

Lenten Message Series: Thresholds

March 6 - April 28

Series Text: Psalm 24:7 “Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

Other Texts: Also John 10:9 Jesus said, “I am the door/gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

Psalm 24:7 “Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

Series Blurb: The Bible is all one book, with one main story. It’s the story of God’s salvation for people. For our Lenten message series this year, we’re going to retell the main story of the Bible, from the first book of the Bible to the last. Interestingly, the story of the Bible can be told in doors, gates, and thresholds! And that’s what we are going to do. Each Sunday we’ll enter biblical stories of entrances, and we’ll open the main story of the Bible. We’re calling the series “Thresholds: The Story of the Bible, the Story of Salvation.” Get ready to step on through!

Wed., March 6: Ash Wednesday

Threshold: Seriph at entrance to Garden of Eden (Sin closes doors)

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-24 (The Fall)

Text: Genesis 4:7 “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

Call to Worship: -Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Today is Ash Wednesday, and we mark the beginning of Lent with the marking of ashes on our bodies. It’s a sign of repentance, of admitting that we need help, healing, forgiveness, a savior. We can only understand Easter after we understand the need for salvation.

Since the beginning of the year, our message series has been about being Jesus’ disciples. With the mark of ashes, we now transition from learning *about* being disciples of Jesus to actually *following* Jesus as He journeys to Jerusalem, to His cross and to His death. Human salvation unfolds as we first watch Jesus carry His cross, and then when we pick up ours. Discipleship, from here on out, begins a steep uphill climb.

Memory Verse:

“Don’t forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.” -Hebrews 13:16

Invitation to Observe The Lenten Discipline

BOW #322

Prayer: “Ash Wednesday”

UMH #353

Worship Music: - Sanctify

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Message: Thresholds #1: Paradise Lost**PP#1:** *An image for sin.*

The Bible is the story of God working human salvation.

The setup is very short: the first two chapters of the Bible, Genesis chapters 1 and 2, tell the story of creation. Then, in one short chapter, the insurmountable crisis occurs. We call it “The Fall,” and it is Genesis chapter 3. The rest of the Old Testament, well, it’s the story of God tackling the problem. Two chapters for God to create everything good. One chapter for humans to foul it all up. And then 926 chapters for God to tackle cleaning it up. It gives you some indication of the gravity of what happened, doesn’t it? If God could create everything so effortlessly, then why is it so difficult for Him to tackle human sin?

Ah. This is the reason we are here tonight. We do not understand the gravity of sin. And with that, we do not understand the power of salvation. We can only grasp Easter when we wrestle with Good Friday.

Our culture understands sin as something we do that offends God. It’s similar to when we fail someone or let them down. “I forgot to pick you up at the airport! I’m so sorry. Please forgive me.” Well, if this is sin, then, why can’t God just “get over it.” My goodness, let it go already! Why can’t He just think about something more positive? That would be true, if sin were simply an offense. But that’s not what sin is.

Or, our culture understands sin as a broken relationship. We break our relationship with God. It’s similar to when we break our relationship with a close friend or family member. I take my wife for granted, don’t appreciate her as I should. I say mean things to her and give her my bad attitude. I treat her like she’s not important. I can make it right by apologizing: realizing my mistake, being sorry, admitting that, and committing to do better. So, according to our culture, we need to come to self awareness of our broken relationship with God, how we mistreat Him, be truly sorry, and admit this to God. Then, out of the goodness of God’s heart, God will forgive us, and our relationship will be restored. Well again, this would be true, if sin were simply a broken relationship. But that’s not what sin is.

PP#2: Thresholds: Paradise Lost

Genesis 4:7 “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

During Lent this year, we’re going to go back into the story of salvation that is the Bible. We want to understand sin better, so we can experience salvation better. We’re going to unpack the larger story of the Bible, the one that is told from the beginning to the end of the Bible. Normally we look at a story here, a passage there, a certain character, a certain event. But the Bible, as a whole, tells a bigger narrative. It’s the story of God working human salvation.

