



March 8, 2019

Lent Begins

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions." -- Psalm 51:1

"You are dust, and to dust you will return." This ancient formula was heard by millions of Christian all over the world two days ago on Ash Wednesday as the sign of the cross was made in ashes on their forehead or wrist. This symbolic act is both a solemn reminder and an invitation to renewal.

One temptation in Lent is to be so impressed by our sins and failings, and so overwhelmed by our lack of generosity, that we get stuck in a paralyzing guilt – a guilt that leads only to introspection instead of directing our eyes to God. It is a guilt that can become an idol and a form of false pride.

But Lent is precisely the time to break down this idol and to direct our attention to our loving Lord. The question is: "Are we like Judas, who was so overcome by his sin that he could not believe in God's mercy any longer and hung himself? Or, are we like Peter, who after denying Jesus returned to his Lord with repentance and went on to live as a truly dedicated Apostle and leader in the early church?"

Prayer: Lord God, this Lent help me to do my best to keep my mind fixed on You and Your Kingdom. Amen.