

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE THE HOLY FAST

Mid Week Instruction
Reid Temple AME Church
Pastor Washington

GENESIS



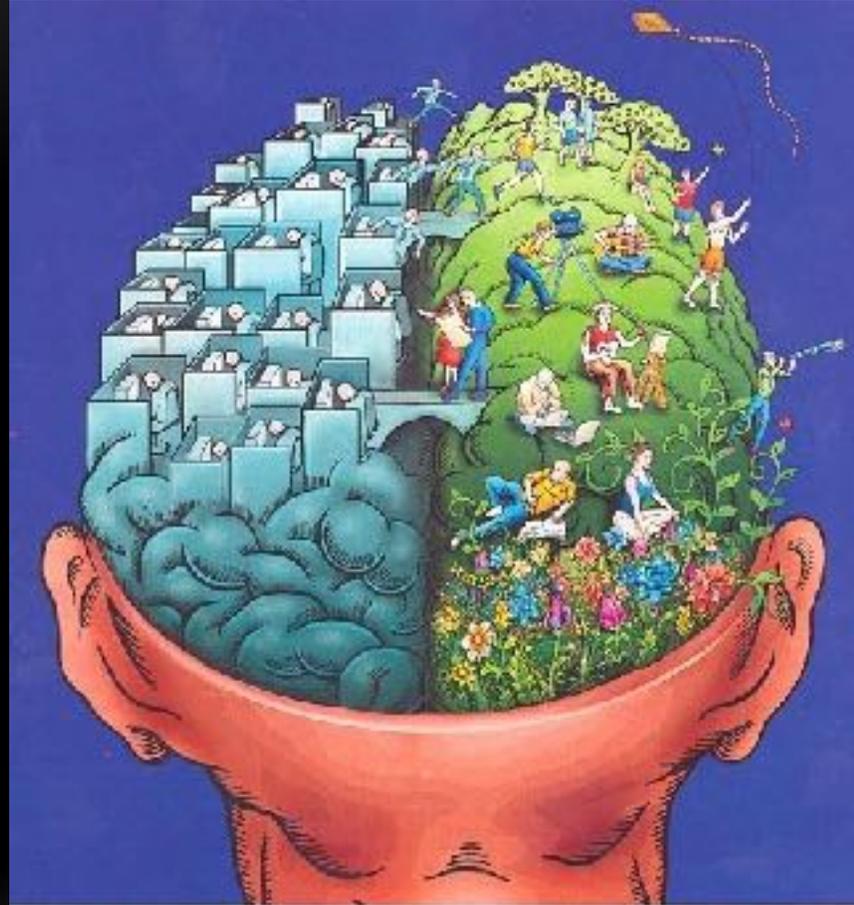
Remember man
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
return.



INTRODUCTION

- Capitol One credit card company had this advertisement that asked the question, “What is in your wallet?” The implication was that if you had their card, you will have smooth sailing through life.
 - Although this ad was catchy and appealing, it also was overstated, the Capitol one credit card may be a passport to much of what society offers but it is not what one has in their wallet as much as what one has in their heart that God is concerned with.
 - Ash Wednesday does not tell us what we have in personal wallets but what we have in our personal lives and personal will.
-

SPIRITUAL ATTIC



ASH WEDNESDAY

- Ash Wednesday is a time to look at what we have accumulated over the year that could often times hold us back.
- To take Ash Wednesday seriously is to discover that what you thought you had overcome or forgotten may still be there. Phil 3:13
- Ash Wednesday brings us face to face with the realization that the reason we respond or behave in the manner we do is because we have not made a clean break with what or who hinders us.

BLOW THE TRUMPET



JOEL 2:1 - BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION

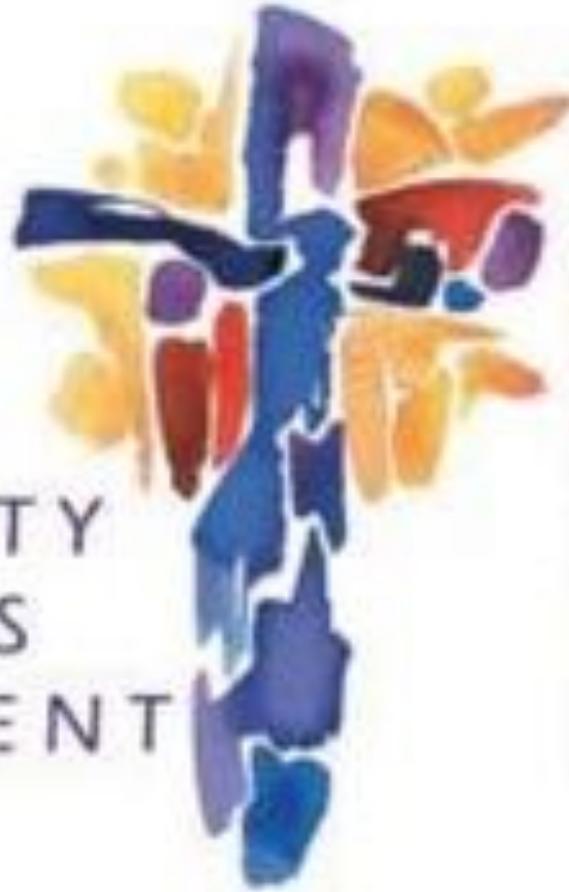
- The prophet Joel invites us to wake up, sound the alarm. The trumpet was used in order to get ready to receive God's message.
 - The message is that there is no peace in our lives until we make a serious effort to repent of things that have been clinging to our lives.
 - The message simply stated declares, "it is time to take care of business and be about what you promised yourself you were going to do."
-

