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CONFERENCE

RESTORE
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Devotional Guide

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The God of Restoration

MATTHEW 28:16-20

This is the time for those who call Jesus Lord, who have been saved by the blood of Christ, to rejoin the battle to win lost souls for Jesus. We are loved and saved by the Father who has a passion for restoring lost and broken people. The church is the Army, we have our orders, and we must decide to join the battle.

Did you know that the Greek word for "nations" is the word from which we get our word "ethnic"? Literally, the good news of Jesus, "gospel", is for every people group on earth.

How do you think sharing the good news of Jesus would help to defeat hate and bring people together in community?

What do these Scripture verses teach us about diversity in God's family?

Without getting too technical, please note that in this verse the main verb is an imperative, "make disciples". The other verbs, going, teaching, and baptizing are supporting verbs for the action of making disciples. In ordinary language, we might say: "As you are going on your way, make disciples! To make disciples you teach people the good news of Jesus, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and then teach them how to live out God's commands in their lives."

How do these specific details help you to understand what Jesus is commanding us to do?

What can you do in your community, and even in other parts of the world where you go, to make disciples?

The Word of Restoration

LUKE 4:14-21

We are a broken people and Jesus came so that we could be restored back to relationship with the Father, and that He could restore back to us that which has been stolen, lost, or broken. Jesus didn't come for the righteous or the good people. He didn't come to start a new religion. He came to rescue us, the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. He knew that because of sin and Satan, that we would be lost, that we would make a mess of things, leaning on our own ways, and reaping the results of living a life without God.

The Word of God is clear that the process of restoration and transformation is a primary work of the Holy Spirit. Did you know that from the birth of Jesus to his glorification that the Holy Spirit was his enabler, the empowering agent in his life?

Take a closer look at Luke 4:14-21. Read it through at least two times and take note of the Holy Spirit's role.

If Jesus, being divine, needed the Holy Spirit in his life and ministry, what does that say about our need for the Holy Spirit?

How can you allow the Holy Spirit to work in your life to rescue others, help the poor, comfort the brokenhearted, release the captives, help the blind and oppressed?

Take a few moments to read these verses describing the Holy Spirit's role in the life of Jesus:

- Luke 3:21-22
- Luke 4:1-15
- Romans 8:11
- Hebrews 9:14
- John 16:13-14

Ask our Father in prayer to reveal in these words how he wants his Holy Spirit to guide

The Expression of Restoration

PSALMS 22:3

Somebody said that praise is the missing jewel of the modern church. As you look back upon your life and examine your experience, maybe the thing that is missing and needs to be restored is praise.

In Psalm 22 we learn that people are hungry for the real presence of the living God and they are hungry to have the need of their heart satisfied. We can only be satisfied when we do that which we were made to do. God made everything that He made to praise Him.

Psalm 22:3 says "But you are holy, O you that inhabits the praises of Israel." God inhabited the praise of His people, Israel. In other words, that's where God lives. That's where God dwells, in the praises of His people.

Since the time of composition, the book of Psalms has been used as a songbook and a prayerbook. In Judaism, Psalms 146, 147, 148, 149 and 150 have been used as "verses of praise". In Christianity, especially among early believers, many of the psalms were used in their gatherings during prayers and as songs for praise of God.

What role does praise of God have in your life?

What is happening in the life of the writer of Psalm 22?

How does the writer use praise in his situation?

What situations or circumstances in your life need to be used as opportunities to praise God?

The Restoration of Revival

ACTS 3:17-23

Maybe it's time to talk about the restoration of the church, corporately, the restoration of the body of Christ and call it revival. It was the heart cry of the prophet Joel and it's also the heart cry of Jesus.

What would happen if the Body of Christ began a sweeping recommitment to being the people of God?

Read Acts 3:17-23 two or three times. What is Peter teaching in these verses and what is he trying to get his audience to do?

Literally, this verse contains the phrase "times of refreshing may come from the face of the Lord."

How does repentance bring refreshing from the face of the Lord?

What does it look like? How does it feel?

Read Joel 2:12-14. How did Joel understand restoration and refreshing?

What qualities of God should one focus on when seeking refreshing through

Restore the Broken Brother or Sister

GALATIANS 6:1-5

Can you think of somebody who once was on fire for God, who once was active for God? Maybe they were a deacon or a Sunday school teacher. They once played a critical part of the Kingdom, who loved the Lord with all their heart, with their entire mind, all their soul and all their strength. Yet, that person now has been sabotaged by the devil. That person has fallen into sin, or has fallen into rebellion, or has fallen into brokenness and now is no longer serving the Lord, or if they are serving the Lord, they don't have that joy, that spark they once had in their life. They are broken.

The Christ-following life is a "one another" life. The word for "one another" is used at least one hundred times in the Greek Bible, our New Testament. One third of the "one another" verses have to do with unity, that is the Church family getting along.

