

The Sign Of Jonah
A Series Of Special Services for Lent
by Dr. Reed Lessing

Ash Wednesday: God Is Calling

P *For I eat ashes as my food and mingle my drink with tears because of your great wrath, for you have taken me up and thrown me aside. My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass. But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations. You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her.*

C **The appointed time has come.** (Psalm 102:9-13)

Hymn #221... In the Cross of Christ I Glory

Verses 1-4

In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'er-take me,
hopes deceive and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me.
Lo, it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming
adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

Prayer

Confession

P *Gracious Lord, ashes remind us of our human frailty and mortality. You are eternal, but we are limited in our days. Someday we will return to dust and ashes. You remind us of this in your Word:*

C **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.** (Genesis 3:19; Psalm 90:3)

P *Ashes speak of condemnation for sin. When Adam fell into sin, judgment and death came to all. Since we all are born into sin, we are marked for death and ashes.*

C **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.**

P *Ashes speak of our total dependence upon you, O God. We are but frail human beings who must rely upon you, dear Father. We think we are capable of taking care of ourselves and make our own plans for greatness. However, so often these plans fail and crumble into ashes.*

C **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.**

P *Ashes speak of our humiliation and repentance. As people in the Bible humbled themselves and expressed their repentance and mourning in the signs of sackcloth and ashes, we also humble ourselves before you, O God, as we ask you to forgive our sins through Jesus Christ, our Lord. As we repent we put on dust and ashes.*

C **Dust we are and to dust we shall return.**

P *People of God, as we see the meaning of ashes and dust for us as Christians, we now make our earnest confession unto the Lord.*

C **Almighty God, you have always warned your people against trusting in false gods. We are sinful and this nature has given birth to sinful deeds: things we have done and things we have left undone. We are but dust and ash of the ground and we deserve nothing more than to return to the dust. Though we deserve your stern judgment, but for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive and renew us. Amen.**

Choir ... "Lenten Meditation"

First Reading ... Jonah 1:1-3

Holy Gospel ... Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Creed

The Sign Of Jonah: “God is Calling!”

Offering and Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer

Holy Communion

The Blessing

Hymn #217... Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

Verses 1, 2, 4, 5

Alas! And did my Savior bleed and did my sov’ reign die?
Would he devote that sacred head for sinners such as I?

Was it for sins that I have done he suffered on the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown! And love beyond degree!

Thus might I hide my blushing face while his dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness, and melt my eyes to tears.

But drops of grief can ne’er repay the debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away – ‘tis all that I can do.

For Next Week

Read Jonah 1:4-16

1. Even when God, in his grace, has sought me, how have I dug in my heels, refusing to hearken to him?
2. How has my acting in such a fashion caused trouble for others?
3. How was Jonah’s sacrifice similar to, as well as different from, that of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross?

Dawson Covenant Church

