

# Corporate Repentance

Some sins are individual, but other sins are corporate.

**Sins that have affected the body of Christ as a whole must also be recognized, confessed and repented of before revival can come.**

When we compare ourselves with one another or when we compare our church fellowship with other church fellowships we **fail** to see the true condition we are in.

Too easily we accept the Christianity we have grown up with. We accept things as they are and do **not** recognize those things that are draining our spiritual strength and making us weak and ineffective as a Christian fellowship.

**Sins affecting our corporate church fellowship may remain hidden for years and never be dealt with.**

But a time of judgement is coming – God will suddenly come to His temple to cleanse and purify His people.

**1 Peter 4:17** [NIV] *“For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”*

**God must first deal with His church before He can begin to change society.**

The church is the key that unlocks God’s blessings for the land in which we live.

This is why God is calling His church to wake up, to recognize her true condition and to repent.

Five of the seven churches of Asia Minor needed to repent in areas of failure and decline.

**What is the Holy Spirit saying of our fellowship today?**

What is He saying that we need to repent of today?

**What should we be repenting of?**

## **1 We repent of where we have failed in our relationship with Christ.**

**Revelation 2:4-5** [NIV] *“Yet I hold this against you: **You have forsaken your first love.** Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”*

Remember Revelation was written for New Covenant Christians.

We have to ask ourselves have we **lost our first love and passion for our Saviour Jesus Christ?**

**Ephesians 1:15** [NIV] *“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,”*

Paul had once commended the church at Ephesus for its love for God and others, but most of the church founders had died and many of the second-generation believers had lost their zeal for Jesus Christ.

## **Our love for Jesus Christ is the very heart of our relationship with God.**

Lose this love and no matter how hard we try to be good Christians we will fail, for we have lost the most precious thing we can have.

**Revelation 19:6-9** [NIV] *“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! **For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.**’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, ‘Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”*

This is the ultimate goal of the church to marry Jesus Christ.

Our love and adoration of Jesus Christ should be increasing **not** waning as the time of our marriage approaches.

**Ephesians 6:24** [NIV] *“Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with **an undying love.**”*

Our love for Jesus Christ must be undying love.

**Matthew 15:8** [NIV] *“These people honour me with their lips, **but their hearts are far from me.**”*

This statement was addressed to the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

We can sing songs, say our prayers, listen to God’s Word, but if our heartfelt love for Jesus is **not** there in our worship, we worship in vain.

**John 14:15-20** [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. **On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.**”*

Do we claim this promise of a close relationship with Jesus Christ?

### **How do we experience this intimate relationship?**

By depending on the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit!

Are we as a fellowship so organized and self-controlled we feel we can exist independent of the Holy Spirit?

### **Reject the Holy Spirit and we reject Jesus Christ.**

Is that the way we love our future husband?

**John 14:19-21** [NIV] *“Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. **Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.**”*

We show our love for Jesus Christ by obeying **His words.**

**John 14:22-26** [NIV] *“Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love*

*me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. "All this I have spoken while still with you. But **the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**"*

**Jesus Christ continues to teach us through the Holy Spirit**, who will also remind us of what Jesus said when here on earth in the form of a human being.

**As God's people we need to repent of our pride, our independence and insensitivity to the Holy Spirit and offer our fellowship back to Him.**

**When we grieve or quench the work of the Holy Spirit in our fellowship we are grieving Jesus Christ our future husband who sent Him.**

## **2 We repent of where we have failed in our relationship within the church.**

**John 13:34-35** [NIV] *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

Jesus has commanded us as His disciples to love one another.

Do we?

**John 17:20-21** [NIV] *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**"*

Jesus has also prayed that we might be one, as He and the Father are one.

Are we?

**One of the biggest obstacles to unbelievers coming to faith in Christ is the division they see in the Christian church.**

So many denominations that will have nothing to do with each other and may even work in opposition.

Many churches are broken by divisions within.

We need to "*step back*" from this situation and consider its outcome.

**Ask the question, 'How do you think that Jesus Christ our future husband sees such a divided bride?'**

Would you want to marry a woman who was suffering from **acute schizophrenia**?

