith? What will be your Lenten practice this year? How might this practice more deeply connect you to God's committed love?