



University Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Austin, Texas

Ash Wednesday Meditation

7:30 p.m. Feb. 21, 2007

Nordan Chapel of University Christian Church

Charles Kutz-Marks, preaching

Though it feels like I'm only 12 miles from where I started the day this morning, appearances are deceiving. I've traveled more than 13,000 miles from this morning just do to the spin of the earth on its axis and so have you. On top of that, in that same 12 hrs. time, we've all traveled another 800,000 miles on our yearly revolution of the sun. And, of course, we could calculate our solar system's movement through the universe, too, all moving us from where we started the day without our ever noticing.

When we stop and think about it, much of life is just like this realization. We move through our days and our familiar routines oblivious to where we are and where we're ultimately going.

The grand universe in which we live and move and have our being is always in motion. With our rational minds we understand that nothing in this universe is permanent. We hold these fragile human lives – these earthen vessels- we are given to attend for a while, but before long, usually before we are really ready, we must relinquish life.

“We are dust and to dust we shall return.” The ancient saying is both accurate and shocking. We don't like to think of the fact that we are dust. We like to think that we are more, that we're somehow better than the mere dust from which all the planets and stars have been formed and from which we each have also come.

There is good news for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We learn that we are indeed more than just dust. We are Spirit and we are children of the living God. We are meant to enjoy life and contribute to the well-being of others, to expand the horizons of knowledge, and

most importantly, to represent the compassion and love of God to one another.

All along the way it is important for us to get our bearings and to remember not only where we've been, but to chart a course again, to carefully discern where we need to be going. Such is the gift of the season of Lent. Lent is a time to repent for our shortcomings, a time to approach God in the expectation of God's gracious receiving of us back. That's an important first step.

But further, Lent is an opportunity for us to make some important decisions about how we will live these 40 days differently, better than we usually live. Lent best builds us when we commit ourselves to some new wholesome discipline and seek in relationship to God the strength to be true to that new commitment. In the back of our minds we know that if we can make a powerful, positive change for 40 days, we can make the change for a lifetime!

Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return, but remember that you are also spirit, spirit that has not yet reached its potential, not yet reached its God destined glory. Remember that you are God's through Christ.

Receive now the gift of palm branch ashes on your forehead in the sign of Jesus' cross. They waved last year in praise of the coming of Jesus to Jerusalem, reminding us that when the people expected one kind of Messiah, God sent another kind of Messiah, and most of the people missed it.

Life is good, but far too short to be squandered in any shallow way. We enter into the season of salvation. Open your eyes and ears, your hearts and minds to receive the blessing God is calling you to find.

So as long as you are speeding through this life, why not aim high? Why not aim – with all your will and all your power – why not aim for God?

Come now friends, and receive your blessing....