

Wednesday Word
Ash Wednesday 2/14/24

As we begin the Lent season, we prepare our hearts with repentance, confession, and humility. We are looking forward to the resurrection of Jesus and the victory over sin and death. We commemorate the beginning of this season with ashes on our heads. This symbolizes our deep repentance and realizing that our spirits will receive the same death as our bodies if we do not turn toward the Lord.

Let's take a moment to consider what this day and what these ashes mean to us.

Ashes in the Bible represent:

1. Mourning
2. Mortality
3. Penance

In Esther 4:1-3, Mordecai uncovers the plot to destroy the Jewish people. He went into the town and wept in ashes and sackcloth as a heart cry before God.

In Job 42:1-6, we know Job sat in dust and ashes as he repented for not fully giving God the glory and honor that he deserved and for trying to articulate and understand God's reasoning and God's mind.

Jonah 3, the nation of Nineveh, one of the most wicked nations on the planet, is called to repent, fast and sit in ashes and sackcloth for three days in repentance for their evil deeds.

Ashes represent our spiritual mourning. In each of these biblical examples, they all mourned for their human frailty, each in different ways but their heart was the same. They mourned because something was wrong in the hearts of mankind to do evil.

Ashes also remind us of our mortality. We will not live forever and desperately need to be reconciled to God. Our life is in his hands and without him our souls and our spirits will meet the same fate as our bodies. We will die unless we cry out to him.

Penance is the physical attempt or physical "punishment". While we do not harm our bodies, we wear ashes as a symbol that we are deserving of death and punishment but put our faith in God who redeems us from all unrighteousness.

As we begin this lent season, let's take the challenge to position our hearts in humility before the Lord. Without him we are just dust and ashes. But with him, and the life he promises us, we are full, complete, and restored.

Please join me this evening for our Ash Wednesday Worship Service!

I love you and God loves you!

Pastor Eric