

I. Call to Return to the LORD in Repentant Faith

A. Two sets of commands and their reasons

1. Command: RETURN to the LORD your God
2. Reason: You are stumbling (totter) in your iniquity
 - a) *You are falling over, teetering on the edge, about to fall in your sin*
3. Command: TAKE WORDS with you
 - a) *RETURN to the LORD*
 - b) *SAY to Him*
 - (1) Take away our iniquity: remove the sin from us
 - (2) Receive good things: accept the honorable things from us
4. Reason: So that we might fulfill the sacrifices (bulls) of our lips
 - a) *The desire of this repentance is to give to God what belongs to Him: the sacrifice of praise, the honor and reverence, not merely in words, but in deeds consistent with them.*

B. TRUE REPENTANCE of specific sins:

1. Assyria will not save us (repudiation of other saviors)
2. We will not mount horses (repudiation of our own strength)
3. We will never again call our creations gods (repudiation of idols of our own making)

C. PROMISE: For in you the orphan finds mercy

1. TRUST/FAITH: Mercy belongs to God alone, more than merely an objective statement of reality, but rather a personal dependence upon God for that particular mercy for our particular sins
2. They consider themselves as weak and powerless as orphans, fatherless, indicating their running away from God as a prodigal son?
3. This means that they come to the LORD with no presumption upon His blessing or His goodness, unlike the false repentance of chapter 6 (see earlier sermon for reference)
4. Mostly, it means that they understand the nature of God who redeemed them: He is merciful to those who know that they are weak and helpless. God helps the weak! He restores the orphan! He takes the broken under His wing and protects them, guides them, loves them!

II. The LORD Turns Toward His Repentant People in Healing Love:

A. Three Attitudinal Promises of God:

B. "I will heal their apostasy"

1. God restores to health as He turns us back from turning back! Think about this promise! Even our turning back from apostasy is due to the healing work of the LORD

C. "I will love them freely"

1. What a promise! I WILL LOVE THEM! This is not a positional love, which God already had toward them (remember His tone in chapter 11), but rather an experiential love. God's actions toward them moved from anger to love. They kept themselves in the love of God (Jude 1:21) by returning to Him in dependent faith.
2. God's love is not coerced or procured, but it is freely given of His own will. Freely implies that God gives His love of His own accord and is not ruled by any action, emotion, or karmic principle towards us.

D. "For my anger has turned away from them"

1. Lots of "turning" going on in this short verse
2. God's anger has turned away from them as He heals their apostasy and loves them freely.
3. The emphasis is on the prior action of God's healing regenerative love as His anger turns aside and is replaced by this experienced love.
4. This "turned aside anger" is fulfilled with the death and resurrection of Christ, so that Paul can quote Hosea 13:14, which was originally written as a judgment that death would not be held back
5. Sometimes we think of God's anger as continuing towards us once we have turned back to Him, but that is not the case. When we turned, we feel no more the anger of the Father, only the freely given love of God. Now, this is only from our experience, not from the objective heart of God, for prior to our turning God has been working according to His gracious healing love.

a) *EXAMPLE: Horse training as pressure and release.*

III. PROMISES OF ABUNDANT RESTORATION:

A. God is the like the dew:

1. The refreshing sustenance that must first fall upon the earth and then produces the following agricultural wonders that are metaphors for God's productive work in His People by His Power according to His Promise:
2. Note the initial Actor in this restoration to wholeness is the LORD. He is to be praised for His work and His grace towards His people.
3. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you may ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you." (John 15:16)

B. He is Making His People into a Beautiful Masterpiece for His Glory:

1. Lily – Beauty
 - a) *Sin is ugly, it makes us ugly in spirit and our lives ugly. God can restore beauty to your life because He has dealt with sin ultimately and is dealing with our present sin through repentance and the transformation of the Holy Spirit*
 - b) *Joel 2:25 – “I will restore the years that the locusts have eaten”*
2. Rooted cedars - Strength and Power
 - a) *Sin weakens us. It weakens our ability and propensity to love. It weakens our ability to resist it. Sin begets sin in a downward spiral. God restores strength and power through His transforming power in pointing us to Christ as our sufficient provision and our sufficient Lord over sin.*
 - b) *Isaiah 40:31 – “...they will walk and not grow faint...”*
3. Olive - Valuable and Usable
 - a) *Sin destroys our value. It leaves us feeling unloved and unlovable, worthless and destitute. The grace of God in Christ shows us that we are loved, not merely in spite of our sin or because of some worthiness, but because God has set His love upon us. He truly loves us! He gives us value and restores us to be great fruit producers, usable and valuable to His Kingdom.*
 - b) *Matt 25:34 – “Come, you are blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*
4. Fragrance of Cedar Forest - Delight, Enjoyable, Refreshing
 - a) *Sin destroys our ability to enjoy God, our ability to enjoy His creation in proper respect, and to enjoy one another. We lose the capacity of delight to the point where we seek and soothe ourselves with crumbs when the table is set by the Father. Have you lost the sense of delight in God? Are you settling for a pittance when an inheritance is what you were made for? Is your joy hollow? God can make you delight in Him with “joy inexpressible and full of glory”.*
 - b) *1 Peter 1:8-9 – “Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”*
5. Flourishing – Abundance
 - a) *Sin robs us of the abundant joyful life that we were created to have in joyful submission of worship to God. If sin has robbed you of this abundance, repent of that sin and turn to the One who promises abundance of life.*
 - b) *John 10:10 – “I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly”*
6. Famous as the best wine - Glorious Renown
 - a) *We were created in the image of God to reflect God’s glory for God’s honor, and as such we were crowned with glory and honor as well. Sin has marred this glory and like flawed mirrors we no longer reflect God’s glory. Let us repent of this broken sin and turn back to the Lord to reflect His glory rightly*
 - b) *1 Peter 1:15 – “...like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct.”*

- C. Note that all of these metaphors are agricultural and depend upon watering of the dew.
1. God is the source and substance, the power and provider of this transformation
 2. If God dew, then His people will be transformed, growing into what He has promised: "from me comes your fruit" (v8)
 3. We can cling to this great promise: God is transforming His people.

IV. How is God Transforming His People in Abundant Restoration?

A. The Spirit transforms us as we behold God's glory

1. 2 Corinthians 3:18 – "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the LORD, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, and this comes from the Spirit who is the Lord."

B. How do we behold His glory?

1. 2 Corinthians 4:6 – "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

C. Where do we go from here?

1. Make every effort in your life, through spiritual disciplines of prayer, reading the Word, gathering in community to worship and praise Him, to find your way into the presence of Jesus: to see Him, to know Him, to wrestle with Him, to lean on Him, to worship Him.
2. He is the image of the invisible God by which we are transformed through beholding His glorious grace.
3. And on that final day when He returns, the date of which nobody knows according to Scripture, but is so soon that we need to "keep watch", we will be ultimately and finally transformed for we will behold His great glory.
 - a) *Luke 21:27 – "and then they will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with power and great glory."*
 - b) *1 John 3:2-3 – "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."*

D. Trust in the Promise of God, Purify Yourself by Fixing Your Hope on Jesus

1. 1 Pet 5:10 – "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.