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February 2018

***Ash Wednesday stewardship***

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” ***-Evangelical Lutheran Worship***, p. 254

With these ancient words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into the season of Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of the riches that God entrusts to us.

The essential teaching of Ash Wednesday – that we are just mortals, after all – crushes our ego, dispels our pretentions and drives us deep into God’s mysteries. Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What’s *really* important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

**We are dust.** Yes, but we are *God’s* dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each one a speck of “dust” created by of God, billions of years ago. God put us together from the very stuff of the universe.

* Therefore, we are quite literally “earthy” beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. Part of creation, not separate from it, we work to preserve and sustain the health of God’s creation for all people and future generations.
* Therefore, we have reverence for our bodies, expressed through healthy living – eating right, exercising, and avoiding illegal drugs and other poisons.

**We are breath.** We are “dust,” certainly, but not *only* dust. Genesis 2:7 describes us as “dust” into which God has “breathed the Holy breath of life.” Our life is the breath of God in our dust.

* Therefore, every breath we take is holy. Every breath is a prayer that whispers God’s praise and reminds us of God’s life force in us.
* Therefore, we look to God to align our lives and ourselves with God’s holy reality that arcs towards God’s purposes of peace, love, joy, justice and truth.

**Our time is brief.** Between the time that the “dust” of our lives comes together to form us and when it returns to the earth, we have a finite number of minutes on earth.

* Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. There is not a single moment one to waste. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.
* Therefore, we do not cling to our possessions, knowing that we don’t really “own” anything, but only hold onto it for a little while.
* Therefore, we nourish our lives with world treasures of real and lasting value – friendships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity and harmony.

This Lent spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will turn your heart and mind, transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday. “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

*--Rob Blezard*

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