

HEART MOTIVES - PART 5

A HEART OF FAITH!

If you or I are ever going to have God revealing Himself *touchable and tangible* in our lives, then according to scripture we must have "a heart of faith"! . . . Listen to these words found in Hebrews 11:6

" . . . without faith it is impossible to please (God), for (the person) who comes to God (comes into His presence) must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Now for any of Christian who wants to **experience God's presence**, the greatest problem is not whether we believe in Him or not. The real battle is found in *our struggle to believe that God would want to have anything to do with us!* . . . Especially after ALL we've done! And why is that?

Because we know that everyone else sees only what is on the outside! But God, oh no, *He sees within our hearts!* He knows everything! Every dirty thought, every hateful attitude, every proud opinion we've ever had! *He knows everything!*

And so whenever we go to seek the *touchable and tangible* presence of God, our thoughts scream back to us, "How can you ever expect God to reveal Himself to you? Especially after what you have done?"

But listen to I John 3:20, it tells us "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. (But) *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence* toward God."

The secret to experiencing the *touchable and tangible* presence of God is found in the answer to this question, "how do I, in a very practical way, begin to live *without* my heart condemning me the moment I begin to seek God's presence and favor?" *Now this is very important.* Listen to this scripture. Titus 3:5 says "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*"

Now what exactly is this verse trying to tell you and I? And why is it so important? To fully answer these questions you will first need to know exactly what Paul is saying here. The Greek word translated "saved" here means both literally and figuratively: *to save, to deliver or protect.* And in the King James Version it is also at times translated - *to heal, to preserve, to be made whole!*

Now don't miss this! The word "saved" in this passage carries with it both the idea of a past work . . . **and the present process of being saved!** Now what do I mean by that?

When you became a Christian, at that moment in time when you asked Jesus to come into your life and save you from who you are, and you surrendered all that you knew of yourself to Him as Lord - then in that very moment of time He became your Savior! Ahh, but how many of you know that there was still a work of creation to be done in you? Do you really know that?

In other words, you are still in the process of being made whole! In fact, whether you know it or not, God is trying to rewrite your entire "belief system". Scripture tells us that He is working "within you both to will and to do His good pleasure." . . . You are a work in process!

Now how is that process being carried out? First I can tell you that it is not being done by your own efforts, your self-will, your spiritual intelligence, nor your strong character or self determination! In other words there will never be anything of our own that you or I can point to and say to others, "This is how I became a spiritual person. This is how I accomplished it! First I did this -just this certain way. Then step two - I did this other thing. And finally, to top it all off . . . I did this! *That will never happen!* Because Paul has just told us that the work of God within you is not by our own "works of righteousness"! So then . . . how is this work accomplished in you?

Paul goes on to tell us that this work of "righteousness", is accomplished by the "*washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*".

Now what is the "washing of regeneration"? And the "renewing of the Holy Ghost"? Let's first look at the phrase, "washing of regeneration". The word "washing" here is the Greek word *loutron* which means **a bath**. In fact, figuratively it can also mean immersion or baptism. And it comes from another Greek word that means to "bathe the whole person" in contrast to just washing or cleansing a part of them.

And the word "regeneration" or the Greek word *paliggenesia* is the (spiritual) **rebirth** (the state or the act) of being (figuratively) spiritually *renovated*. And more specifically in this passage, it is a "Messianic restoration" through an act of *cleansing by Jesus*.

The word "regeneration" also comes from another Greek word, *palin* which carries with it the idea of repeating a process. . . . *To do something again and again - over and over!*

So understanding that, we now know that Paul is probably not talking about the initial act of salvation here, but the "process of salvation". The process of God saving you. And if we are right, then Paul is also talking about some sort of process where the Messiah, *Jesus washes you spiritually clean, . . . again and again!*

When looked at closely, the next phrase, correctly translated "renewing of the Holy Ghost", confirms that this is a **process that must be repeated over and over**. And that it also is a work that only the Holy Spirit can do within you! Now can I be quite honest with you?