**A sick church cannot offer healing to a sick world.**

She has first to experience reconciliation and healing in her own fellowship.

**We must repent of the deep divisions that are spoiling our testimony and pray for the healing and renewing of the presence of the Holy Spirit to unite us again as the One Body of Jesus Christ.**

### **3 We must repent of our failed relationship with the world.**

**John 17:15-19** [NIV] *“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”*

**Jesus Christ prayed that we would go into the world** but be protected from the influence of Satan who at present rules this society.

We should be influencing worldly attitudes for good.

Yet how much have we allowed worldly attitudes and values to influence us?

**Matthew 6:31-33** [NIV] *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**”*

Are we more concerned with seeking first material things rather than seeking first the Kingdom of God?

**Are we making any real attempt to reach out to unbelievers with ministries of compassion and kindness?**

**Matthew 23:37** [NIV] *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have **longed to gather** your children together, **as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings**, but you were not willing.”*

**Do we really have a burden for the lost people like Jesus Christ our future husband has?**

**Matthew 28:18-20** [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

How committed are we to being part of Jesus’ commission to go out into the world to make disciples of all peoples?

**We need to repent in all these areas of our corporate church life where we have failed to do what Jesus Christ our future husband has called us to do.**

### **What is God saying to us today?**

**Revelation 2:11** [NIV] *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the churches.”*

**What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church today?**

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us as individuals today?

It is always easy on a human level to find fault with the church and be critical of her weaknesses and failures.

But remember the church is made up of individuals like you and me.

The safest way, then, is to begin by asking, “*Lord, what are you saying to me? I am part of the body. So let the Holy Spirit convict me first of all and then convict us as a body.*”

### **Where do I need to repent and change?**

#### **What do we as a church need to repent of?**

Prayerfully look at the following list and tick any items where you believe we need to repent of as a church [as well as an individual].

#### ***Where we have failed in our relationship with Christ***

- A lost love and devotion to Jesus (like the church at Ephesus)
- Little desire for prayer
- Prayerlessness – depending instead upon self-effort and programmes
- Shallowness and often insincerity in our worship (with lips but not heart)
- Worship as an event one day a week but not affecting life during the week
- Lack of faithfulness and obedience to the Word of God
- Lack of faithfulness in tithing and giving to God’s work
- Little acknowledgement of and dependence on the Holy Spirit
- Christian life and ministry dependent on self-effort
- The church controlled by people rather than by the Holy Spirit
- Church ruled by traditions more than by the Holy Spirit
- Complacency and lukewarmness (as in the church at Laodicea)
- Apathy – lost passion for Jesus and no concern for the lost

#### ***Where we have failed in our relationships within the Body***

- Disunity and divisions among us (within and between churches)
- An independent spirit – indifference, suspicion, superiority, competitiveness
- Unconfessed grievances against each other
- Unconfessed and undealt-with wrongs in our past
- Lack of genuine love and care for one another
- Little concern to help the needy among us
- Legalism, Pharisaic or “*religious spirit,*” criticism
- Authoritarian and controlling leadership
- People hurt by pastors and church leaders
- Pastors and leaders hurt by resistant and controlling church members
- Exalting our church (or denomination) while putting other churches down
- Little concern for other local churches and the wider Body of Christ

#### ***Where we have failed in our relationship with the world***

- Worldly attitudes and values seeping into our lives
- More concerned with material interests than the Kingdom of God
- More concerned with buildings and facilities than with building people
- Little concern for the poor and needy
- Little attempt to reach out to unbelievers with caring ministries
- Little real concern for the lost
- Little concern for or commitment to world missions

**Revelation 19:7** [NIV] *“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.”*

Before Christ comes again we His bride must be made ready.

Is this true about each of us and our church fellowship?

**Matthew 25:1-13** [NIV] *“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.** The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. **The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.** “Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, **I don’t know you.**’ “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”*

**To which group do we belong?**

**Remember the oil depicts the Holy Spirit!**

**Malachi 3:1-5** [NIV] *“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty. **But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. “So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.**”*

This is how God will come to His temple, the church!

Be warned!!