Now, I've noticed, perhaps by chance, that at most of the key turns in the big story of the Bible, there are mentions of doorways, of entrances, of portals, of gateways. I'm not really sure yet what to make of this, but I've crafted this message series around these intriguing images of thresholds. So, this message series is, "Thresholds: The Story of the Bible, The Story of Salvation." Tonight we look at the very first threshold, way back in the story of the Fall, back in Genesis chapter 3, or, as John Milton so famously put it, "Paradise Lost." Genesis 4:7 "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

PP#3: Genesis 1:1-2:4 Orderly account of creation (God)
2:4-25 Personal account of creation (Lord)

Take your Bibles out, and open to the very first chapter in Genesis. It's the one spot in the Bible anyone can find! Take a look at it. What is this story here? [It's the story of creation.] Yes! And how is this structured? [Around six days.] Right! Verse one, all there is in reality is God. God always was. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By the end of the chapter, everything that is part of our known reality was created. It's a busy chapter! Well, the story actually ends in chapter 2, verse 4.

So, look at chapter 2, starting in verse 5. What's going on here now? [The garden.] Yes! It's the creation story, told a second time, but this time it's specific. There are details, geographic markers, names. History now has started! Chapter 1, generic. Chapter 2, specific. You can also see the change in the main agent. In chapter one, notice, it is always, "God." In chapter 2, verse 4, notice that God is now called, "The Lord." This is even a different word in Hebrew. It signals a change. Lord identifies a relationship with created humans. God now has a name, and He has a relationship with the people He has made. He's talking to the people, directly.

PP#4: *Image for the paradise with the Garden of Eden and the two trees*

Paradise is described as the Garden of Eden. No sin, no violence, no selfishness. Harmony. Peace. Direct and uninhibited relationship with the Lord God. Look at verse 9. There are two key things right smack dab in the middle of the garden. What are they? [2 trees.] Yes! Two trees. What are the trees? [The Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.] These two trees summarize the two key components of God's relationship with people. God has these two powers: the power of life and the power of knowledge of discerning between good and evil.

Look at verses 16 and 17. What is God's command to Adam and Eve about these trees?

[They cannot eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.] Right. So, notice, God has these two main powers, or functions, with people. And in creation, God gives one of these to His people, and the other one He keeps for Himself. Adam and Eve can eat freely from all the other trees, including the Tree of Life. God has given people life, both abundant and eternal. That's key. Hold on to that.

But God forbids His people to eat from the other tree. Why? Because God has created paradise, a perfect relationship in which people enjoy God's gift of life, and stay faithful in their relationship with Him. God is the one who discerns between good and evil. He will worry about that. He knows everything, and so He's the one who will make the important decisions. They can trust in Him to tell them what is good and bad, right and wrong. He's good. He's right. He's loving. He's safe. He's protecting them. Paradise.

PP#5: Genesis 3:1-24 (CEB)

1 The snake was the most intelligent of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say that you shouldn’t eat from any tree in the garden?”

2 The woman said to the snake, “We may eat the fruit of the garden’s trees 3 but not the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. God said, ‘Don’t eat from it, and don’t touch it, or you will die.’”

4 The snake said to the woman, “You won’t die! 5 God knows that on the day you eat from it, you will see clearly and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Turn to chapter 3. Look at the very first verse. There’s a clue here about what’s coming. Something’s changed. Very first verse, who’s now the main agent? Who does the talking?

[The serpent.] Yes, the serpent! What do we know about him? He is the most intelligent creature. He’s a genius. He knows more than all the rest. The question immediately becomes, can the people trust him? He talks to Eve. He asks her to recount the rule.

Dang. She gets it right. She knows better.

Plan B, tell her she can’t trust God. Plant seeds of doubt. Start rumors of a conspiracy, a coverup. God is keeping them in ignorance in order to keep them under His control. He is abusing them, using them like pawns. And God is afraid that they will discover the truth! Then His plan to dominate them will unravel. They will be able to be like God, equal with their creator.

You know, this was probably a brand new concept for them. They never had any reason to doubt God. I’m not sure how much time between chapter 2 and 3 has passed, but they have a perfect relationship with a God that they only knew as good and kind and loving.

