

**Ashes to Ashes  
&  
Dust to Dust**



Why do people go to church to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday? Ashes remind people of their mortality. Anyone who has ever attended an Ash Wednesday service has heard, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

We are going to look at those reasons dispensationally to see if Ash Wednesday is something we want to observe.

Our bodies are mortal, we are not. God formed our bodies out of the dust of the ground.

#### Genesis 2:7

And **the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground**, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The curse of Adam was that working the ground (to grow things to eat,) would be difficult, and then he would return to the ground as dust.

#### Genesis 3:19

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, **till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast**

**thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.**

Throughout the Old Testament, there are constant reminders that man's bodies are dust. Abraham said that he was dust and ashes.

Genesis 18:27

And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I **have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:**

Job talks about himself as pottery. He was made as the clay and will go back to dust.

Job 10:9

Remember, I beseech thee, **that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?**

Both man and animals' bodies will return to the dust that they came from.

Job 34:15

**All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.**

God knows best that our bodies are dust.

Psalms 103:14

**For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.**

God gives good things to man and animals, but when He takes away their breath, their bodies return to dust. We cannot live without God.

Psalms 104:28-29

**That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.**

Solomon, too, tells us that both man's and animal's bodies return to the dust of the earth.

Ecclesiastes 3:20

**All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.**

The physical bodies return to the earth but the good news is that the spirits of man and animals return to God.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

**Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.**

Isaiah tells us that our dead bodies will live again. The earth shall cast out the dead.

Isaiah 26:19

**Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.** Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and **the earth shall cast out the dead.**

Daniel reminds us that believers can look forward to everlasting life in an immortal body. Unbelievers will have to endure everlasting shame and contempt.

Daniel 12:2

**And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

Job understood that man's mortality and sinfulness would be overcome by a redeemer.

Job 19:25-26

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

Ashes are also the sign of mourning and repentance. It is significant that the words "ashes" and "dust" do not appear in Paul's letters. Remember, Paul is our apostle and we are to follow him because he was given instruction by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

1 Corinthians 14:37

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, **let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**

Paul's letters to believers, written after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for our sins, assure us of our complete and total forgiveness from sin and death.

Romans 6:14-18

**For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.** What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? **But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**

In this dispensation given to Paul, believers are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The Holy Ghost dwells in every believer's heart. We are children of God, joint-heirs with Christ Himself! We will be glorified together with Christ! This is a far cry from mourning and repentance!

Romans 8:8-9, 15-17

<sup>8</sup>So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if



any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

<sup>15</sup>For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Paul tells the Galatians that they, and we, are children of God when we believe in Christ Jesus. We are Christ's and heirs with Him.

### Galatians 3:26-29

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We have been given freedom from sin and death.  
We have liberty.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and **where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

We are free people because of Christ. We need to understand the liberty we have in Christ.

Galatians 5:1

**Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,** and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Paul's message, over and over, is that we no longer have to worry about sin. We are freed from it because of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Romans 8:2

**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**

## Romans 6:22

**But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.**

We have been given the free gift of everlasting life.

## Romans 5:18

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; **even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.**

When you understand that Paul's letters are Jesus Christ's message of salvation for us today, it makes observances like Ash Wednesday, focusing on mourning, shame, and sin, something to be avoided. There are many churches that misunderstand the freedom and liberty that come from the forgiveness of all sin that Christ achieved by His death, burial, and resurrection for our sins. Christ payment paid for our sins, in full. There is no need to continue to dwell on them when we could be helping other understand God's grace and love.