

WEEK OF SANCTIFICATION: THE FAST GOD WANTS

Houses of Light Church • January 2, 2021 • Pastor Netz Gómez

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **After everything that happened in 2020 many of us yearn for a new spiritual beginning.** God wants us to wash and clean everything that is old, what has already worn off, and start over. We must leave behind our expectations that were not met in 2020 and embrace what God has for us.
- B. **In Scripture THE FIRST STEP TO EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS SPIRITUALLY IS REPENTANCE.** This is the most basic of all the messages in Scripture. **It was the message that John the Baptist preached** in preparation for the coming of Jesus.
Mat. 3:2 "And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- C. **It was Jesus' first message to the crowds** announcing the arrival of the kingdom. To the message of repentance Jesus added the message of believing in the gospel.
Mark 1:15 "and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
- D. It was also **the message that the apostles announced** when Jesus sent them and they saw the manifestation of the kingdom.
Mark 6:12-13 "So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them."
- E. **Casting out demons and healing diseases is preceded by repentance.** Not all disease is caused by sin or by demons and it is not that repentance always causes immediate healing in all disease but what is certain is that sin opens the door to the devil. We can cast out demons but when the person has not repented there will really be no true freedom. The demons need sin and evil to live in someone, it is their legal permission; when we repent they have no place to stay and people can experience freedom and healing.
- F. **Repentance was the first message that the disciples preached after the resurrection,** they only added baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit as a result of repentance:
Acts 2:38 "And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- G. **It was the first message that Paul preached in Europe** and it indicates to us that it is a call for the whole world.
Acts. 17:30 "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent."
- H. **ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, WHAT PRECEDES RENEWAL IS REPENTANCE.**
Acts 3:19-21 "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing [relief, rest, comfort, renewal] may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom

heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

- I. The restoration before Jesus comes is for now in our hearts; after his return it will be in society and after the Millennium the whole earth is restored. **For now, in the context of repentance and in the presence of the Lord we are renewed.**

Psalm 104:30 "When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground."

II. WE MUST LEARN TO REPENT

- A. **It is not easy to repent** because we have wrong ideas of what repentance is and because we are so used to certain behaviors that we have made them part of our personality, so **we need to learn to repent.**
- B. In **Hebrew** the word for repentance is *teshuvah* means **to return; you leave something and go to someone.** You walk away from actions (sin) and come to a person (God). Our wrongdoings are called sin by the Bible, and sin hurts Heavenly Father's heart. It hurts Him when sin takes us away from Him because He loves us. Sin has to do with distancing ourselves from our loving Father. In **Greek** the word is *metanoia* and it means to **change your way of thinking and your attitudes.**
- C. In short, **to repent means to change our thinking, stop doing wrong, and return that relationship with Heavenly Father.** It does not speak of religious rituals or sinking into self-condemnation.

III. FAST, REPENTANCE AND REWARDS

- A. **Apart from prayer, God left us another resource that is available to all in our search for His favor and intervention and that is fasting,** which consists of abstaining from food for a certain time to examine our hearts and seek the Lord with greater intensity than the food itself. In **Isa. 58** the Lord reveals the kind of fast He wants which is steeped in repentance, and which He promises to reward:
1. **FASTING AND RECONCILIATION: v. 4 "Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high."** When we forgive others for the evil that they have done to us, we open the door so that by the power of God it manifests itself and there is freedom and healing.
 2. **FASTING AND GENUINE ATTITUDE: v.5 "Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord?"** It has to do with the heart more than with external rites; even stopping eating is not the heart of the fast.
 3. **FASTING AND JUSTICE: v. 6 "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?"** When we remove every way that we oppress and abuse others, we remove the obstacle that prevents God from unleashing His blessing.
 4. **FASTING AND COMPASSION: v. 7 "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"** Our God is compassionate and as His children that is a mark that distinguishes that we are

from His family.

