

The Final Key That Unlocks Revival – Repentance!

We have looked at the first three conditions for revival as mentioned in **2 Chronicles 7:14**.

- 1 **Humbling ourselves** (*Brokenness*)
- 2 **Praying** (*Acknowledging our dependence*)
- 3 **Seeking God's face** (*Intimacy*)

We will now meditate on the fourth condition, **repentance** (at times being very specific).

You may think that the order of these four conditions are wrong.

Shouldn't we "*turn from our wicked ways*" first?

Then "*pray*" to God and "*seek His face*" before repentance?

The simple truth is this.

We do **not** know what to repent of until God reveals our true condition.

While we are living in the shadows, **we cannot see** what we are really like, and **do not know** that repentance is needed.

Revelation 3:14-18 [NIV] *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see."*

Here was a church fellowship that was living in the shadows.

They knew God's Word very well [*"I am rich"*] but had to been blinded to their spiritual condition.

What did Jesus suggest?

Revelation 3:19-20 [NIV] *"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."*

To allow Jesus Christ to come into their fellowship, so that they can then clearly hear His Voice [His Words] not a muffled whisper of One who is the other side of the door.

John 8:12 [NIV] *"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

When we let the "light of the world" into our lives He will turn our knowledge into understanding.

Christ will clearly show us exactly what we are to repent of.

James 1:23-25 [NIV] *“Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does.”*

God’s Word [Jesus Christ is God’s Word personified], when we walk in the light He will show us what we need to repent of.

Isaiah 6:1-5 [NIV] *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.’”*

When we come into God’s presence we see things as they really are, our true spiritual condition.

Only in the light of God’s Holiness will we be able to come to true repentance.

Often we have a one-sided view of revival as a time of glory and joy and with people flocking into our churches.

This is only part of the story.

Before the joy and glory, there must come conviction, and this begins with God’s people.

John 16:5-16 [NIV] *“Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. **But I tell you the truth:** It is for your good that I am going away. **Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ‘I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.’”***

Conviction is always one of the works of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will make us see things in our personal lives and our church fellowship that are grieving Him and hindering His Work.

When we allow the Holy Spirit access to our lives, to be a **divine searchlight**, it will cause us great pain and agony of spirit.

There will be tears and godly sorrow.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 [NIV] *“**Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what***

concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter."

Worldly sorrow is only because we are "caught red-handed" by God's Word and the Holy Spirit illuminating it to us.

Godly sorrow demands action on our part.

Note:- "earnestness" – "indignation" – "alarm" – "concern", these are terms of action, **not** "lukewarmness" or a blinding to our true condition.

Revival is not intended to make us happy but to make us Holy.

There will be no revival without a deep, uncomfortable and humbling conviction of sin that leads to repentance.

What is repentance?

Repentance is more than regret and remorse.

Repentance is more than being sorry and apologising to God.

Repentance is deep conviction that brings a change of heart that leads to a change of behaviour.

A temporary change of behaviour is **not** enough, the change must be a permanent change if it is true repentance.

Ephesians 4:30-32 [NIV] *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."*

Repentance is recognising we are living and behaving in a way that grieves the Holy Spirit.

Specific attitudes of mind and spirit are listed in this scripture, all of which grieve the Holy Spirit.

Repentance is an ongoing process.

Some Christians think that repentance is a "one-off" change of mind at the time on conversion.

Repentance is far more than this.

I once heard an illustration of this.

Our life is like a dustbin that has been in the hot sun for some time, the contents is really repugnant.

At conversion God asks us to lift the lid and experience just what our sinful life smells like to Him.

But as we progress in our Christian life God expects us to rummage into this stinking bin and take out and reject our putrid past.

This is progressive repentance.

The Holy Spirit will continue to reveal things in our lives that must be dealt with and forsaken.

Deeper and deeper levels of ingrained sin that He wants to purge from us so that we may grow in holiness.

1 Peter 1:13-16 [NIV] *“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. **But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”**”*

When we read this passage of scripture in context, we see it is again the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as He preaches the gospel of grace and repentance to us.

Repentance is a gift from God

Acts 11:15-18 [NIV] *“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.’ **So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?**” When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, **“So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”***

The “baptism” or “anointing” of the Holy Spirit as a gift from God brought conviction, conversion and repentance to these gentile [un-churched] people.

Romans 2:4 [Living Bible] *“Don’t you realise **how patient He [God] is being with you? Or don’t you care? Can’t you see that He has been waiting all this time without punishing you, to give you time to turn from your sin? His kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.**”*

The Holy Spirit is the real gift from God that leads us to repentance.

Without the Holy Spirit’s convicting work, we will **never** see our sin nor feel its pain and therefore, will **not** feel the need to do anything about it.

The Holy Spirit strips away our disguises and excuses. We can disguise our need for repentance of sin behind the façade of religious observances.

The Holy Spirit lays bare our self-deception.

The Holy Spirit reveals the depth of our self-centred life.

The Holy Spirit deals with all that is unholy in our lives.

We can never come to repentance on our own.

Repentance is a response to revelation

True repentance does **not** come by gazing inward and trying to find things wrong in our lives.

Such a self-seeking only leads to misery, self-condemnation and a loss of joy.

Self-analysis may result in shallow repentance and self-forgiveness [self-justification] but **no** permanent change.

True repentance comes only as we have revealed to us God's Holiness

True repentance comes as a response to God's revelation of Himself and then a revealed comparison of our own nature.

1 John 1:5-10 [NIV] *“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.**”*

When we come into the light of God's presence, through the revelation that the indwelling Holy Spirit brings.

When we see His Holiness, perfection, righteousness and power, we see ourselves more clearly as weak helpless sinners.

The more we seek God's face and move into the light of His presence, the more we become conscious of wrongs within that need to be dealt with.

It is the Holy Spirit who leads us to repentance, cleansing and releasing us from sin into a state of revival.

There is no other way to revival.