For example, accept one another (Romans 15:7); be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to one another (Ephesians 4:32); and confess sins to one another (James 5:16). One third of the "one another" verses instruct Christ followers to love one another (John 13:34, Romans 12:10, 1 John 3:11, etc.). About 15% of the "one another" verses stress humility and deference (John 13:14, Galatians 5:13, Philippians 2:3, and 1 Peter 5:5).

Galatians 6:1-5 contains yet another type of "one another" action, bear one another's burdens. How can we bear other's burdens? What does this verse mean? Notice that the context of "bearing one another's burdens" is restoring a transgressor with gentle spirit through the Holy Spirit.

How does this truth help you to bear another person's burden?

Why are "restoring a transgressor" and "bearing one another's burdens" connected together in these verses?

Read verses 4-5 in the New Living Translation, "Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. For we are each responsible for our own conduct."

What do these verses have to say about our "one another" relationships?

Restoring Relationships

PROV. 18:19 | MATT. 5:23-24

Conflict is a part of life. It's how we handle conflict that impacts our relationships. We offend others just as often as we are offended, but we only notice what affects our personal feelings. The scriptures instruct us not to be an offense to anyone, but as with most commands, we will fall short more times than we'd like to admit. When it comes to offenses, our responsibility is twofold. We are called to reconcile and we are called to forgive. This is how we restore relationships.

What does Proverbs 18:19 tell us about conflicts or arguments?

Think about a recent conflict you had with someone. How did it start? Did it escalate? If it has been resolved, what brought the restoration? If it has not been resolved, what is preventing restoration?

In Matthew 5:21-24, is Jesus more concerned with what happened or is he more concerned with the issue being resolved? Why?

When dealing with conflict, what attitude or emotion puts us in danger of God's judgment? Why?

Leaving one's gift at the altar indicates that the person had come to the temple to worship. How are our gifts to God, our worship hindered by relationship conflict? Why?

Long, long ago, Francis of Assisi penned this prayer. I invited you to pray this prayer and to reflect on its meaning:

*Lord make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O divine master grant that I may
not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.*

Restoring Lost People

LUKE 19:1-10

Jesus was the searcher, the finder and the restorer of people who had lost something—people who lose their sense of direction, destiny, significance, fulfillment, hope, opportunity and dreams. Jesus found these misplaced people and then He restored them. The work of restoration continues as we seek to find and restore people who have lost life and lost God.

The complete Jericho story begins in Luke 18:35. Read both the story of the blind man and the Zacchaeus story. These two stories remind us of Jesus' purpose declared from Isaiah 61 in Luke 4:17-19. Jesus said he was anointed by the Holy spirit to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

How did Jesus fulfilled his mission in the story of the blind man and in the story of Zacchaeus?

What do both of these stories, the blind man and Zacchaeus, have to say about restoring lost people?

Looking at these two stories, how does Jesus view restoring lost people?

Prayer: Lord, I am often like Zacchaeus, making huge efforts to catch a glimpse of you, only to find that you are waiting for me, calling me by name, inviting yourself into my heart. Once I am with you, I find happiness in putting things right, ordering my life, finding the springs of generosity and justice that have been stifled by old habits. Restore my heart to its first love. Through Jesus who seeks and saves the lost, I pray. Amen.

A Whole New You

COLOSSIANS 3

Many are familiar with a television show called Fixer Upper. Fixer Upper is a show about taking old, dilapidated homes and turning them into showplace homes. We watch shows like that because we like to see things that were old and broken down and dilapidated, and all of a sudden they're brand new. Chip and Joanna Gaines, the stars of Fixer Upper, specialize in doing that to homes. Almighty God specializes in doing that in lives, to transform a life, to take a person who is old and broken down and covered up with sin and degradation and set their feet on a rock, as the Scripture says, and totally change them. As Paul tells us in Romans 6, every person who has been baptized into Christ has been raised to new life.

That's the beginning point for Colossians 3—"Since you have been raised with Christ." This text is such a valuable text for Christ followers because it defines who we are, describes our behavior, how we are to live in community, and shares our destiny.

Who we are: "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." ". . . God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved . . ."

How we should behave: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

How we are to live in community: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Our destiny: "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

Take a moment to reflect on how blessed we are to know these things with such exactness.

Prayer: Father, thank You for choosing us and for loving us unconditionally in Christ. You have shown us mercy and we thank You. Help us to be kind, humble, gentle and patient with others just as You have been with us. When we are offended, help us to forgive. When we offend, help us to repent and make things right. We know that love is the most important part of our new life in Christ. It is the bond of unity; it is the glue that holds things together. Mold us into one body and let us always be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in us and give us courage, wisdom and faith. Father grant that everything we say or do brings glory and honor to Jesus Christ Your Son and our Savior. If we don't do anything else, let us always be thankful for what Jesus has done in our behalf. Through him we pray. Amen.