

21 DAYS OF CONSECRATION:

TIMES OF REFRESHMENT FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Houses of Light Church • January 6-7, 2024 • Pastor Netz Gómez

Acts. 3:19-20a

"Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing [renewal, relief, rest] may come from the presence of the Lord,..."

I. THE WEEK OF SANCTIFICATION

- A. As a congregation, at the beginning of the year, the Lord gave us this precious promise in which he confirms that from His presence there will come times of renewal and relief to continue forward with the call and purpose that God has for us as a community. The requirement is to repent of our sins and turn to the Lord and that is what we are doing during these 21 Days of Consecration to see this promise fulfilled in our lives, families and church.
- B. This first Week of Sanctification has been glorious! Each day of the devotional has been very meaningful and we have seen miracles:
 - 1. We begin with thanksgiving **"for the Lord is good and His mercy endures forever."** (Ps. 100:5) Asking the Holy Spirit to remind us of God's character, who He is, and what He has done. With the purpose of allowing the Lord to soften our hearts to receive more from Him.
 - 2. The second day was about the **joy of salvation**, we reflected on what it is that has made us lose the joy of having been saved. When someone loses the joy of salvation, the Christian life becomes a religious routine that bears no fruit, but thank God that joy can be restored.
 - 3. The third day was about **enjoying the presence of the Lord**. We were created to enjoy his presence not only inside the church but also outside of it.
 - 4. The fourth day was about **going up the mountain** like Moses did with the longing for God to show us his glory. **When we really long to see it, that intense desire leads us to remove every obstacle that stands in the way.**
 - 5. On the fifth day we talked about the case of Hagar and I consider that it is **very important to delve deeper into what happened to her so that we can remove the offenses and receive the times of removal that the Lord wants to send.**

II. THE CASE OF HAGAR AND THE DANGER OF LIVING OFFENDED (GEN. 16)

- A. The story of Hagar tells us about a reality of life: we are going to receive offenses and injustices but the point is to understand how we can be free from their destructive effects to receive the promise of God.
- B. Hagar was an Egyptian slave who worked for Abram and Sarai. After Sarai despaired of not seeing the fulfillment of the promise that she and Abram would have a child, she told Abram to have a baby with the slave girl. Abram agreed, but the moment Hagar became pregnant he began to look at Sarai with contempt (v.4) and she in response began to mistreat Hagar, so she decided to leave her masters' house (v.6) and making that decision was about to lose the place that God had given him and the prophetic destiny of his son.

- C. **The truth about offense is this: Those who matter most to us are the ones who can offend or hurt us the most. We all expect more from those we show interest in, and the higher our expectations, the greater the opportunity to be offended and fall into the devil's trap. That happened to David:**

Sal. 55:12-14: "For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me— then I could hide from him. ¹³ But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. ¹⁴ We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng..."

- D. **As in the case of Hagar, an offended believer seeks to protect himself and what he does is begin to isolate himself; He has been hurt and does not want to experience the same thing again. His focus is more on taking care of himself so he doesn't get hurt again rather than continuing to give himself in that relationship, ministry or job.**
- E. **This happens a lot in congregations, a person who is offended suddenly disappears and people can speak ill of the ministry to which they once professed fidelity and loyalty; all due to an offense that Satan reinforces in the heart and the person takes the bait and now finds themselves disconnected and is easy prey for deception.**
- F. **Isolation rarely starts from the outside, it always starts from the inside. You may be a member of a large congregation and attend regularly but isolation has already occurred in the heart. All of these offenses that have been allowed can ultimately lead us to distance ourselves from others, including God Himself.**
- G. **This response will eventually lead to hatred, which is not always open anger but simply a failure to love, and if this process is allowed to continue, it deprives the person of receiving eternal life.**

1 Jn. 3:15 "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

III. OFFENSE LEADS TO DECEPTION

Prov. 18:19 "A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city..."

- A. **Those who isolate themselves place barriers with others which are internal vows that people make to not allow others to get close to them because they do not want to be hurt or betrayed again. These thought processes that develop deep in the soul can lead a person to develop their own version of Christianity and the Bible.**

Prov. 18:1 "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire."

