

Ash Wednesday Year A

Story – Rabbi and the Soapmaker

S: There is so much trouble in the world – does religion really make any difference?

Come upon children playing in a mud puddle

R: There is so much soap in the world, yet we still have dirty children – does soap make any diff?

S: For soap to work you have to use it

**Exactly – and it is the same with faith!**

This is AshWed – Today we will all be marked with the sign of the cross – the sign of our faith

But if it is going to mean anything – we have to live it!

We are God’s beloved – God yearns for us to be united with Him

So - in Joel God calls us to with compassion in His voice

“Return to me with your whole heart – rend your hearts not your garments

For gracious and merciful is He – slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment”

God pleads with us – trust Me – come back to me with ALL your heart.

So this Lent – this Ash Wednesday – I am going to ask you to be compassionate to one another.

Just as God is compassionate to us

During these 40 days of Lent I call you to 40 days of compassion

Meet God – meet your brothers and sisters – in the same way God meets us –

Graciously, mercifully, slow to anger, rich in kindness & relenting in punishment

Return hatred with love    Love your enemies & Pray for those who persecute you

**What JOY!**

**We get to love our enemies**

**Not to harbor anger and hatred**

**We are free from that – we GET to repent!**

**We are blessed to be able to live graciously, mercifully**

**Blessed to be slow to anger and rich in kindness**

**We are blessed to hear Joel’s call – to US!**

RETURN TO ME WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART

(not just your forehead that ‘s covered in ashes)

What does God require of us this LENT?

Return to me with your WHOLE heart

And love –

NOT so others will see you

NOT blowing trumpets before you

NOT neglecting your appearance so all may know you’re fasting

BUT in your inner room – in silence – hidden

Surrender your heart

Then ACT – In your daily walk

Feed the hungry

Give drink to the thirsty

Clothe the naked

Shelter the homeless

Love one another

Give to your brothers and sisters what you want to recv from God

Micah 6- Act Justly – Love Tenderly – Walk Humbly with your God

40 Days of Lent

40 Days of Compassion

40 Days for us to build the Kingdom of God

40 Days that are just the beginning – if what we do in Lent works – why stop?