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Restoration - Reconciliation - Repentance
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We have learned about the ministry of reconciliation that has been given to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. God is reconciling us through His Son Jesus Christ, God is not holding our past sins against us, but because of what Jesus did in giving His life, we have been given the opportunity to be reconciled, if we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior. The religious world thinks that their sins are ever present, that they have not been forgiven and God is holding them against them, but that is not true, He is wanting the world to be reconciled to Him through Jesus. Once the Lord gives a gift or a calling, He does not withdraw those gifts nor change His mind.

We learned about the prodigal son returning to his father's house, he was very repentant, not blaming everyone for his actions or making excuses of why he had acted as he had, but was willing to become one of his father's servants. His father welcomed him back with open arms, forgiving him and ready to treat him as he had before. We learned about the older brother being offended at the way that his father treated the prodigal son, but the father explained that the backslidden brother needed to be welcomed back into the family. This is the same way that God accepts anyone who has backslidden from the faith, if they come with a truly repentant heart, not blaming others or making excuses, they can be accepted back into the body of Christ.

The question that we are being asked, are people who have backslidden and turned their lives back into a life of sin, can they be restored and brought back into fellowship with the body of believers? Can they be restored back into the body, with the gifts and callings that they had before? Or are they doomed to never be active again? We have examples of people in the bible who missed the mark, but they repented and came back, restored into full fellowship again.

Rom 11:29 "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [for He does not withdraw what He has given, nor does He change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call]." AMP

Rom 11:29 "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." KJV

Wherever God has placed us in the body, whatever gift that He has given us, we will be responsible for that when we stand before Him.

Jer 29:11 "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." KJV

God spoke this to the children of Israel when they were in captivity for 70 years, this was not His plan, but it was because of their disobedience and rebellion that they had been taken captive. When they began a turnaround in their lives, turning back to Him completely, they began to experience peace, prosperity and favor, the plans that He had for them all along. Captivity was not the plan that He had for their lives.

In relationship to a turnaround in our lives, God giving us a second or third chance is that every set back that we encounter in life is a set up for a supernatural comeback in our lives. The upcoming Easter season is a chance for people to make a new beginning or resurrection life.

There may be some who are needing that kind of life and God has said that He would put His hand to us again and we will have a supernatural comeback.

There are principles, separation and courage, that can be followed, which are man's responsibility in response to genuine biblical repentance, enabling God to put His hand to our life again, in an outward manifestation.

The following scriptures are examples of Judas and Peter. Judas betrayed Jesus, but Peter denied even knowing Him.

Judas had betrayed Christ, realizing what he had done, he repented, but it was not a heartfelt repentance, it was only that he recognized the sin he was guilty of and ended his life because of it. When he saw the consequences, his suicide resulted from guilt and remorse but not an unrepentant heart and conscience, he had no biblical repentance.

Peter had denied Jesus three times. When Peter repented the correct way, God put His hand upon him again. They had repented but were different in the sincerity of that repentance. After the Day of Pentecost when Peter preached and so many were born again, God had used him in a miraculous way.

Matt 27:3-5 "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, *repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, what is that to us? See thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." KJV

*this type of repentance means to express a mere desire that what is done could possibly be undone, it is also accompanied with regret, guilt, shame and sometimes remorse, but with no effective change of heart, it is an ineffective repentance in which forgiveness of sin is not promised, this words means little or nothing more than a selfish dread of the consequences of what one has done.

The type of repentance that Peter showed means regret and a turning away because of a change of heart, that is brought about by Gods spirit.

We can have remorse, shame and guilt and not a genuine repentance, biblical repentance that we want to have, will deal with our hearts and we will have to turn to that. This is the kind of repentance that Jesus preached, Jonah preached and Peter preached. How do we have a genuine repentance? There is a sorrow when we say that we are sorry, but it doesn't come from the heart, there has to be a heart change.

Judas repentance led to death, he marked Jesus with a kiss, but Peter's repentance led to life even though he denied Jesus three times and he was one of the twelve. What is the difference? There was a genuine heartfelt repentance.

Paul is addressing the church at Corinth in a letter, regarding repentance and salvation and reconciliation.

2 Cor 7:9-10 "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." KJV

2 Cor 7:9-10 "Yet I am glad now, not because you were pained, but because you were pained into repentance [and so turned back to God]; for you felt a grief such as God meant you to feel, so that in nothing you might suffer loss through us *or* harm for what we did. 10 For godly grief *and* the pain God is permitted to direct, produce a repentance that leads *and* contributes to salvation *and* deliverance from evil, and it never brings regret; but worldly grief (the hopeless sorrow that is characteristic of the pagan world) is deadly [breeding and ending in

death]." AMP

In the church today among Christian people, people are going to miss the mark, and most do not know how to recover from the attacks of the enemy, the church does not know how to help them out of that trap and the church cannot help them when they come with a worldly repentance, making excuses, wanting to negotiate, they must come like the prodigal son, totally repentant. There is a right way to repent and it will work life. If we repent and just have remorse, sorrow and guilt, we have never experienced Gods total, full forgiveness and restoration, because when God forgives us He restores us to righteousness or right standing with Him again, just like sin had never happened in our lives.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." KJV

Mark 6:12 "And they went out, and preached that men should repent." KJV

Matt 26:75 "And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly." KJV

Jesus is talking to Peter, forewarning him about how the enemy is trying to separate him. The devil has this same plan for each of us to separate us from the plan that God has for us. Separating us from the things we know to do that are right, ie; from church and from God, letting pride enter into us. God had a plan for Peter, that he would preach to the Jewish people and that pride would not get in the way. He was to help his fellow companions.

Luke 22:31-32 "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." KJV

Luke 22:31-32 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. 32 But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers." NLT

Luke 22:31-32 "Simon, stay on your toes. Satan has tried his best to separate all of you from me, like chaff from wheat. Simon, I've prayed for you in particular that you not give in or give out. When you have come through the time of testing, turn to your companions and give them a fresh start."MSG

True repentance must come from our heart, comebacks must come from our heart, there has to be a refocusing, exercising of our faith in Gods character and His promises. The following scriptures are an example of refocusing.

Luke 7:36-50 "And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet

with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." KJV

If we have missed the mark, our faith is going to have to rise up and have faith in the character of God as to what has been promised to the backslider that comes back. We must have faith in the restoration that God has promised, that we are whole and complete and have been cleansed from all unrighteousness. The sacrifice that God laid on Jesus was so complete, that Christians were not to be second rate, but be whole and complete. Do not limit God in restoration, His plan has never changed.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." KJV

Courage is a quality that man needs, example is of Joshua stepping out in faith, being obedient to what God tells him to do regarding taking of the cities, but because of disobedience with one man, they lost the battle they should have won easily. Did the sin effect just one man or were all effected? God never changed His mind; God gave them a second chance. He has given us ability, just because we miss the mark, don't let this cause us to not rise up and come back to Fathers house, He gives us second chances.

Josh 8:1-2 "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land: 2 And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it." KJV

Gal 6:1 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, *restore such an one in the spirit of **meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." KJV

*restore here is like a bone out of joint, needing to be put back into place. **meekness strength in control

When we go wanting to restore a person taken in a fault or sin, don't go with the attitude that we are better than they are, because we could also be tempted, maybe doing the same thing faced with the same circumstances, but go with meekness, be careful and know that it is God's plan to restore. Our faith will determine how great our comeback is after we are forgiven.