

## WEEK 5 - REVIVAL, 2 CHRONICLES 7: 13-15.

### 2 Chronicles 7: 13-15.

<sup>13</sup> ***"(When) I shut up the heavens and there is no rain, or (when I) command the locusts to devour the land or (when I) send pestilence among my people, if (as soon as) My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then (once they have done that) I will hear from heaven, and I will (most definitely) forgive their sin and I will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place."***

### Introduction:

Our journey so far:

- The Lord has withdrawn his blessing from South Africa (vs 13) – we have already discussed this and established the fact beyond doubt.
- In reaction to the current situation, the Lord requires 4 actions from His children (2 outward, 2 inward)
  - Humble yourselves – we discussed this last week.
  - Turn from your wicked ways – **we are currently examining this command**
  - Pray – we still need to discuss this
  - Seek My face – we still need to discuss this.

This week then: We continue our study on the second pre-requisite for revival – turn from your wicked ways.

### Lesson 5: Christian, turn from your wicked ways.

We previously learned of 3 kinds of sins from which we need to repent.

1. Sins committed in our capacity as individuals – these sins are confessed privately, as a matter between ourselves and God.
2. Sins committed against someone, or together with someone. These sins are not only confessed to God, but also to the party offended / influenced by our sins (restitution)
3. Sins committed by means of our association with a Church, group of people, or as part of a nation/country. These sins are confessed individually (by my association with the group) but also corporately as a group, Church or nation.

We are currently in the process of confessing sins committed on our individual capacity.

Previously we mentioned 2 sins from which most or all Christians need to repent: Firstly, our lack of prayer, and secondly our lack of study of God's word.

This week – we continue to confess as the Lord lays certain sins on our heart and conscience.

### Sin nr. 3: Our lack of sympathy/empathy/kindness.

Life is difficult, and often painful. Nowhere in God's word, is a Christian promised an easy or carefree life. On the contrary – All who live godly lives will suffer persecution at some or other stage (2 Tim 3:12) As sparks fly upwards, man is born unto trouble (Job 5:7) For this reason we, as Christians are exhorted to bear one-another's burdens, to care for one another (Gal. 6:1,2).

Yet often we don't have time for a brother or sister who is struggling physically, spiritually, emotionally or financially. We are too busy doing our own thing, living our own lives. The best definition of spiritual pride I have encountered: "An inability and unwillingness to sympathize with the struggles of others. A spiritually proud person belittles the trials and struggles of others."

My dear Christian brothers and sisters. Ask the Lord if you haven't become hard and cynical toward others and their struggles, and if so, let's ask the Lord to give us a "heart of flesh" towards all who are struggling. The fruit of the Spirit – kindness, gentleness, friendliness...

Prayer:

*"Lord – we confess that we have lost our kindness, gentleness and compassion towards others. We have become cold and clinical towards those who are suffering. Please restore to us the gentleness of the Lord Jesus. We confess that while we are hard and unsympathetic, we are not demonstrating the love, or the person of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. Amen."*

#### **Sin nr. 4: The sin of idolatry.**

We read in Exodus 20: *"You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below **You shall not bow down to them or worship them...."***

What is an idol?

- An idol is anything, or anyone which "competes" with the Lord for our attention, admiration, time or worship.
- It is the person, activity, object, pastime with which we associate in order to find fulfilment. Its whatever we use (apart from the Lord) to fill the "emptiness" or longing inside of us.

What is the end / outcome of idol worship?

An idol will always, without exception, disappoint. In the long run, that which substitutes for God in our lives, lets us down. St Augustine said: *"He (God) has created us for Him, and our hearts are restless, till they find their peace in Him."*

Modern day idols.

In biblical times, idols were more concrete and less abstract than today. They worshiped animals, stars, the moon, planets, persons such as royalty, pharaohs, etc.

In our day we worship more abstract gods, but just as real to us. Most of what we worship is not evil in and of itself. It's not wrong to support and follow a soccer or rugby team, but it's wrong to worship Manchester United or the Blue Bulls. It's not wrong to live as healthy a life as possible, and to exercise regularly – on the contrary. However it is wrong to make your own body and physical fitness an obsession, an object of worship. This matter is so subtle, I am convinced most of us have at least one idol we worship, which is competing with our worship of the one true God. Please go through the list of idols carefully and prayerfully. Do not be too hasty to come to the conclusion you have no idols in your life (The heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17.9)) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your true condition to you, you may be surprised by what He shows you.

