



The Place Where Life Begins

Bishop W. James Thomas, II, D. Min.
Senior Pastor

BISHOP'S MISSIVE #193
(Released March 5, 2025)

Greetings CBC Family,

Where did Ash Wednesday come from? And what does Lent have to do with us? I invite you to take a look at Isaiah 59:12-20

Ash Wednesday has its origins in the early Christian Church – somewhere 6th and 8th centuries. Originally, the idea was that a Christian, as a sign of repentance, would sprinkle ashes on his or her head.

In the Bible, ashes were always associated with humility and mortality, fasting and remorse. If you had sinned against God, and you felt remorse about that sin, and you were repenting of that sin, then sometimes, in the Bible, you would sprinkle ashes on your head as a sign of sorrow and repentance. Ashes were also supposed to remind you that you were mortal, that you will eventually become ashes after you die.

During the 6th or 7th centuries, Christian churches thought about this idea, and the private practice of the imposition of ashes as a sign of repentance became a public practice. As the act evolved, it began to be applied on the forehead in the shape of the cross. The ashes would actually be taken from the palm branches from Palm Sunday, burned the year before.

Some churches today have retained this practice, while others have not. At CBC, we do believe in the practice of the imposition of ashes and believe that it can be quite valuable for people who are doing it for the right reasons. Although the imposition of the ashes is upon a person's forehead, what is more important is what is going on in your heart.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of **Lent**, which is a forty-day span of time from now until Resurrection Sunday. During this time, we focus on Christ's finished work on the cross. The 40 days of Lent do not include Sundays because every Sunday is considered a "miniature Resurrection Sunday." We celebrate the resurrection every Sunday.

Why 40 days? Right after Jesus was baptized, he was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. This encounter lasted 40 days. Those 40 days were a time of introspection for Jesus. Lent is our time to spiritually make that journey with Christ. My prayer is after these 40 days, we will all emerge stronger than we were before.

Bishop W. James Thomas, II, D.Min., Senior Pastor



www.calvaryforward.org

Mail: Post Office Box 1859 | Dover, DE 19903 † Campus: 410 Fulton Street | Dover, DE 19904
Office (302) 736-6554 | Fax (302) 734-7790 | info@calvaryforward.org