- B. **The person who isolates himself begins to become a law unto himself. This is why Jesus said that in our time there would be an abundance of people living as they please and as a result the love of God in the hearts of believers would grow cold.**

Mat. 24:12-13 "And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

- C. **Allowing yourself to live offended leads to a person living without law, which, simply put, is disobedience to authority. Jesus calls us to persevere but the**

question is, can you persevere in salvation if you remain so offended? The enemy uses offenses to bring people into captivity.

2 Tim. 2:24-26 *"And the Lord's servant[e] must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will."*

- D. It is surprising how those who get into lawsuits and opposition fall into a trap that imprisons them to accept the suggestions that the devil wants. These people are not aware of their captivity and do not realize that bitterness comes out of their hearts. When people are deceived, they believe they are fine even though they are not.

IV. WHAT GOD DID WITH HAGAR AND ALSO DOES WITH US (Gen. 16)

- A. The story of Hagar is beautiful because it shows us the answer and the solution that God gave her and also gives it to us so as not to fall prey to offenses.
- B. **v.7** *"The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness..."* When Hagar fled, she came to the desert, which can happen to someone who is offended and isolates themselves to protect themselves from being hurt and suddenly finds themselves in a spiritual desert. The beautiful thing about this story is that the Lord finds it there, which speaks of how the Lord is aware of the processes we are experiencing and comes close to us to help us.
- C. **v.8** *"And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"* Obviously the Lord knew where she came from and where she was going, but Hagar was losing both her identity and her destiny by letting herself be carried away by the offense and this is what can happen to us if we do not identify and release, through genuine forgiveness, any offense that may occur. have in our hearts.
- D. **v.9-11a** *"The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." ¹⁰ The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." ¹¹ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son..."* Although the situation in which Hagar lived was not perfect because in reality there was injustice in Abram's house; The prophetic destiny of her and her son was tied to being under the authority of Abram and Sarai. Although we cannot draw an absolute principle from this passage, we can see a biblical principle about authority..

Rom. 13:1-2a *"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed..."*

- E. The Lord told Hagar who she was, a woman under authority, and that she was pregnant with a baby who would eventually father many offspring. In fact the Lord named the child.
- F. **v.11b** *"...You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction."* This is a fundamental reality to overcome and forgive offenses: God

sees what happens to us, takes us into account and defends us, that is why we can overcome self-pity and bitterness.

Psal. 5:11 "But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you."

- G. v.13 *"So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."* In this encounter with God Hagar was able to see the Lord who saw her. To truly overcome offenses, it is not only about forgiving and knowing that God sees everything that happens to us, but about seeing Him more than everything else, even the worst offenses and betrayals.

V. CONCLUSIÓN

Phil. 2:14-15 "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world;"

- A. The Bible says that God has called us to live in a blameless and simple way, marking the contrast with a world that lives on the defensive or the offensive. We must learn to respond according to our identity: we are children of God and we must not give power to offenses to destroy us.
- B. We must all learn to deal with offenses in a positive way, forgiving those who offend us. Because otherwise we can fall into the trap that the enemy is setting and lose not only our friendships and relationships but even our destiny in God. Our response to offense determines our future.

VI. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- A. Can you recognize if you are offended by someone close to you? Explain
- B. According to this teaching, how can you really overcome the offenses or injustices you have experienced?
- C. Pray for each other in the Friendship Group to remove any obstacles that prevent you from experiencing the times of refreshing that God is sending.

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The School of Discipleship restarts on January 22 for the 3 Levels: 1st Level, in English and in Spanish. 2nd level Spanish and English together and 3rd level bilingual.
2. On the weekend of January 27 and 28 we celebrated our 24th anniversary. Come join us in giving thanks for all God has done at Houses of Light.
3. On Sunday, January 28 at 5:00 p.m. We started our first service completely in English. If you want to support us, go to the Report Center to sign up. If you speak English, we invite you to come to the front table during the Second Sunday Service.