

Communion

Repentance Without Condemnation

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The Spirit of God ministers directly to our hearts by His word and exhorts us not to harden our hearts if we hear His voice (Hebrews 3:15). When He speaks, He is ministering to us, and we must stay with what He is saying and not harden our hearts by switching off or assuming that what is being delivered to us is just information.

God's love calls us to repentance

The Holy Spirit is speaking in love to our hearts about repentance. The love of God does not condemn, and condemnation is not repentance, so if we start feeling condemned when He is speaking to us, then we know that the repentance He is calling for is not operative in us.

When God is speaking to us, He pours His love into our hearts so that we can each receive what He is saying to use specifically. This pouring in of His love is not to give us an emotional experience, although His love does touch our emotions. Rather, the love of God comes to us to join us to His fellowship - the fellowship of God who *is* love (1 John 4:16). When we begin to be caught up in *His* fellowship, with Him, repentance begins to

work in us. In fellowship with Him, we become aware of where our relationship with Him is fractured, and how we have caused that damage.

The love of God urges us, without condemning us, entreating us to Himself and away from our sin with its destructive behaviours. God's cry to us is, 'Come away from that!' Sometimes, He speaks very pointedly about specific matters or behaviours so that we can see what is true. When we have our eyes set on ourselves, on what we think is right and wrong, our carnality blinds us. Our eyes are veiled so that we *cannot* see. Will you hear the Lord say that to you?

We must hear Him without allowing self-condemnation to run over the top of us and without resorting to a non-coping meltdown that will only lock us into our carnality and prevent God's ministry from addressing us. We will be demanding that the love of God be something *other* than His love that comes to address our true problem. We must not demand other-than-love from God! He is asking us to turn to Him, receive His love that is being poured into our hearts, and hear Him.

Love and faith to turn

You and I need the love of God because love is the only way that faith works (Galatians 5:6). As the love of God touches your heart, you will become aware of His word coming to you, giving you an initiative to turn to Him. This initiative comes from faith, which comes by

hearing, which comes by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

It is the love of God poured into our hearts that gives us the faith to turn to Him, not our own self-sourced, self-righteous efforts to 'have faith', or our zealous re-attempts to do what we have previously been unable to do. The love of God does not rely on us being such 'good' Christians that we can turn, or on the strength of our determination to change the way we've been, or on any other motivation, capacity or strength in ourselves. We are enabled by God's love to turn to Him. His love, coming into our heart, gives us His capacity to turn to Him, to receive His word and His faith that is in His word, and to turn away from our own ways in the matters He is addressing.

Our default response when we hear the word of the Lord is to use His word to fuel new variations of self-sourced living, but doing this only keeps us ensnared to the same carnal mechanisms that installed us as our own guru in the first place. We are not being called to that! We are being called by the love of God to turn to Him.

We will know when we've turned to Him because the light from the face of Christ will begin to shine into our heart, illuminating and opening the eyes of our heart. This is what happens initially when we are born from above, as Jesus explained to Nicodemus¹:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
(John 3:3)

When a person is born from above, they begin to see what they simply could not see before. As they begin to see, they begin to enter the

kingdom forcefully (Matthew 11:12), pressing in hard, seeking fellowship, praying, fasting, and doing whatever it is that God directs them to do with the initiative that has come to them in the illumination they have received from Him.

His illumination will call us to fellowship, where our walk as Christians is in the light just as He is in the light (1 John 1:7).

The light of fellowship

The light of the Lord's fellowship into which we are invited is the light that comes from Him. It is *not* our 'light', which leads to mere talking about the things Jesus is teaching but not to walking in the truth of them. The light of God who *is* the light (John 8:12; 1 John 1:5) lights us up about the name He has given us, and gives us initiative, through His love, to walk according to our name.

