

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Ash Wednesday" 3/2/22

A reading from Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, God, according to Your steadfast love;
according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
Against You, You alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight.

We realize our sins and cry out for mercy, so begins our Lenten journey. Today is Ash Wednesday a day set aside to remember from dust we came and to dust we will return. No matter how good or guilty we feel.

A prayer of repentance, Psalm 51, was written by King David to confess his sin of sending Uriah to his death, because David wanted Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. The guilt he felt over this was overwhelming. He cried out to God to pardon his sin, he prayed for peace, and the grace to go and sin no more. He longed to be free of this sin, so he could go to God with a clean heart. He wanted God's mercy and for this David would give God the glory.

This brokenhearted confession is a template for us. As we hear David's heartfelt words, we call to mind all which we have allowed to come between us and God, all which disrupts our relationship with the Lord. Because Christ came to live and love, to die and rise again, we have a mediator who stands for us when we go to God seeking forgiveness.

We can go to the Lord, again and again, praying as David did – for God to remove our sin, to wash us in the blood of Christ so we can be white as snow before God. As we pray his words, the weight is lifted and we are able to stand before God, with a clean heart. God loves us, has mercy on us, and His amazing grace pardons us and sets us free from what separates us from God's presence.

This day, many of us will go to a special worship service, we will contemplate our failings, what separates from God, we will see our sins and repent. We will cry out for God's mercy, counting on God's compassion, and we will beg for forgiveness, which God will freely give. We are loved and forgiven, through the blood of Christ. Nothing can separate us from God - ever. We are God's children and God loves us.

If you are able to go to a service, remember the ashes are a reminder of our mortality, a symbol of our repentance, a token of Christ's death, a sign of God's forgiveness, and a mark of our desire to live holy and righteous lives.

God's peace to you as you are marked with the cross of Christ and as you hear these words, "From dust you have come and to dust you will return,"

Please pray with me. Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. I give You thanks for hearing my prayer and for forgiving my sins. Thank You for Your Son, Jesus the Christ, through whom I now stand before You, as I confess my failings and receive Your mercy. **Amen**