

SLIDE #1 Look at this slide, please, of a bear.

Yes, this sermon is going to be a bear! But...I want to talk with you about dust & trust. Indulge me to begin with a story about Sunday hunting, the newest PA controversy.

Did you hear about the hunter. He said:

1. I scouted the area all summer.
2. I searched out the best location for my tree-stand.
3. I set it all up a month ahead of time.
4. I trailed the herd.
5. I picked out a trophy buck.
6. Two days before opening day I rechecked every aspect of the hunt.
7. Everything was in place.
8. Sunday morning, I woke up at 2 am.
9. I put on my camo, loaded my pack, set out for my stand.
10. This was destined to be an epic hunt.
11. As I approached my deer stand, there was a bear in the tree stand.
12. I changed my mind, decided to go to church instead.

There are better and worse reasons to rally back to church in the fall, and we're certainly glad you're here! Hopefully you came with a higher purpose than that hunter, and to: listen to the Lord; speak to the Lord; adore, confess, give thanks, and to surrender.

[1] DUST The Bible uses dust to teach us that:

(A) Human beings are created by God from the dust Gen. 2:7
and to dust in once sense, we do return. Gen 3:19; Ps. 104:29; Eccl. 12:7
and thus it expresses our human frailty as does Psalm 103:14-18.

SLIDE #2 (Psalm 103:14-18)

“...He knows how we are formed,
He remembers that we are dust.
The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
But from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children—
with those who keep his covenant...”

(B) Dust on the head expresses grief. Job 12:2 and Isaiah 47:1

(C) Lying in dust expresses humiliation. Ps. 44:25 and Ps. 113:7

(D) Sitting in dust expresses repentance. Jonah 3:6

(E) Shaking dust off your feet expresses rejection. Matthew 10:14; Acts 13:51

(F) Throwing dust into the air expresses shock. Acts 22:23

[-Bible Notes for Dust (TNIV)]

We were in shock this week. The atrocities were appalling to hear about and see. We throw up our hands and seek the Lord's understanding and guidance. Now we watch the Old Testament teaching of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth being employed. We know that gets us nowhere but just involves more eyes and more teeth. The Lord clearly taught that we are to love our enemies, but how can we in the face of such atrocities? We cannot walk away from our Christian discipleship, but rather wrestle to understand what Jesus teaches about loving our enemies. We witnessed a crime against humanity, and a crime requires justice. Loving my enemy calls for justice for a crime. I wrestle with what Jesus says, but loving my enemy may require his/her incarceration for the sake of society and for the criminal's transformation. I will continue to pray for peace with justice. That is all I can offer with you in this matter.

Matthew's gospel lesson calls for the proper attire to attend the wedding banquet. Since we are sharing a covenant banquet of our own at the Lord's invitation, we should consider how we are attired also. Jesus' parable teaches that the only one not included is the one not wearing wedding clothes. The dust of repentance is called for. Listen to the invitation to the Lord's Supper: "Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another." Repentance is our attire.

The parable seems to be a recounting of the Old Testament history of Israel and their desire to return to Egypt or to worship idols and not to follow God's ways. Jeremiah 7:24 indicates their stubborn inclinations and some evil in their heart.

SLIDE #3 Jeremiah 7:24 & Proverbs 8:17

Jeremiah 7:24 "But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward."

Proverbs 8:17 "I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me."

Sitting in dust expresses repentance and there is the difference with ancient Israel. Time and time again even to the days of Jeremiah, God would hear their prayer if they only repented of their sin. We need to prepare our hearts with repentance. Some people today, never make the connection of the necessity of repentance to walk with the Lord. Proverbs 8:17 says that if only will seek Him, we will find Him.

A woman was talking with a marriage counselor. She said that his complaint was probably accurate. She said, "her husband's complaint that he was leading a dog's life was probably well-founded."

She said, "he comes in the house with muddy feet," "tracks across my clean floor, barks at nothing, growls at his food and makes himself comfortable on my best furniture."

Maybe we do need to repent of some small things, but we don't have to confess other people's sins.

Some people are simply giving up and giving in. Instead, we are invited in preparation to receive Holy Communion, to simply repent, and be changed from the inside out, from the heart. The Lord says: "I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me." (Proverbs 8:17)

[2] TRUST We come to the Lord's table with all our heart...trusting.

Trust is the other attire we need.

SLIDE #4 (Proverbs 3:5)

(A) The Bible instructs us to trust:

1. In God. Psalm 91:1-2
2. In the Lord. Proverbs 3:5
3. In Jesus Christ. John 14:1-2
4. In the name of the Lord. Psalm 20:7
5. In God's word. Psalm 119:42 and 105
6. In God's unfailing love. Psalm 52:8

[-Bible Notes for Dust (TNIV)]

Trust is the blessed assurance and our reliance upon the character, strength, and truth of God. Trusting the Lord is surrendering everything—our past, present, and future to the Lord; and especially our use of money, and trusting his understanding when some things are beyond our own understanding.

Jeremiah 29:13-14

¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

¹⁴I will be found by you," declares the Lord,...

(B) And then, as we trust the Heavenly Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may:

1. Receive salvation. Isaiah 25:9
2. Be blessed. Psalm 40:4
3. Experience joy. Psalm 33:21
4. We will walk in righteousness and justice. Psalm 37:5-6
5. We are released from fear. Psalm 56:3-4

(C) But the Bible also teaches that we should not trust:

1. In idols. Isaiah 42:17 and 2 Kings 17:14-15
2. In other people. Psalm 118:8-9 and Psalm 146:3-4
3. In ourselves. Proverbs 28:26
4. In fortified cities. Jeremiah 5:17 and Proverbs 16:32
5. In horses and chariots. Psalm 20:7
6. In weapons. Psalm 44:6
7. And in riches. Luke 12:13-21 and 1 Timothy 6:17

[-Bible Notes for Dust (TNIV)]

SLIDE #5 Proverbs 3:6

We cannot trust our own understanding sometimes. God is all-knowing, all-powerful and everywhere present. It is best if we leave some things to God to know and understand.

[3] LIVE WITH TRUST and NOT IN FEAR.

Life can be a bear sometimes. We need to trust our Heavenly Father, and our Savior and Lord. The followers of Jesus are to live by faith and not fear.

When a woman found out she was pregnant, she told the good news to anyone who would listen. Of course, her 4-year-old overheard some of her parents' private conversations. One day when Sarah and her 4-year-old were shopping a woman asked the little girl if she was excited about the new baby.

“Oh, yes!” the 4-year-old girl said, “and I know what we are going to name it. If it's a girl we're going to call her Nina after my great grandmother, and if it's a boy we're going to call it quits!”

I'm going to call it quits now on this sermon, but not with the Lord; and I hope you don't you call it quits with the Lord either. We are attired with repentance and trust, and we are ready to eat the covenant meal with the Lord.