Where did this idea come from? The serpent. And where might he have gotten such ideas from? My guess is that he is telling them how he understands reality. His view of God is that he sees God as keeping him from getting what God has, what the serpent deserves. Now, mind you, the serpent offers no proof. Just an different way of thinking about reality. Not based on reality, mind you. But contrived. A fabricated understanding.

PP#6: Genesis 3:1-24 (CEB)

6 The woman saw that the tree was beautiful with delicious food and that the tree would provide wisdom, so she took some of its fruit and ate it, and also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then they both saw clearly and knew that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made garments for themselves.

8 During that day’s cool evening breeze, they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God in the middle of the garden’s trees.

Eve and Adam seem interested in becoming like God, wanting the wisdom of discerning between good and evil. God has said not to eat. But they want to know for themselves. Rather than trusting God, they want to trust their own understanding.

The sin is not the act of the eating of the forbidden fruit. The sin is in deciding not to trust God, not to obey God, and instead trust in yourself. It’s removing God from the center of your life, and placing yourself there. The problem wasn’t the fruit...which European artists represent as an apple. It’s not poisonous. Snow White! The problem is choosing to not trust God. That’s poisonous!

God, of course, is present during all this. Yet He doesn’t intervene. He doesn’t stop them. If only He had a mongoose take out that serpent! If only He had done something!

But He quietly watches from the sidelines. Why? Because sin is not about the fruit. If God had placed a barrier around the fruit to prevent them from taking a bite, it would have stopped nothing. The sin was in the turning of their hearts away from God, and that already happened when they *reached* out for the fruit.

Eve claims, verse 13, that the serpent tricked her into eating the fruit. But she's making excuses. He didn't. Yes, he told them lies. But they weren't tricked. They are not gullible, innocent victims. They made a decision of the will, not just on false knowledge, no longer placing their trust fully in God. They didn't eat the fruit in order to get what the serpent promised. They ate the fruit because they turned their will away from God.

Then there is that amazing verse, verse 7. "Then they both saw clearly." Now that they took upon themselves to determine among options and consequences, they saw fully the trap of their sin, that God was trying to protect them from. I believe they clearly saw their hearts divided, and the anxiety and fear that comes from having to choose without knowing all you need to know. The serpent had suggested that God was a liar and that He was using them for His own personal gain. But now Eve and Adam saw clearly that it was the serpent who was using them to get back at God, and that they were now dominated, controlled, abused by trap their sin had caused.

PP#7: *Marble statue of a naked man with just a tiny fig leaf covering his privates.*

Their covering of their nakedness was a covering of the parts of their bodies that God gave them to create life with Him. Creating life is one way that creation is like our Creator. God has us participate with Him in the miracle of life. But they violated their trust, and so, in shame, they cover over their life-making parts. They covered themselves because from that moment on, any new life they created through procreation would be covered in this sin of selfishness.

This is the outward sign of the inward sin. Life, which God created good, was now tainted, corrupted, fallen. Ever since, we are all in the same boat as Adam and Eve. And each of us since then have failed to put our trust fully in God.

Sin, you see, is not just making God offended, or mistreating our relationship with God. Sin is a move of the will away from God, away from design, away from life. It is an unplugging from the source of abundant and eternal life. It is plugging our trust back into ourselves. It's like taking the toaster and unplugging it from the outlet and plugging it back into itself. There is no real power coming in any more.

PP#8: Genesis 3:1-24 (CEB)

16 To the woman [the Lord] said, "I will make your pregnancy very painful; in pain you will bear children. You will desire your husband, but he will rule over you."

17 To the man he said, "Because you listened to your wife's voice and you ate from the tree that I commanded, 'Don't eat from it,' cursed is the fertile land because of you; in pain you will eat from it every day of your life. 18 Weeds and thistles will grow for you, even as you eat the field's plants; 19 by the sweat of your face you will eat bread—until you return to the fertile land, since from it you were taken; you are soil, to the soil you will return."

We see it in people, as they start to age, and then die. First after hundreds of years, but then sooner and sooner and sooner. Death sets in and takes it's toll. It takes it's toll in all of creation. Verses 16-19. Childbearing becomes painful. Inequality arises between the sexes. And the ground is cursed because of his action—he violates the very stuff from which he is made. Hard labor and sweat will mark his relationship with his own substance.