List of idols we commonly worship:

- My body, physical health, bodybuilding.
- Food.
- Money.
- Sport, a particular sportsman or sporting team.
- My husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend.

- My mother, father, child, other family member.
- Television, series, soap operas, social media, Facebook, etc.
- Studies, academic achievement, university degrees.
- My occupation, corporate and business success.
- Nature, the animal or plant kingdom.
- My country, nationality, language, culture etc.
- My local church, pastor, denomination etc.

As already stated – none of the above are evil in and of themselves, on the contrary, many are good and necessary. Ask yourself – are these activities / objects taking their rightful place in my life, subservient to my worship of the one true God. What would happen to you if you were temporarily or even permanently deprived of one of these, would your whole world cave in around you? If so, ask the Lord whether you may have made that activity, object or person into an idol.

Prayer:

*"Lord, above all else I wish to be obedient to Your will, and to Your Word. Please show clearly through Your Holy Spirit, whether I have unknowingly been worshiping idols in my life.*

*I confess that I have made an idol out of (name the idol(s) one by one). Please forgive me for abandoning You, the source of all goodness, to run after a worthless idol, which will only disappoint in the end. Please help me to find my joy, and fulfilment in you, (Ps 37) and only in you. I lay down all idols, and my worship thereof, with Your help and guidance.*

*Amen."*

Laying down idols in our lives.

You will find that its not that easy to lay down an idol. In times of stress and trouble we often revert back to our idol for comfort and affirmation. As we recognize this tendency, we need to repeatedly lay down the idol till at last it takes it rightful place in our lives, secondary to our worship and adoration of God

### **Sin nr. 5: Unforgiveness.**

It seems as if the sin of unforgiveness has been dealt with so many times in our lives, that there is no need to repeat and review this sin. Every Christian knows – God will forgive me my sins, to the measure I am prepared to forgive others (Matt. 6.14-15) However, much has been made of this sin, for a good reason – much needs to be made of it. **Forgiveness is the single most difficult thing, humanly speaking, that any Christian will be called on to do.** More than this – forgiveness is absolutely central to the Christian faith – Think for a moment what it cost God to forgive us – His only Son! No wonder God takes forgiveness (and lack of it) in our lives so seriously.

So it does seem appropriate to re-visit this sin of unforgiveness – just to make sure....The fact that I know intellectually I need to forgive, does not mean that this has happened in practice. The fact that I say I have forgiven someone, does not mean that this has happened in my heart. Its worth repeating – to forgive is difficult – everything in me cries out

against pardoning, and blessing a person who has harmed me, shamed me, humiliated me and embarrassed me.

We are going to, with Gods help, do 3 things:

We are going to ask God to reveal to us the person(s) who we have not yet truly forgiven and set free.

We are going to forgive those people, one by one, as God grants us the grace.

We are also going to ask God to bless those persons, to prosper them, and to, where applicable, save them if they are not yet born-again.

Prayer:

*"Lord, thank you for what You did at the cross to make it possible for me to be forgiven, and saved for eternity. Forgive me, that sometimes, through my actions, I make light of this. In obedience to Your Word, I forgive (name person(s)) for what they have done to me. I set them free, and ask you Lord to bless them and prosper them. In addition, Lord, I undertake to pray for the salvation of those of those of them who are lost (name the person(s)). Would you please through your Spirit show them their lost and dangerous position, and also the way to salvation, through the atoning death of Christ.*

*Please continue to show me, Lord, where there may be bitterness or unforgiveness in my life, so that I may immediately rectify the matter. Amen."*

#### **In summary.**

We have confessed the 5 sins committed as individuals, which the Lord has laid on our hearts to do. Obviously, there are many other sins of which the Lord may convict – e.g. uncleanness, fornication, swearing, blasphemy, etc. As the Lord leads, please take the trouble to honestly confess and repent of these sins, so that we may approach the throne of grace with boldness, and with clean hands. (Hebr. 4:16, Psalm 24.4)

#### **Next week, DV.**

By Gods grace we examine sins committed collectively – against others or with others.

Blessings,

MPC prayer team.