

WEEK 1 – REVIVAL (2 Chronicles.7: 13-15)

2 Chronicles 7: 13-15.

13 If I shut the heavens, that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people, 14 if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land.15 Now My eyes will be open, and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.

Introduction:

I believe the Lord has led us to take another look at the well-known 2 Chr. 7: 13-15, as this text speaks to our current situation better than any other scripture. Perhaps someone will ask: Have we not preached everything there is to say about 2 Chronicles 7.14? Is there anything more to preach regarding this text? The wonder of the Lord's Word is that it never loses its freshness or uniqueness. 2 Chronicle 7 is as fresh and applicable today as it ever was, we will never be able to exhaust all the riches of God's Word in one lifetime!

Therefore, it is appropriate to study a well-known section about restoration and revival, such as 2 Chronicles 7:14, and to hear what the Lord wants to teach us as South African Christians, because here we have been given a "recipe" by the Lord Himself, to lead our country to restoration and healing!

Lesson 1 - God talks to His children by allowing difficulty and difficult times.

2 Chronicles 7 vs 13 - If I shut up heaven, that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to eat the land, or if I send pestilence among my people...

The very first point to note that it is the Lord Himself who withholds the rain, allows pestilence or sends the locust. We are often hasty and eager to blame the devil for everything that goes wrong and yet it is very clear here that the Lord, and not the devil has sent these afflictions. Admittedly, it was Satan who tormented Job - but not without the Lord's permission. We read in 1 Sam 16:14 - an evil spirit was sent from God to constantly harass Saul, a wicked spirit, yes, but still under the authority and command of God. It is often the devil that causes the damage – but never without the Lord's knowledge and consent, and sometimes even under the command of the Lord. It is the Lord who allows difficulty, often using the devil as an instrument.

My dear brothers and sisters - let's say it clearly to each other - the Lord has withdrawn his favour from South Africa, exactly as we read here in vs. 13. Currently the evil one has a free hand to torment our country, he has been given "authority", to steal our country and its people's prosperity, happiness and freedom. We see this happening every day.

But why does God allow this? Is God not Love? Did not he promise – "I will never forsake you or leave you?" (Hebr. 13.5) For the moment it is enough to confirm that God is and will always be a God of love. Exactly how much He loves us will be evident as we progress with our study of 2 Chronicles 7. But for now it is enough to know this- God loves us infinitely and always desires the best for us. It is precisely because of His great love for us, that He allows afflictions and trouble, in order to win us back to Himself.

Back to verse 13: The Lord deliberately allows difficulty and pain for various reasons. Here are but a few:

- To get His children's attention.
- To draw us closer to Him

- To bring us at the end of our own efforts and schemes. (To bring us to the end of ourselves)
 - To ensure that God, and God alone, receives the glory when He brings deliverance and victory out of impossible situations, where humanly speaking there was no outcome.
1. **To get our attention:** It's interesting to note that when the Lord brings trials and difficulty to a nation, He does not spare His children who form part of that nation. We as Christians endure suffering together with the ungodly. The main reason why we are not spared is because the Lord wants to make us part of the solution. We read from verse 14 that the Lord uses difficulty and hardship to mobilize His children to intercede for the situation, and thus become part of the solution. Hardship brought upon a country is a God's "wake up call" to the Christians who form part of that country. The difficulty and pain affect all, the solution lies in the hands of the Christians, and this has always been God's method. (much more on this later)
 2. **To bring us closer to the Lord:** The Lord loves His children so much that He desires an intimate and loving relationship with them, and He is willing to literally do anything or allow anything to promote this process. Think of your own children for a second. What is the one thing you most want as a parent - an intimate, open, loving and joyful relationship with your children. What brings the most pain to the parent –is it not the loss or damage to the intimacy, trust and love in your relationship with your child? Likewise, the Lord wants, above anything else, a closer, more loving and intimate relationship with you, my precious brother / sister in Christ. Hardship and pain are one of the tools that a loving God uses to draw His children into a closer relationship with Him.
 3. **To bring us to the end of ourselves:** God wants us to be totally dependent on Him in every facet of our lives. While we are humanly able to do so, we fight our own battles, and make our own plans. It's only when all our own plans fail that we turn to God in total reliance, problems that are humanly impossible force us to rely totally on the Father. As we have already said - That's exactly what God desires, for the very reason that He loves us so much, He allows circumstances that are humanly impossible to place us in a position of total dependence on Him.
 4. **To reserve the honour for Himself.** Paul asks a simple question - what do you have which you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Cor 4: 7) God shares His honour with no human being. Divine outcomes and grace in impossible situations ensure that God and God alone receives the glory and the praise.

Summary - the message for today.

We have learned that crisis's occur in a people or nation's existence because the Lord has deliberately withdrawn his favour from them. He does this for various reasons, but from the Christian's point of view for mainly 4 reasons:

- To get our attention.
- To bring us into a closer, more intimate relationship with Him.
- To bring us to the end of ourselves, our own strength and our own plans.
- To ensure that the Lord receives all the honour when He brings us out of our impossible circumstances.

DV next week: verse 14 - the Lord's command to His people (the Christians)

Prayer:

Father, thank you for loving me so much that you will literally allow anything in order to ensure a deeper relationship with you. Help me Lord to increasingly discover the wonder of the fullness of your presence, and of Your Holy Spirit day by day.

Amen.