PP#9: Genesis 3:1-24 (CEB)

22 The Lord God said, “The human being has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.” Now, so he doesn’t stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever, 23 the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to farm the fertile land from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the human. To the east of the garden of Eden, He stationed winged creatures wielding flaming swords to guard the way to the tree of life.

Verse 22. “The Lord God said, “The human being has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.” [Not here meaning new knowledge. It means having to make discernment between, judgements, decisions.] Now, so he doesn’t stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever, 23 the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to farm the fertile land from which he was taken.” Now, this may seem like a pouting God who punishes out of anger. But I see here a God who has to enforce consequences. Now that the people have eaten the forbidden fruit, they have lost their access to the Tree of Life. They cannot be allowed to have both, because they are now broken and corrupted. They cannot live forever in a fallen state. That is not God’s good plan. So, verse 24, “He drove out the human.” What a sad scene. God has to do what He never wanted to...push away His own beloved creation. God’s heart is breaking as Adam and Eve cling to each other and stumble out over the rocky ground. Paradise Lost!

Verse 24, now watch this. Notice it here: “To the east of the garden of Eden, he stationed winged creatures wielding flaming swords to guard *the way* to the tree of life.”

PP#10: *Image of the winged seraph with flaming sword blocking the Garden of Eden entrance.*

There is the first threshold! Up until now, there are no thresholds, no doors, no ins and outs. It was all direct contact, immediate presence. No barriers, no distance. But after Eve and Adam turn their hearts away from being fully on God, now a threshold appears. There is an entrance to the Garden of Eden. But God stationed seraphim, winged angels with flaming swords, to block the way. The door is closed. The threshold is barred. The tomb is sealed. To this day, we cannot physically see the Garden of Eden, because it is hidden by the seraphim, transformed into a spiritual reality, unperceivable to humans.

The first threshold of the Bible: the paradise God created us for, barred and inaccessible. This is the state of the human condition by the end of the third chapter in the story of salvation. The Tree of Life no longer available. Sin and death are the realities of each and every human born since.

PP#11: Genesis 4:3-8 (CEB)

3 Some time later, Cain presented an offering to the Lord from the land’s crops 4 while Abel presented his flock’s oldest offspring with their fat. The Lord looked favorably on Abel and his sacrifice 5 but didn’t look favorably on Cain and his sacrifice. Cain became very angry and looked resentful. 6 The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why do you look so resentful? 7 If you do the right thing, won’t you be accepted? But if you don’t do the right thing, sin will be waiting at the door ready to strike! It will entice you, but you must rule over it.”

The very next story, chapter 4, shows the consequence of sin. Adam and Eve’s two sons, Cain and Abel, present offerings to God. It seems that Abel was zealous and gave God the best of what he had. Cain, however, seems to give an average offering. God accepts Able’s offering but not

Cain's. The issue here is motivation, not the kind of offering. Able gave his best. Cain's heart is not fully set on God. So God goes to Cain to coax him to do the right thing. Look at verse 6, "The Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry, and why do you look so resentful? If you do the right thing, won't you be accepted? But if you don't do the right thing, sin will be waiting at the door ready to strike! It will entice you, but you must rule over it.'"

This verse describes the sad state of humans ever since losing the Garden of Eden. Be careful! Sin is waiting at *the door*...see? Threshold! Sin is waiting at the door ready to strike. It will entice you, but you must rule over it. The threshold now becomes a calling to sin. We must decide between what is good and what is evil. We have tasted the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of God and Evil. Cain, the first born child—Adam and Eve had to remove their coverings of sin to conceive him—and Cain is born. What does this very first born human do? He gives to God grudgingly. And when God comes to warn him, Cain goes to his brother.

PP#12: Genesis 4:3-8 (CEB)

7 "If you do the right thing, won't you be accepted? But if you don't do the right thing, sin will be waiting at the door ready to strike! It will entice you, but you must rule over it." 8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Verse 8, "Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let's go out to the field.' When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him."

By chapter 4, murder has occurred in God's perfect creation...8 verses after The Fall.

