

ASH WEDNESDAY HOMILY  
*February 18, 2026*

**Psalm 34:8-10:** Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Well, today marks the beginning of the Season of Lent? And what is Lent?

Well, at its most basic, Lent is a spiritual journey. And like all journeys, Lent has a destination – that destination being a celebration... the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

But you know, Easter isn't just a one-day celebration of a past event. No, even more, it's about the radically new life, which some 2,000 years ago, burst forth from the tomb of Christ and that's been given to all who believe in Christ. As Paul says in **Romans 6...We were buried with Christ through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life; the newness of Christ's resurrection life.**

On Easter Sunday, we celebrate Christ's resurrection as something that not only happened to him, but that's happened *to* believers; that's happening *in* believers; and that'll happen *upon* believers in full when Christ returns to make *all things* new, including making new our presently dying bodies.

If you're a believer, you've received the awesome gift of Christ's resurrection life. And by the power of the Spirit, you're called to live that life out, not just on one day, but all our days. Daily, you're to walk in the newness of Jesus' resurrection life – his life that's to radically alter our attitude to everything, even our own death. Because in light of Christ's death and resurrection, death's no longer the end; it's the beginning. It's our entrance, our Passover, into the beauty and joy of his Kingdom that'll never end.

In the Resurrected Christ, we've been given a whole **new identity**. We're new creations. We're now the forgiven and beloved children of God whose lives are ultimately secure not in ourselves or our stuff, but in Christ.

In him, we've been given a whole **new way of living in the world**; a way that's to be characterized by deep faith, radical hope, and sacrificial love.

In the Resurrected Christ, we've been given a **brand-new goal** – the goal of glorifying God in all our hand finds to do.

Christ's resurrection is to be our everything. It's the very foundation of our faith. Without it, our faith is futile as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15**.

And yet, is it not the case in our daily experience that faith in Christ's resurrection is seldom ours... that daily we lose sight of and betray the new life we've been given. Sadly, we often

live as if Jesus didn't rise from the dead and his resurrection has no meaning for us. We easily forget the One to whom we belong. And in forgetting, we fail. And in failing, we mimic the ancient Israelites, who instead of living with gratitude to God for his deliverance from Egypt, instead grumbled and complained. They wanted to go back to their old enslaved life rather than live in the new and free life that God had graciously bestowed on them.

Daily we forget what God has done for us in Christ; we forget that we're new creations in Christ. And as such, we're no longer enslaved to the guilt and power of sin nor are we enslaved to the finality of death. And when we forget, we cease to gratefully refer the whole of our lives to our Resurrected Lord.

But this where the season of Lent comes in – this season that's not simply about giving up a few things here and there. No, Lent's about recognizing all the ways we live as if Christ hasn't been raised from the dead. And in this way, Lent is an intentional (even communal) time of **recovery** – of recovering the wonder of the resurrection life that's ours in Christ.

And the path to this recovery lies along the road of **repentance** – of acknowledging the ways we forget and betray our Crucified and Resurrected Lord... the ways we live as if he hasn't been raised from the dead.

And friends, repentance itself is a divine gift – a gift where we intentionally turn from our sins and idols, so as to turn back to Christ. Repentance is about intentionally asking ourselves certain heart questions, questions such as...

- *Do I live as if I'm my own or as if I belong, body and soul, to Christ?*
- *What are my besetting sins, and how are they destroying me, harming my relationships, and distorting my view of God's creation?*
- *To what do I need to say 'No' in order to say 'Yes' to Christ and his Lordship?*
- *Do I function as if I'm self-sufficient or as if I'm wholly dependent on Jesus who alone is able to take the ashes of my life and restore them?*
- *In what ways am I allowing what I want to overrule what Christ wants for me?*

Lent is about recovering through repentance the new life that's ours in Christ, so that our on-going life of repentance may be strengthened and deepened.

And then here's the goal of Lent – **renewal**; that we'd be renewed in the love of Christ that's indeed stronger than death; that we'd be renewed in our commitment to him through worship, prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, fellowship within this congregation, and in bearing witness to his kingdom.

Lent's about returning to the wonder of Christ's resurrection life that he's so graciously bestowed upon us. It's a journey about taking the grace and Lordship of Jesus seriously. It's the adventure of tasting and seeing afresh that our Lord is indeed good and that he's worthy of all our praise.

In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Spirit. Amen.