



More of You, Less of Me – Part 1

Growing by Subtraction John 3:27-31

How can Jesus increase if I won't decrease?

The Wisdom of Dust

Psalm 90:12

¹² Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

The Joy of Dust

John 3:25-30

²⁵ An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. ²⁶ They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

²⁷ To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the

Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' ²⁹ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰ **He must become greater; I must become less.**"

The Transformation of Dust

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The Beauty and Splendor of Dust

Isaiah 61:1,3b

¹ The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to **bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.** They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

Marked by Ashes

Walter Brueggeman

We are able to ponder our ashness
with some confidence,
only because our every Wednesday of ashes
anticipates your Easter victory over that dry,
flaky taste of death.

On this Wednesday, we submit our ashen way to you —
You Easter parade of newness.
Before the sun sets, take our Wednesday and Easter us,
Easter us to joy and energy and courage and freedom;
Easter us that we may be fearless for your truth.
Come here and **Easter our Wednesday** with
mercy and justice and peace and generosity.

We pray as we wait for the Risen One who comes soon.