

February 17, 2010 - Ash Wednesday

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

For centuries, the Church has paused on the first day of Lent to enter into a time of worship, where palm ashes are placed on foreheads in the sign of a cross. These ashes are a visible reminder of our mortality and our need for God's grace.

On Ash Wednesday, we also hear an invitation to observe the season of Lent by praying, fasting, and giving to the poor. In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches us to pray, fast, and give. He says when (not "if") we pray, fast, and give, we do it, not to get credit, recognition, or reward, but to grow in our relationship with God. So as you enter into Lent and begin 40 Days of Prayer for Main Street Church, remember Jesus' teaching. Spend time in prayer so that God's grace may touch your life and the life of the church. Spend time in prayer so that you--and through you, the church--might clearly hear God's voice.

Spend time in prayer and let God change your life: when God changes you, God changes the church; and when God changes you and the church, God changes the world.

Notice also that Jesus instructs us to go into our "rooms" and shut the door when we pray. I think this not only teaches us that we pray to God, not for show, but it also teaches us that prayer is intentional. It requires commitment. It requires us to find solitude and silence, to find that that time and place where we can be alone with God.

Find a time and place to be alone with God for the next 40 days (and beyond.)

In prayer, ask God to renew your commitment to Christian discipleship and call you (once again) to be a person of prayer. Ask God to guide you as you observe a holy Lent.