

Luke 15

Psalm 32:1-7

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

NEXT STEPS

Sometime in our lives, all of us have experienced being lost. In the stories that Jesus tells, (Luke 15) things are lost by

- Wandering-Sheep
- Carelessness-Coin
- Rebellion-Son

Which reason do you think causes most people to become lost?
Why?

Read Psalm 32: The psalmist describes the joy of being forgiven and made right with God. How can denial of our situation be a dangerous place to live?

Read 2 Cor. 5:17 Do you really believe that in Christ, everything becomes new?

How has Christ made you a new creation?

Read 2 Cor. 5:20 What does it mean to you personally that Jesus makes his appeal through us.

What are you willing to sacrifice to see people you know come to a real relationship with Jesus Christ?

This week we prepare for the Lenten season by beginning a journey as a community of faith to engage in a meaningful way the suffering of Christ on our behalf and the power of His sacrifice in our lives.

Read Psalm 103:8-18 what do these verses let us know about our condition and God's desire for us?

Read Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

What does it mean for you to rend your heart and not your clothes?

What does it take to return to the lord?

Ash Wednesday Service

We will have an Ash Wednesday service on **Wednesday, February 22, 2012 from 7-8 pm**. This service will involve times of personal reflection, music, communion, prayer, the reading of Scripture and Jeff will share with us about participating in the Lenten Season.

*Childcare for infants through 4 years will be provided.

A little more about Ash Wednesday... Where is Ash Wednesday in the Bible? It isn't. But there are plenty of precedents for calling God's people together for repentance and for renewal. The trumpet sound of the prophet Joel, calling for God's people to tremble at the approaching judgments of God (Joel 2:1-2, 12-17) resonates with the call of Jesus to times of mourning and calling on God with self-denial and even fasting. Notice Jesus does not say "If you fast" but "Whenever you fast..." as if he expects us to keep in step with his own example (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21). **Why ashes?** Ashes in the Bible are a sign of mourning or humility before a Holy God. (Daniel 9:3; Job 42:6; Jonah 3:6; Matthew 11:21) Ultimately, through Ash Wednesday, we can realize an opportunity to deepen our awareness of God's forgiveness and purifying presence. This service invites us to humble ourselves before God as we prepare to follow in the steps of Jesus all the way to Calvary.

About the Lenten Season... Lent is the forty-day season of reflection and preparation for the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is a time of repentance, of considering Christ's sufferings and rethinking how we are called to take up our own crosses. Some of us give up things like chocolate, Facebook or television during this season as a sort of fasting, and others try to integrate something new into their lives, like visiting folks in prison, sewing clothes, exercising or praying.

It is a good season to rethink how we live and to let some things go, or maybe even to develop some new holy habits. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and it ends on the Saturday before Easter Sunday.