

In the season of Lent, we remember how much we need Christ and what Jesus did for us on the cross. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus reconciled us to God, bringing a new covenant and offering a new relationship with God through Christ. This forty-day season is when we reflect on who we are and why we need Jesus and what he has done for us.

John M. Drescher tells this story. A pastor was in his office when a woman from his congregation asked to speak with him. She had carried a terrible burden and needed him to listen and tell her what to do. Many years before, she had been unfaithful to her husband and she had carried the guilt of that sin with her ever since. The pastor asked her several questions.

“Do you believe what you did was wrong?” “Oh, yes! I know it was sin. I broke one of God’s commandments.” That, he told her, was conviction.

“Were you ever sorry for this sin?” “Every time I think of it. And I think of it every day.” That, he said, was contrition.

“Are you still committing this sin?” “No, it was just the one time.” That is repentance, turning from the sin.

“Did you ever ask God to forgive you?” “Many times. Maybe thousands.”

“Let me give you God’s word for you. God says, ‘If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness’ (1 John 1:9).

The pastor watched as a look of peace and joy spread over the woman’s face.

Psalm 51 begins, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.” We know that God’s love never wavers, even when ours does and we turn away. When we come to our senses and turn back to God, we find that God is waiting for us, ready to receive us, ready to forgive. Conviction, contrition, repentance, forgiveness. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Christ has broken the bonds of sin and opened us to God’s love and forgiveness.