



Lent Day 1, February 22, 2012 Ash Wednesday

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."
Genesis 3:17-19

In these verses in Genesis we see in all its stark reality the consequences of sin. What had been perfect for Adam and Eve, literally an absolute Eden, is now cursed. Lush greenery and abundant food is replaced by thorns and thistles. Adam must now toil to feed his family. Worse yet, he will also once again become part of the ground when he is buried after his death. Up until this point, death wasn't even a word in Adam's vocabulary. I wonder if he had to ask God what that meant? But because of sin, death and all its terrible bed partners, such as sickness, evil, sadness, depression, and oppression took up residence on earth.

As we begin this journey of Lent, we do so with the sobering reality that we are all sinners. It wasn't just Adam's fault. Given the same situation, we would have made the same choice. We know this because the Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

It's not fun to dwell on our sin nature, but in order to totally appreciate the Resurrection, we must first experience the depth of our sin.

Application: Today spend some time in prayer, asking God to show you the sin in your heart. What is it over the next 40-some days that He wants you to deal with? What is holding you back that needs to be confessed and cleaned out before you can take your first step toward the empty tomb of Easter? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you yourself with unveiled eyes. Fall on your knees before the Lord and confess your sin and ask for forgiveness and healing. Take as much time as you need.

Prayer: Lord,
It's never easy to look honestly inside myself. Help me to see what needs to go, what needs to be confessed. I pray for the courage to do this, and the Spirit's guidance to accept forgiveness and choose a different path. In Jesus' name. Amen.