RITUAL AND SYMBOLISM

- Ash Wednesday has for many Protestant congregations always been understood to be the province of Catholics, the ashes are a physical reminder of our mortality.
- We place the ashes on our forehead or what is called the “impositioning of ashes” and come away with the smudge of a cross.
- The ritual and symbolism is a reminder that we are made from the dust of the earth and to the dust we shall return.

RETURN TO GOD

THE
FORTY
DAYS
of LENT

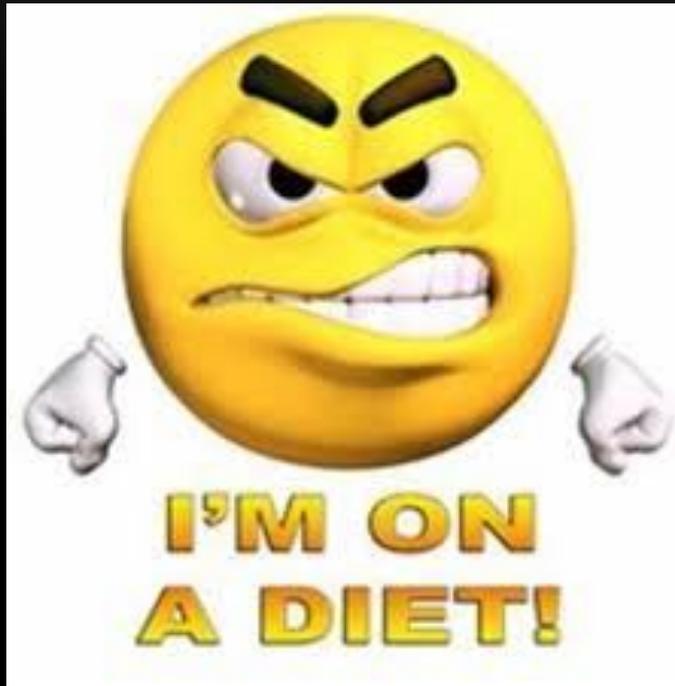


RETURN
to the
LORD
YOUR
GOD

LENT – PSALM 51

- Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent. Lent is a time used as part of our daily living to consider our faithfulness unto God.
- Lent is a time we go to God and confess and ask God to give us a clean heart and renew a right spirit. Lent is a time we “repent” we do an about face and turn our entire lives in the direction of God.
- We are to repent not primary because we have done something bad or wrong, but because our God has done something very good and will do something even better in the future.

DIETING OR FASTING?????



COMMON PRACTICE OF LENT

- One of the common practices of our day is that of dieting. Let's be honest, dieting is never easy...it takes a powerful lot of will power and determination. Dieting requires effort.
 - We are urged to diet, to lose weight, to look better, to aid in digestion, to build up muscles, to control cholesterol, to lower blood pressure, to avoid heart attack.
 - The bible does not ask us to diet, the bible does ask us to fast. We are to fast for healthy purposes and fasting is common during Lent.
-

FASTING



FASTING DURING LENT

- Many persons say they are going to abstain from certain foods during Lent, what they are actually saying is that they are going to fast from consuming those food items.
- The book of Joel does call for a fast, but it specially calls for a “holy fast.” Joel 2:15 *“blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.”*
- I know this is asking a lot, but would you even consider a holy fast for your soul during this next six weeks of Lent?

REPENTANCE

Step 2 FEEL SORROW
FOR SIN

Step 1 REALIZE YOU DID
SOMETHING WRONG

REPENTANCE

- We instinctively draw back from words like “repentance, fasting, discipline, and denial because these are difficult terms for the believer to reckon with.
- The Prophet Joel tells us to repent of our sins, selfishness, thoughtlessness, neglect of the Word, failure to pray, neglect of God, failure to live up the highest and best that we know.
- One of the ways we give evidence to our true repentance is by fasting. V12 says, “even now, declares the lord return to me with all your heart with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

WEEPING

- Weeping and fasting are outward signs of our genuine sorrow for the wrong we have committed. The "holy fast" is an external expression of denying ourselves and the mourning within the heart.
 - Until the the heart is reached, every other act is just a meaningless formality and cold ritual. Our spiritual renewal must go far beyond just our outward activity.
 - There is something in our human hearts that we don't like, or want to deny the self of anything it desires.
-

**DO SOMETHING
TODAY THAT YOUR
FUTURE SELF WILL
THANK YOU FOR**

WWW.LIVELIFEHAPPY.COM



I am a recovering
people pleaser.