5. **FASTING AND CLEAN LIPS: v. 9b** ***"If you take away...the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness..."*** Stopping criticizing and gossiping is not easy for our fallen nature; it is part of our culture. The more you pray for others and for what surrounds you, you will conquer your way of expressing yourself about what happens.

B. **To repent is to return to Him and leave everything that is selfish, lustful, incredulous or unforgiven in my life. Letting go of bad attitudes and bad actions to change and return to Him through Jesus in that intimate relationship with Him.** We want to please Him and make Him happy; that we are happy together.

C. REWARDS OF FASTING:

1. **RENEWAL, HEALTH, DIRECTION, AND PROTECTION: v.8** ***"Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard."***

v.11 "And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose water does not fail."

2. **QUICK RESPONSE: v.9a** ***"Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.'"***
3. **CLARITY IN THE MIDDLE OF CRISIS: v.10** ***"then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday."***
4. **BEING USED BY GOD TO RESTORE: v.12** ***"And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in."***

IV. PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF FASTING

A. **Define the purpose of your fast:** Determine to seek personal revival and from there to those around you. If you change everything begins to change. We start with ourselves first and He can make other things happen. You can incorporate other requests and even make daily prayer lists. Fight and plan your day well so as not to be distracted and pressured by internal or external factors.

B. **Define the type of fast:** It can be a **Daniel fast** (the guide is available on our website); a **partial fast** (one or two meals a day); a **water fast** (if you have a health condition you should check with your doctor); or a **mixed fast combining two types of fasting**. **The key is your time alone with God in prayer, worship and meditation on the Word and the attitude of your heart.** The reason for fasting is not to have an empty stomach or to diet but rather to meet God and cry out for personal, family and congregational revival.

Mat. 6:16-18 ***"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."***

C. By having your times with God:

1. **Recognize (Ps. 51:3,4):** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you all hidden sin (Ps. 19:12). It is not so much that you feel guilty but to search your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the things you have to repent of. Let Him convince you that is his specialty!
2. **Confess all sin (1 John 1:17):** Do not hide or justify any sinful action, attitude or motivation. Be honest and transparent with God, don't be afraid. They can be personal sins, character, personality, lifestyle, education, culture, theological education, beliefs, sins in the family, at work, ministry, etc.
3. **Repent:** Ask for forgiveness, correct your way of thinking; stop sinning and come closer to God.
4. **Restore:** If possible, make up for the damage your sins have caused to others.
5. **Ask to be purified (Ps. 51: 7,8,9,10,11,12):** Cry out for a change in your being; aspires to be holy; it is important to sincerely long for the purified need.
6. **Proclaim freedom and the Lordship of Christ:** When you follow this process, your freedom is the fruit you receive. Claim you are free for Christ in your spirit, soul, and body.
7. **Praise and exalt the Lord:** Spend time proclaiming the greatness, power, love, and faithfulness of God.
8. **Intercede:** For your loved ones, including your church, community and country declaring God's promises. Ask for your personal, family, ministerial needs, etc.
9. **Give thanks to God:** Gratitude every day is the key to receiving God's peace (**Phil. 4:6-8**).
10. **Use your devotional and have a notebook:** God will speak to you and show passages of the Word, take note of everything. Record everything that God reveals to you; answered prayers and supernatural events (dreams, visions, etc.).

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Many of the great victories have been preceded by times of fasting; I encourage you to start this fast by focusing on God. The more you focus on your empty stomach and the sacrifice you are making, the more you will want to eat but we encourage you to watch and pray. It is likely that due to the change in focus that you are having during these days you feel bored and impatient so I recommend that you pray and pray. When we pray we are strengthened physically and spiritually (**Eph. 6:10**).
- B. **Let's start the year on the right foot, we will repent with all our hearts so that God unleashes what He has in store and we can really have a Happy New Year.**

VI. APPLICATION

- A. **Plan the type of fast that you are going to carry out; make a list of requests and promises, get your devotional and notebook; and plan what time you will spend praying. Study these notes to be clear about what repentance is. In Friendship Group use the devotional questions to reflect on.**