

Is This Bitter Sin Keeping You From Being Prepared for Jesus' Return?

I was grieved, as I studied the book of Revelation in eight different translations, at the number of people who didn't repent. With everything that was happening, the bowls poured out and the plagues being released upon the earth, the people did not repent and change their behaviors. They had seen the hand of God released and still chose not to follow Him.

The thought that entered my mind was how this parallels to what is happening now. There are people not so different than the seven churches. They are living in sin, ignoring the signs of the end times and not repenting.

I think we are living in the best of times! We are seeing the very Word of God manifest before our eyes. We are seeing the manifestation of the end times, and the good news is that we have been forewarned and still have time to repent and change our ways. "Concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matt. 24:36). I believe we can make the greatest impact for the kingdom now if we take the signs we are seeing as warnings and change. As believers, we need to purge the sin and unforgiveness out of our lives.

The Bible says, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12) and "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:22a). "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go on your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24).

Repenting and seeking forgiveness are not always easy. It can hurt to self-examine and to see where you have been at fault, where you need to look inside and seek forgiveness for what you have done. The good thing about it is that it brings forth freedom. When we forgive ourselves and others, it releases something inside us that empowers us, strengthens us and enables us to be used effectively for the kingdom. The kingdom of God is inside you. You have the ability to release it through repenting, changing and forgiving.

We don't have to be like the virgins who didn't have their lamps ready and filled with oil when the bridegroom came (Matt. 25). We see the signs of the times, "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled. For such things must happen, but the end is still to come" (Mark 13:7) and "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and glorious day of the Lord comes" (Acts 2:20). We don't know the hour or the day, but we are being given warning.

Repent means to turn around and change. Repenting is acknowledging the mistakes we have made, receiving the forgiveness Christ purchased at the cross, and then extending that forgiveness to those who have wounded us. We want to be found diligent by Him, in peace, without spot and blameless when He comes (see 2 Pet. 3:14).

Forgiveness releases ourselves. It releases us from the bondage we are holding ourselves in, the grudges, offense, hurt and pain. When we forgive, most of the time, the other person doesn't know we are still holding a grudge. It is ourselves who we are holding in bondage. Christ extended forgiveness to us, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

In the book of Revelation, people saw the sin and did nothing. They remained in hatred and they kept rebelling. They saw the

hand of God, and they did not repent and turn from their wicked ways. We have the Word of God right here in front of us. It is our great instruction book. When we read this book, we are warned of things to come. We are also told of the blessings that those who follow Him will receive. The word of God says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). I want to see God. I want to get to heaven and hear him say, "Well done, you good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23).

As we repent, change our ways and forgive others, it allows for more love to come into our lives. As we remove ungodly things from our lives and things we are involved in that are contrary to the Word of God, love will saturate us. As we stay in perpetual relationship with our Father, He will show us areas of our lives that need to be cleaned up and purged. As He purges us, He fills us with more of His love.

As the end times continue to manifest, people are going to need to know the love of God. That is why as Christians it is important we repent and turn from our old ways, our old selves and our old natures and put on Christ. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts" (Rom. 13:14). When we put on Christ by repenting, we are putting on love. "And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14, NKJV). When we put on love, we can be God's love to a lost and dark world. They will desire what we have: the God of love.

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