Thresholds in the story show 1) paradise lost, and 2) sin lurking. And these are the thresholds that still define our reality!

Sin is the turn of the human will inward. Can God simply ignore that, pretend it's not true? Not when the sin corrupts all of creation. There is now a new reality that defines life. God can't simply "get over it" because God now is a part of a broken reality.

The rest of the Old Testament is God wrestling with the mess people have created, and continue to create. God can't simply forgive and overlook when His beloved children are hurting, broken, ruined. The rest of the Old Testament is a preparation by God to redeem what is lost, reclaim what has been corrupted, undo what cannot be undone.

The threshold of the Garden of Eden reminds us that we are not where we belong. We are in exile. We live estranged from our created purpose. This world is not our home. We are created for something else.

PP#13: *Image for "sin lurking at the door," from Genesis 4:8.*

The threshold of self-will shows sin lurking, enticing us, ready to strike. We are trapped under sin. It is there, lurking. It has power over us. It is our slave owner. God can't just pretend it's not there. God has to actively change the reality of our lives. And that is so much more complicated than we think, because at the root of our problem, is our own selfish will. It is our turning our trust away from God and on to ourselves. Unless that is addressed, any forgiveness by God will be superficial. God must make us holy, from the inside out.

God could do it forcibly. But that would violate the very self will He created in us. Our sins need to be forgiven, and our selfish will needs to be redeemed. It needs to be turned outward again, and placed in full trust onto God. God cannot do that *to us*. But then again, God cannot do that

without us. We must die to ourselves so that we can live for God. Death is the consequence of sin. And it is that death that God must now tackle.

PP#14: *Image of a tired, sad, crestfallen man plodding through a wasteland, in exile (desert?)*

Tonight is Ash Wednesday. Tonight we get honest. We see that the story of Eve and Adam is actually our own story. We have turned away from God. We put our trust in ourselves. We live in pain and struggle. We are in exile. We are estranged. We are stuck in our sin. And we are helpless to do anything about it. We are in need of a savior. We need help.

[Hold up painting.]

Here is a painting that a friend of my mother painted, back the year I was born. She was teaching a painting class, and she painted this as a demonstration. She painted the story of creation. Afterwards my mother asked to keep the painting, and I got it from her.

PP#15: *Image similar to the painting of creation with Adam and the cross there.*

I find this painting so profound. You see, when God created the heavens and the earth, and when God bent down to shape the human, at that moment, God knew the future. God knew that Eve and Adam would sin. And God knew we could not get out of the mess on our own. He knew that death would need to be paid, and that only He could do it. So, as God bent down to breathe the breath of life into the clay nostrils, pain wracked His face. He knew the moment He gave life, that Jesus would have to die.

In this picture of creation, we see the swirling origins of light, life, dirt, stars. Adam's form is starting to move with life, and in the midst of it all, a cross *already stands*. God knew the cost, and chose to breathe life into Adam's clay form.

Adam reaches out to the cross in this painting, reaching out to the Tree of Life restored!

PP#16: *Image for coming before God in prayer seeking forgiveness (in ashes?), repentance*

Tonight, I invite you to see yourself in this form. You have life, God's breath, a purpose, a God who loves you. But the thresholds of a closed Eden and lurking sin trap you. We haven't heard the whole story of the Bible yet, but we do know that God already has a plan. Tonight, reach out to Him. Reach out to the cross. Open your hearts to Jesus.

Get honest. Confess your sin, your separation from God, how you trust in yourself rather than your Creator. Let Ash Wednesday be a time for you to get real. May it be a threshold for your own story of redemption!

PP#17: Psalm of Confession

Psalm 51:1-9

Hymnal #785

Ash Wednesday I: Identifying Our Sin

Psalm of Confession: Psalm 51:1-9

UMH #785

PP#18: Leader: Christ our Lord came to you to be your Lord and King.

People: Confused, we cried, “Hosanna, loud Hosanna!” and waved the palm branch.

Leader: Yet Christ was not who you wanted Him to be.

People: Therefore we had no use for Him. We rejected Him.