I believe it is time that we as Christians quit arguing over whether the Holy Spirit comes into the life of a Christian at the point of salvation, or as an entirely second experience! The question you should be asking yourself is "have I surrendered to this filling of the Holy Spirit in my life today, at this precise moment in time?"

Now remember, we are searching for how our heart can be brought to a place where when we go to seek God . . . our heart no longer condemns us! And as a result . . . **we then have a heart of faith!** So how is this work of cleansing by Jesus done in you and I? Or how can you be washed clean, and your heart renovated by the power of the Holy Spirit so that it no longer condemns you? Listen to the words from John 13:5-9. They are very important!

Scripture tells us that *" . . . after pouring water into a basin, (Jesus) then began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the servant's towel that He had wrapped around Himself. But when He came to Simon Peter, Peter said to Him, 'Lord, are my feet to be washed by You?' . . . And Jesus answered Him saying, 'What I do now, I know you do not understand. But YOU WILL later on.' . . . But then Peter said 'You shall NEVER wash my feet!'"*

Now listen to this! *"Answering him, Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you will have no part in Me! No companionship with Me - at all!" To which Simon Peter then replied, 'Lord, wash not only my feet, but my hands and my head, too!'"*

Now what was Jesus saying here? Jesus has just implicated here that in order to be able to walk in this intimate companionship with and "in Him" . . . first, He must what? . . . **HE MUST WASH YOU CLEAN!**

Do you see it? And how often must this process happen according to Titus 3:5? Remember? Do you remember? How often? **AGAIN AND AGAIN, OVER AND OVER!**

Now can I be honest with you about how I have come to see this scripture worked out in a practical way within my own life? Whenever I have been involved in sin, known or unknown, or just when I have neglected my "first love" relationship with Jesus . . . I always

"feel" my heart condemning me. And in the past, for me, during these times my first response was always to try somehow to "wash" myself clean before God. Do you know what I mean?

I found myself searching for the right words to say to God. And in that moment, trying to really "feel" repentant. (More so than usual) Usually repeating and promising over and over, again and again that I would never do what ever it was I did again. . . .
Somehow trying with my words and sincere emotions to scrub the grunge and stain of sin off of my life!

But Paul, in Titus 3:5 screams through the darkness and dullness within our spirits that the useless spiritual scrubbing that we try to do is hopeless! "It is not by works of righteousness"! It is because of His mercy that He is saving you!

If right now you can feel your heart condemning you, *and you understand what I have just taught*, then stop here, and first . . . repent of whatever sins you have committed. And then - afterwards - in stillness, bow before your King, the Messiah Jesus, and confess that you now know that no matter how hard you try, how sincere your heart, **without HIS CLEANSING you will never be clean!** Now, pray to Jesus . . .

"Unless You wash me totally - from head to foot, I know I will never be clean! And I confess to You that I now realize that no matter how much, nor how long I struggle to clean away the stain of sin in my life, it will never be long enough. Because I can never be clean on my own!"

"So now, with my life totally surrendered, I open my heart for You to wash me clean! Clean from every stain of sin, every moment of unclean thought, and from the guilt produced by me turning from You as my *first source* of emotional fulfillment and then looking to some 'God Substitute' to meet my needs. And clean from all that could ever cause me - to forget - how much - You love me!"

"Please, Father right now would you wash me clean? And in your cleansing, may I finally find a 'heart of faith' that no longer condemns me!"

NOW, BE STILL AND ALLOW GOD TO CLEAN YOU FROM HEAD TO FOOT!

Hebrews 4:16 says, "therefore come boldly, with assurance and confidence . . ." **YOU ARE HIS SON - HIS DAUGHTER. He will be faithful!** After your prayer, now tell God, "With a new heart, I come into your presence to be healed by your overwhelming love for me! Thank you Father for seeking me out as your lost sheep! For only through you could I have ever found my way home! **THANK YOU!**"