

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

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¹³ *"(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- The Lord has withdrawn his blessing from South Africa (vs 13) – we have already discussed this and established the fact beyond doubt.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 previously
 - 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.

This week – sins of a corporate nature.

I am a born again, Afrikaans speaking South African citizen. As a consequence of this I am associated with 3 groups of people:

1. The Church, by virtue of my being born again. (Nobody joins the Church by application, as one would a club or organization. All members of Church are born into the Church at the time of their conversion (2nd birth))
2. The Afrikaner nation also by virtue of the fact that I was born to Afrikaans speaking parents.
3. South Africa as a nation, by virtue of the fact that I was born and raised in the geographical region called South Africa.

Now, a point of critical importance: As a result of these associations, I am co-responsible for the deeds, actions and decisions made by the church, the Afrikaner nation, and the South African government / leadership. I cannot, and may not, as an individual, distance myself from these 3 groups of people. On what grounds can I assert that? Let me try to explain:

We read in Romans 12:5: *"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."*

If one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. If one part of the body makes a poor decision, the rest of the body bears the consequences as well. By virtue of the Church being a body, and all Christians members thereof, I cannot distance myself from what is done by the rest of the body, including the leadership, – I bear joint responsibility.

Romans 5:12 – "*Just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...*"

Here we see that Adam's sin is counted against all of us – why? For 2 reasons:

1. Adam sinned as my representative (as first human, he represents the whole race.) If someone representing me does something, he is acting on my behalf, as if I was acting with him.

2. Biologically speaking I was already "in Adam", by virtue of my DNA, even though I was only born thousands of years later, it is still as if I was present when Adam sinned, and his sin is therefore "accounted to me" by God. The application here is obvious – I was "present" when my parents, and their forbearers in the Afrikaner nation, were sinning, it is as if I was sinning with them, and I therefore bear co-responsibility for the sin. I am therefore able (and obliged) to confess the sins of my forefathers as if I were complicit. To take it one more step – the current South African government was elected by the South African people, to represent them, and decide for them. The people of South Africa, therefore, are co-responsible and liable for decisions made by our government, and we as South African citizens will also be held accountable before God, for the sins of our government.

There are several examples in scripture of this exact principle.

For example, Nehemia and Daniel confess not only their own sins, but also the sins of the state as well as the church, of which they were part. (Nehemia 1, Daniel 9). They confess the sins of state and church as if they were personally involved in the committing of these sins.

Ralph Wilson (Great prayers of the bible) writes the following:

*"How do you and I ask mercy for a sinful nation of which we are citizens? How do we pray for healing for a church whose spirit has been tarnished by sin and hatred? How do we pray for forgiveness and restoration for a church that has left true doctrine for false? How do we pray? Painfully. **Personally.** We learn from Jesus and from Daniel."*

He goes on to say:

*"As an intercessor, I cannot just pray for another. **When praying for my own nation, people, or church, I must identify with their sins and confess them as mine.** Taking on the sins of another as a mediator -- that is the role of an intercessor"*

Its crystal clear – **you and I as South African Christians may not distance ourselves from the sins committed by our forefathers, church or government** – we confess them, with tears, as if our own...

Therefore – when God calls us (His Church) to turn from our wicked ways, this not only means we confess and repent of our individual sins, it also means we confess and repent of those sins done by our association with our church, nation and country!

In obedience to this biblical principle, are going to confess the sins of our church and nation and country, as the Lord leads.

Firstly – sins of the church in South Africa.

By the Church, I mean every church and denomination which confesses and preaches Christ as the Son of God, and savior of the world. We begin with a sins which was committed by a previous generation of our church. But, as you recall, we are by association with our predecessors, guilty of the same sin, and under obligation to confess and repent. I am talking about a sin committed primarily by the Dutch reformed church, but which many other churches

sanctioned just by keeping still and taking minimal action. I am talking about the biblical justification of the government policy of apartheid.

In 1944, a conference was held by the Dutch Reformed Church, led by the well known Pastor JD du Toit, who wrote poetry under the pseudonym Totius. The conclusion of the meeting (attended by some 200 plus pastors), was to officially sanction and justify Apartheid on biblical grounds. Perhaps some argument can be made for geographical separation of nations, certainly no justification can ever be made for the pride, selfishness and lack of brotherly love which resulted from the Apartheid policy. The real tragedy of Apartheid was this – not only did we give the people of colour reason to hate white people, much more, by biblically justifying Apartheid, we gave them reason to hate the God of the white man as well. Prof BB Keet, one of the few church leaders to publically oppose the policy, said the following: "*How can we evangelize someone, convert them to Christ, and then refuse them fellowship with fellow brothers in Christ who happen to have a different skin colour? What sort of gospel denies brothers of the same faith, but different colour, fellowship with one another?*"

Instead of the "struggle" being one of light versus darkness (driven by the gospel and brotherly love) Apartheid changed the "struggle" to one between black and white, (driven by hatred and distrust)

Brothers and sisters – we have an obligation to confess and repent of these sins, even though we were not physically complicit in the committing thereof. On behalf of our association with the church in South Africa, we have the privilege to confess these sins in prayer, right now, as if we committed them ourselves.

Let's pray:

Lord, we as Your Church in South Africa, confess the sins and mistakes made by our forefathers. We confess, on behalf of the Dutch reformed Church, the sin of justifying apartheid on biblical grounds. We confess the hurt, pain and humiliation inflicted on our Indian, Coloured and black compatriots. We also confess the fact that our actions were the reason that some not only hated us, as your children, but also You, a God of mercy, love and forgiveness. Please forgive us, and bring a mighty reconciliation of races in our country, which only your Spirit can do. In addition Lord, we confess that other churches, by virtue of keeping quiet, gave approval to the practice of apartheid as had the Dutch reformed church. Please forgive the Church in our country, heal us, and make us an instrument of love and reconciliation by the preaching of a gospel of love and forgiveness, to be found in the cross of Christ alone. Amen

Next time – In obedience to Gods word, we continue to confess the sins of the Church in South Africa.

Blessings,

MPC prayer team.