If we cling to our habitual way of self-resourced living, we will remain ensnared to our own ways and be unable to walk in God's way for us. But in His mercy, God is calling us *from* our own ways *to* His way. Where we have not joined the Lord's fellowship as we should - where our fellowship with our brethren and with Him is impaired - He is calling us to turn from our independence to His fellowship.

"...what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3)

The fellowship into which we are called is the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and is in the light, for God *is* light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). As we

¹ Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish council of elders (the Sanhedrin), first came to see Jesus by night. He subsequently urged the Sanhedrin

to give Jesus a just hearing, and after Jesus' crucifixion, helped prepare His body for burial.

begin to see God's light by the illumination we receive when we hear His voice, we can begin to find His fellowship in the light and in the fruit of His light that has come to our hearts. Spiritual sight will be coming to us, showing us where we have been carnal or wicked (in which case, our wickedness will need to be articulated in the way and context that God will direct).

When the light of God has shone into our hearts, we begin to know about Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6) and long to really know Him, like the apostle Paul, who longed:

"...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection² and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain to the resurrection³ from the dead." (Philippians 3:10)

Paul's longing was to *know* Jesus, and the power of His resurrection (anastasis²), and to fellowship with Him in His sufferings and death. By these means, Paul sought to know daily, in his mortal body, the power of Christ's resurrection (exanastasis³) life out of death.

When the Holy Spirit speaks His word to our hearts, He articulates to each one of us what we need to do so that we can walk in the light of that word; so that we can stand up in the power of *His* resurrection³ life out of death. This standing up is not by the power of our own flesh or by the light of our own understanding, even if that understanding is drawn from the word that God has spoken. Our standing is by the pure rays of light that shine forth from the face of Christ.

We have heard the voice of the Spirit today, calling us to repent, and urging us *not* to

respond in self-condemnation but to receive His love and turn to Him. So, turn away from listening to your own voice and listen to Him!

Recovery, not condemnation

Can you see that a person who responds to the Spirit in self-condemnation is attempting to control not only their life's circumstances but also God's dealings with them, and in the process, hindering both? They are making their own 'religious' experience truer to them than the word of God. That is *not* Christian, and God is calling people out of that to come and talk with Him properly, as part of a conversation in His fellowship. He is not condemning you. He is loving you!

The excuses we make to maintain our position really do not wash with God. 'But...I've had a hard life...if you really understood...that's not fair...that's too hard...'. Isn't this what the Lord is trying to help us leave behind by turning to Him? If you keep on maintaining your position, then the fruit of your difficult circumstances and carnal behaviours can never be removed from your life. Will you not hear the Lord, turn to Him, and allow Him to help you?

God is calling us out of our carnal ways of thinking so that we can come into His fellowship. At the point of our receiving His word He wants to heal our spiritual sight. It is spiritual blindness for us to perceive His word as a condemnation.

The Holy Spirit wants to minister the love of God to you. Will you respond to Him and receive His love? He loves you, and His call to you to repent is coming from His love, not from anger or judgement. God is coming to us

² The Greek word Paul used was '*anastasis*', which means resurrection from mortal death to immortal life

³ This Greek word used by Paul is '*exanastasis*', which means out-resurrection - the immortal resurrection life of Christ manifest in a mortal body

so that we can be recovered and not condemned along with the world. However, if we refuse Him who is speaking to us, His judgement *will* come upon us (Hebrews 12:25).

Today is a red-letter day. Underline it in your memory, because this is the day God gave you His assurance of His love and His faith for you to depart from walking and living under condemnation. He has given you His word that delivers you!

God has given each person a unique walk. *You* have a unique walk, and a unique meeting with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in relation to your walk. God will give you all you need to walk in His way for you, and will place you in a fellowship of His brethren, to walk with them in the light so that when His word comes and illuminates your heart, His word will multiply in your life. That is the wonder of God's fellowship! It is the context in which the word of God multiplies and grows.

Let *this* most wonderful truth be ministered and illuminated to your heart today: you are called, with your brethren, into the very fellowship of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
