



repentant, childlike hearts and ashes of repentance on our foreheads, He clothes us in His beauty, with robes of righteousness and holy joy.

Sunday, March 1, 2009: Lent – Beauty for Ashes

Scripture: Luke 23:26-31; Isaiah 61:3

Sermon Notes:

1. The season of Lent extends over forty days (excluding Sundays), using Christ's forty-day fast in the wilderness as a model. It begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts through Holy Week to Good Friday.
2. Lent is an opportunity for repentance, contrition, self-examination, and reflection. Its purpose is not simply to grieve the suffering of Christ, but also to weep for ourselves and our sin.
3. Luke 23:27-28. The 'daughters of Jerusalem' were moved to tears by the sufferings of Christ that they saw so clearly. They felt sorrow for Him, but it was misdirected weeping, because they had not yet understood Jesus' identity and His place within the divine plan. Jesus redirects them to weep for their city and their people. Like those women, our sympathizing with the sufferings of the cross can be misdirected sorrow.
4. Luke 23:31. Jesus' prophecy is a warning for all time: judgment is coming, so don't just stand and sympathize, but weep now for yourselves, and get right with God. We need true repentance, which involves more than remorse and self-pity.
5. Christ loved us so much that He offered Himself to God as the sacrifice for sin, taking the death blow upon Himself, so that we need not perish. That which was good (Jesus, "the green wood" -- see Luke 23:31) was dealt with unjustly at our hands to make provision for life, and to bring us peace and escape from the coming judgment.
6. It is the childlike heart that is embraced by the crucified Son. As we come to Christ holding sin in contempt, with tender,

Application Questions:

1. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, the apostle Paul challenges us to "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith." What are some ways in which we can examine ourselves as Paul says? Does the Bible offer us any tests?
2. What does true repentance involve? Provide Scripture references.
3. What is the meaning of the proverb that Jesus gives to the women of Jerusalem in Luke 23:31?
4. Why did Christ have to suffer? What will happen to those who sympathize with His suffering but fail to repent?
5. In response to the sufferings of Christ at the Cross, am I cold and unmoved in my life – am I weeping like the women of Jerusalem – or have I called upon Christ in true repentance like the thief upon the cross did?