

## Questions for the Chalk Revival

Written by Bob Stone

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In the Chalk Revival, it is only as God's Word penetrates the heart that the conviction of the Holy Spirit will bring brokenness, and the soil of our hearts will be watered with tears of repentance and tears of joy.

The heart of a believer can become like a dry and uncultivated field, but when God's Word is replanted in a broken and contrite believer, the heart is rejuvenated. It is a tremendous moment in a Christian's life when he/she stops resisting the truth and arguing with God; when he/she stands before God and honestly says: "Yes, Lord, you are right and I am wrong. You know what is best for me. I submit totally to Your will for me."

Sometimes this happens only when our lives become scorched, dry and lifeless and/or we are brought to the humbling consequences of our sin. But remember, when that desert-like experience happens, it is the grace of God bringing us to the end of ourselves and/or repentance over and over again. God can use us most, and we are the most joyful, in our moments of humility, brokenness and submission—Ps. 34:18; 51:17; 147:3; Is. 61:1.

**The Lord is more ready to forgive the sins of His people than a mother is willing to snatch her child out of the fire, but the sin God will not forgive is obviously the sin we will not confess.**

*What will bring us to this point of confession and repentance?* This is a significant question, because it might be said revival is not possible without a price of confession and repentance. Confession of sin and repentance are not acts or experiences that should be connected only with the early days of our Christian walk. It is the humble and broken heart that God will not despise, no matter what our spiritual age or experience—Ps. 51:17.

Do you remember how it was when you first became a Christian? Right after I became a

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believer at age 12, I went into a dime store in Wenatchee and stole a parakeet feeder. I didn't even have a parakeet, but I thought this little trough was something I wanted—until I got home. I was so convicted by what I had done, I immediately took it back to the store. As we think of those early experiences, do we need to ask God to rekindle the sensitivity we had when we first came to Him?

Remember, it is the *proud* that God will keep away from Himself, and the humble to whom He will give grace—1 Peter 5:5.

**If we avoid daily humbling ourselves before God, we may soon become hard-hearted, cold and indifferent to the things of God.**

God will not plant the seeds of His life upon the soil of our hard, unbroken spirit because they won't penetrate, e.g., parable of the soils. A revivalist once said, "A major step forward would be for the church to cease pretending that it is doing well and admit that it is doing worse than it has ever done in modern history... when we reach the point that we stop all sham and pretense and in brokenness and contrition cry out to God, then the hopes begin to brighten."

What will break up the ground and bring tears of repentance to water the soil of our hearts? God will use many experiences, means, and even the examples of others.

A study of the Water Gate Revival of Nehemiah 8-9 reveals how remorse for sin and brokenness took place in Israel. Notice the context in which confession and repentance took place.

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9:1--On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. 2] Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. 3] They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God.

What initiated this brokenness and confession? The teaching, interpretation and application of Scripture struck a responsive chord in the heart of the Jews —v. 3. (See also Nehemiah 8:7-9.) This brokenness had also been seen earlier in Israel's history, when Josiah the king heard the Word. 2 Kings 22:11— "When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes."

The reason the Word can break us is revealed in Heb. 4:12—"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

This passage shows us God's Word

- is living
- is active and energetic
- cuts and lays bare any falsehood or untruth in us
- penetrates to the innermost recesses of our spiritual beings
- judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart

Looking back at Nehemiah 9:1-3, God's Word was all of this to those who listened with open hearts to the Word read by Ezra.

It is obvious that **the power of the Bible** is **why some avoid reading it**. It is hard to read the Bible sometimes, because it exposes us. A quote on the flyleaf of George Bernard Shaw's Bible illustrates that disdain and even fear of the Scripture: "Except as a curiosity, this book is a most undesirable possession...I must get rid of it. I really cannot bear it in my house."

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If we are willing and allow the Bible to speak to us, one way our sin can be discovered is by prayerfully and honestly reading the Scriptures while asking and answering some particular questions. As long as we are dishonest and merely compare ourselves with others, we can always find someone worse than ourselves and can say, "Well, I'm not that bad, so I guess I'm okay."

But if we compare ourselves with who we could be in the Lord, and the teachings from the Word, our response will be very different. In order to really know how we are doing, we will ask ourselves some questions, and then our assignment is to do a Scripture search to discover which particular passages in the Bible relate to these questions. This study will definitely help us discern what is in our hearts and where we need to confess our sins. Read each question and then search for the passages that apply:

### Questions

#### What about my relationship with people?

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am?
2. Is there the least suspicion of hypocrisy in my life?
3. Am I honest in all my words?
4. Do I exaggerate?
5. Am I reliable?
6. Can I be trusted?
7. Do I confidently pass on what was told me in confidence?
8. Do I grumble and complain in the church?
9. Am I jealous, irritable, touchy, distrustful?
10. Am I pure sexually in my relationships and my thoughts toward others?
11. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
12. Am I proud?
13. Do I thank God that I am not as other people?
14. Is there anyone I fear, or dislike, or criticize, or resent?
15. If so, what am I doing about it?

#### What about my devotion to God?

1. Does the Bible live in me?
2. Do I give it time to speak to me?
3. Am I enjoying my prayer life today?
4. Am I applying the teaching of the Word today?
5. When I am involved in a problem in life, do I use my tongue or the Word and my knees to resolve it?
6. Am I disobeying God in anything, or insistent upon doing something about which my conscience is very uneasy?

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7. When did I last speak to someone else with the object of trying to win them for Christ?
8. Am I a slave to books, dress, friends, work?
9. How do I spend my spare time?

What happens when we put these questions to ourselves? This study will definitely help us discern what is in our hearts and in what areas we need to confess our sin. These are not designed to inflict guilt upon us, but to help us uncover things that need to be brought into the light.

Is the process worth the effort? Yes! Remember, repentance and confession are the price of revival. It is honesty before the Lord that leads to brokenness. This is the way of the Chalk Revival.