(Is that okay?)



PLEASING SELF VS PLEASING GOD

- What do we not do to please self and nourish self? We make the devil within us strong by pleasing self. Look at your own life, what are the chief works of self?
 - They are chiefly these, “self-will” “self-trust” and “self-exaltation.” We would much rather indulge ourselves and that is why we struggle in the area of appetite.
 - God wants us to hunger and thirst after righteousness during these days of Lent.
-

CENTER ON GOD

- If we are to engage in a holy fast during Lent, if we fast or whatever we do needs to forever center on God and God alone.
 - If our fasting is not unto God, we have utterly failed. Our motives for fasting must never be for success, getting our prayers answered, or gaining new power.
 - There is no motive high or holy enough to replace the desire for God as the center of our living.
-

WHAT CONTROLS US?

- One of the things we learn during a holy fast is what controls us. We often cover up what is inside us, hide it even from ourselves.
- If pride or temper or jealousy, bitterness, or pettiness are inside us they quickly surface when you start a holy fast. Begin a holy fast and you will call attention to your pride.
- Begin a holy fast and you will see where you are disgruntled or mean spirited. Begin to fast and prevailing sins quickly rise up to expose themselves.

DEEPENING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- A holy fast deepens our relationship with God, in a culture where self-esteem is a high priority a holy fast doesn't come easy.
 - We prefer to rationalize wrong doing. The purpose of a holy fast is to bring us closer to the reality of cultivating a sense of awe and gratitude for God not just for the symbol of ashes.
 - Let's begin with Psalm 139. Ask God to show you where you need to change. What sins do you gravitate towards? What sins have you made excuses for? We can make peace by repenting and confessing.
-

V13-15 - REND YOUR HEART

- Rend your heart, not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing—grain offering and drink offerings for the Lord your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a fast, call a sacred assembly, Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the alter. Let them say, “spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, Where is their God.

WEEK 1 - DAY 1 THROUGH DAY 7

- Day 1. Make a commitment to enter a Holy fast for 40 days.
- Day 2. Write down your issues, present them before God.
- Day 3. Abstain from cursing and using hurtful words.
- Day 4. Abstain from lying, so that truth starts with you.
- Day 5. Abstain from raising your voice at others and yelling at others.
- Day 6. Abstain from arguments and gestures that belittle others.
- Day 7. Abstain from malicious gossip, and disclosing confidential information about others.

WEEK 2 – DAY 8 THROUGH DAY 15

- Day 8. Abstain from discouraging others.
- Day 9. Abstain from condemning yourself and others.
- Day 10. Abstain from passing judgment on others.
- Day 11. Abstain from complaining about others.
- Day 12. Abstain from tearing down family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- Day 13. Abstain from blaming others for your own shortcomings.
- Day 14. Abstain from excluding and rejecting others because of your differences.
- Day 15. Do not take advantage of anyone's weakness or kindness.

WEEK 3 – DAY 16 THROUGH 23

- Day 16 . Abstain from falsely accusing others.
- Day 17. Demonstrate forgiveness in seeking God's forgiveness for yourself and others.
- Day 18. Allow yourself to feel pain to begin your healing process.
- Day 19. Love yourself as Christ loves you.
- Day 20. Forgive yourself of past failures, and mistakes.
- Day 21. Keep your attitude and conversation positive.
- Day 22. Exercise the fruit of the Spirit.
- Day 23. Love unconditionally without concern they love you back.

WEEK 4 – DAY 24 THROUGH 31

- Day 24. Speak lovingly to others.
- Day 25. Express your love for others through your actions.
- Day 26. Show yourself to be capable of receiving love.
- Day 27. Use every circumstance as an opportunity to show love.
- Day 28. Rejoice in the victories of others.
- Day 29. Do not envy the possessions of others.
- Day 30. Take the time to give thanks for everything God has blessed you with.
- Day 31. Pray for greater patience.

WEEK 5 – DAY 32 THROUGH 39

- Day 32. Read Psalm 51 and meditate on it.
- Day 33. Pray three times a day.
- Day 34. Read Psalm 42 and meditate on it.
- Day 35. Pray for a unsaved family member.
- Day 36. Read Psalm 43 and mediate on it.
- Day 37. Pray for your Church family.
- Day 38. Read Psalm 39 and meditate on it.
- Day 39. Pray for your Pastor.
- Day 40. Memorize a verse from Psalm 51, 42, 43, 39

Lift up
your
Hearts
in

Praise!