Leader: Pilot stood before you, claiming that Jesus was innocent.

People: Yet in sin we cried, “Crucify! Crucify!”

Silent Prayers of Reflection

Response

Leader: Christ our Lord came to you to be your Lord and King.

People: Confused, we cried, “Hosanna, loud Hosanna!” and waved the palm branch.

Leader: Yet Christ was not who you wanted Him to be.

People: Therefore we had no use for Him. We rejected Him.

Leader: Pilot stood before you, claiming that Jesus was innocent.

People: Yet in sin we cried, “Crucify! Crucify!”

Silent Prayers of Reflection

The palm branches are burned.

PP#19: Prayer

Forgiving God, You sent Your One and Only Son into the world to take our sins away. Receive our sin. Take them from us. By the victory won by Your Son, give us victory over this sin, and grant us forgiveness. We pray this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Prayer

Let’s pray together. **“Forgiving God, You sent Your One and Only Son into the world to take our sins away. Receive our sin. Take them from us. By the victory won by Your Son, give us victory over this sin, and grant us forgiveness. We pray this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.”**

PP#20: Leader: Ashes remind us that all that we do and all that we have has no eternal value, it all turns to ashes. All that we achieve is nothing. When seen before God, we are ashes.

People: “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust”

Leader: Yet, ashes can be used as a fertilizer, the source of new life. A forest fire burns off the old growth making new, stronger and vibrant growth possible.

People: Lord, send your cleansing fire. Reduce our lives to ashes. Bring forth new life.

Ash Wednesday II: Our Repentance for Sin

Call to Repentance: Joel 1:12-14, 2:13-17

Preparation of the Ashes

Leader: Ashes remind us that all that we do and all that we have has no eternal value, it all turns to ashes. All that we achieve is nothing. When seen before God, we are ashes.

People: “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust”

Leader: Yet, ashes can be used as a fertilizer, the source of new life. A forest fire burns off the old

growth making new, stronger and vibrant growth possible.

People: Lord, send your cleansing fire. Reduce our lives to ashes. Bring forth new life.

PP#21: Leader: “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let everyone who hears say, ‘Come.’
(*Rev. 22:17*)

People: Yes, Lord, we come to you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: “Forgiving God, You sent Your One and Only Son into the world to take our sins away. Receive our sin. Take them from us. By the victory won by Your Son, give us victory over this sin, and grant us forgiveness. We pray this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Leader: “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let everyone who hears say, ‘Come.’ (*Rev. 22:17*)

People: Yes, Lord, we come to you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: “Forgiving God, You sent Your One and Only Son into the world to take our sins away. Receive our sin. Take them from us. By the victory won by Your Son, give us victory over this sin, and grant us forgiveness. We pray this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Mixing the Ashes with Oil

Thanksgiving over the Ashes

BOW #323

PP#22: Imposition of Ashes

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Repent, and believe the Gospel.”

Repentance with Ashes

Everyone is invited to come forward for self-imposition of ashes. This is an ancient sign of repentance, as testified in Job 42:6, “Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” We bear the mark of sin on our bodies. Make the sign of a cross with the ashes on the back of one of your hands to show that we are indeed sinful and in need of God’s saving grace. As you do, say out loud:

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Repent, and believe the Gospel.”

Song - Sanctify

Imposition of Ashes

Ash Wednesday III: Words of Assurance

Confession: Psalm 51:10-17

UMH #785

Words of Pardon

BOW #323

The Lord's Prayer (using trespasses)

Closing Song: -Sanctify

Memory Verse:

“Don’t forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.” -Hebrews 13:16

Announcements: -Pastor David

PP#23: Benediction

Leader: In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

People: We testify to the truth of Christ: in the chambers of our human hearts, and in the lives we go to live.

Leader: So I say to you: Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you. And may the peace of Christ bless and keep you as you live your life as a testimony to Him.

All: Amen!

Benediction: (*using 1 Peter 3*)

Leader: In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

People: We testify to the truth of Christ: in the chambers of our human hearts, and in the lives we go to live.

Leader: So I say to you: Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you. And may the peace of Christ bless and keep you as you live your life as a testimony to Him.

All: Amen!