

## Ash Wednesday

### Introduction:

Remember you are dust. These words are difficult to grasp in a world that wants to avoid the reality of loss and death. The brokenness of this world and the reality of sin cannot be escaped. We are dust. Our bodies and our lives are not forever. This world is fading away. At the same time, in Jesus, we are called by His grace into an eternal life. On Ash Wednesday, the ashes remind us of our mortality and the frailty of life. The cross reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus, that He became mortal, lived, and died, to extend his mercy to a sin-filled world. By grace He calls us from the ashes into a new life with him. We are mortal. We are broken. We are dust. Yet in Christ, we are forgiven. We are forgiven and made new. We are called into everlasting life. Praise be to God!

### Read Your Bible

- Genesis 3:19
- Philippians 3:8-11
- Mark 1:14-15

### Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. What are some of the things in life that do not last?
2. In what ways does our world deny sin and death?
3. Why is it important to remember that we are dust?
4. What does Philippians say about death and life?
5. Jesus says, "The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news." How does the grace of Jesus reshape our understanding of life and death?
6. How does the cross change what we know about our mortality?
7. Why is that important for how we live?

### Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

### Pray

Heavenly Father, You are eternal, unchanging, merciful, and filled with grace. We confess to you today that we are dust and to dust we shall return. We have sinned against you and we have fallen short of your glory. Have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us to the cross of Christ. Let your grace remake the ashes of our lives. Let us be filled with the love and mercy of Jesus. Call us out of the ashes and into eternity with you. In Jesus' name. Amen.