

Oil of Repentance

Scripture Reading — Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

There is a time for everything ... a time to mourn and a time to dance... — Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4

Today is Ash Wednesday. Many Christians mark this as the first day of Lent, a season of reflection and repentance leading up to Resurrection Sunday (Easter). In some church traditions a mark of ashes is placed on a person's forehead, as a reminder of sin and of Christ's sacrifice to save us.

In the Old Testament, people put on sackcloth and ashes as a sign of mourning—often because of their sins. They recognized that their sins grieved their Lord and God.

Similarly, people would be anointed with oil as a sign—but not of mourning. Being anointed with oil was a sign of favor and holiness, a calling that God had in mind for you. This was an outward sign of an inner reality. If you or your children have been baptized, the symbolism is similar. Baptism marks us as God's covenant children, called to be part of his family. The water symbolizes the washing away of sin and the rising to new life we receive in Christ.

Today is a day to confess our sins and to strive toward holiness as we reflect on the journey of Christ to the cross. It is a time to mourn our shaky obedience. But it is also a time to dance. We take comfort and joy in the fact that Christ's sacrifice for us paid the penalty for our sin. We can go forward in calm, delightful assurance that Jesus' anointing becomes ours, with the promise of new life with God forever!

Prayer

Father, I confess my sins before you. May the gift of Jesus' sacrifice shine in my life today. Bring me to a new place of obedience and service in your kingdom. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Repentance](#), [Baptism](#), [Seasons](#), [Lent](#)

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