

## God's Love Always Leads To A Learning Experience

*"I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence -- and seek my face. In their affliction -- they will seek me early. Come -- and let us return unto the Lord! For He hath torn -- and He will heal us! He hath smitten -- and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us. In the third day He will raise us up -- and we will live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning, and He shall come unto us as the rain -- as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hos.5:15-6:3*

Dear ones, Phil.2:5 says: *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"*.

This "mind of Christ" is that same mind that Paul was led of the Spirit to tell the Corinthians about from 1Co.2:14 and 16. He, in essence, told them that they already had the "*mind of Christ*" -- if they were, indeed, not "the natural man". The "natural man" -- while hopelessly unregenerate -- never can -- nor ever will -- receive the things of the Spirit of God. The "*mind of Christ*" is the Holy Spirit quickened and renewed mind of spiritual understanding that is found only in the "new man". It is the mind that has been renewed by the soul quickening, life transforming, perspective converting indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit of Christ our God. Eph.4:23 says: *"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind"*.

Oh, the sad state of religious intellectual fallen humanity! There is no question about it, unregenerate religion is so often being exuded by so many in our present day! These are highly respected persons that are seemingly so rich in theological knowledge -- and yet so bankrupt in the Holy Spirit. They lack the Light that only the pure truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ can provide. Their spiritual understanding -- being so darkened -- their life being so alienated from the genuine life experience of God and His grace -- they literally cannot see the forest for the trees where the simple -- yet profound -- eternal truth concerning Christ is Biblically being presented. This is truth that God must reveal to you.

The "*mind of Christ*" is not ever -- in any way -- attained by fallen sinners. But, it is obtained by God's blessing -- even by His creation> *"Put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true*

*holiness.*” Eph.4:24

The “*mind of Christ*” is obtained only by grace; and, it is given to us by the one who owns it! It is not earned by us through educational achievement. It is given -- even by Christ, Himself! 2Ti.1:7 tells us: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear -- but of power -- and of love -- and of a sound mind.” This wonderful text is announcing the gospel that God has given to us His through His own Holy Spirit -- who manifests His presence in our lives in accordance with these grand descriptive aspects: power -- love -- a sound mind.

Therefore, the “*mind of Christ*” has been given to us along with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, is the presence of the Holy Spirit revealed from within us by the sound and healthy doctrinal truth that has so much displaced all our iniquities (or, all our perversions of the truth that we have held and heralded forth). The “*mind of Christ*” has captured our thoughts, and brought forward our converted perspective opinions that have to do with the very person and work of the obedience of Christ on our behalf. Praise His Name!

By the revelatory regenerating experience that the Holy Spirit causes to personally take place in our lives -- we see the truth that we, indeed -- having been chosen in eternity -- and, in eternity, been placed in Christ -- according to Col.3:1-2 -- we have also been risen with Him in His glorious victory over sin and death. And, we, in turn -- led of the Holy Spirit -- do set our minds upon things above -- in eternity -- where our eternal Redeemer sits as our eternal Surety -- on the right hand of eternal God.

But, what exactly are these things that so much come to preoccupy our thinking and that have such an impact upon us as we continue to live out our lives here in this fallen world?

Well, I think it must be true that there surely is more than just one answer to this important and revealing question. Nevertheless, I truly believe that a part of the answer lies in that which is being brought forward from this text from Hosea. And, I would like for us to focus a little bit on that which is being declared from here. This text serves to bring forward a descriptive view of just how it is that our Lord God causes us -- while we are still here in this world -- to grow in grace and

knowledge of Him being our eternal Lord and loving Savior.

First of all -- from Hos.5:15 -- there is an action of the Lord that is being described where He and the personal relationship that He owns and controls with His own people is concerned. And, He says that -- where -- in regards to the sense of the proximity of His presence with them is concerned -- that He will remove Himself and “*go and return*” unto His place until -- or, so that -- they will “*acknowledge their offence*”.

In other words, God constructs the platform for and orchestrates the circumstances in which His chosen child will have a genuine learning experience. Oh yes, it is a platform that He makes for their personal discipline. He then orchestrates and governs their circumstances that will directly involve their chastening experience. A chastening that He performs out of His love for His chosen and adopted son or daughter. This experience, in turn, produces from the life of the child of God -- by their being exercised by it -- the peaceable fruit of righteousness that can only be harvested from our lives in this precise manner. He.12:11 relates this to us very succinctly. It says: “*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*”

So then, Hos.5:15 tells us that the Lord purposely withdraws the sense of His intimate presence from His people. And, He does this in order to cause them to have to acknowledge the reality of their offence against Him. Why does He do this? Even because it will -- in this fallen and oppressive world -- bring upon all who are truly God’s people -- a circumstance of affliction that will cause them to have to cry out for the Lord. And, as the Lord says: “*In their affliction -- they will seek me early*”.

This is a principle of the workings of grace. Ps.27:4 has the Psalmist telling us this: “*One thing have I desired of the Lord -- that will I seek after!*” And what exactly is it that the Psalmist says he desires and seeks after? He answers: “*That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life -- to behold the beauty of the Lord -- and to inquire in His temple.*”

When the Lord seemingly withdraws from His child -- that child then suffers the real affliction of that withdrawal. The child of God genuinely

feels the sense of the Lord's absence. And, sovereign all governing God sees to it that this time of affliction, then, becomes a time of real profitable learning and training and growth in the child's knowledge and trust in Him -- as being the Lord and Savior.

Ps.119:67 declares: *"Before I was afflicted -- I went astray. But now have I kept Thy Word."* And, vs.71 confesses: *"It is good for me that I have been afflicted -- that I might learn Thy statutes."* And, then vs.75 lovingly avers: *"I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right -- and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."*

When the ever faithful Lord seems to leave the scene of your life and experience -- your personal sense of offence against Him -- of your fallen and fallible condition before Him -- immediately increases. Your need for the only Savior for your soul that there is grows -- and becomes more apparent to you. All who are truly God's people -- then, with purpose and intent, say: Hos.6:1 *"Come let us return unto the Lord."*

The Lord has gone and returned unto His place -- and you not being there -- suddenly sense His absence -- and your offence against Him. You then, in true repentance, determine to return unto Him -- to find Him in His place -- to, once again, realize His presence. And, you diligently strive to do so in Biblical purity and truth. This, indeed, is a great mercy from the Lord for us to experientially feel this way.

Wandering from the way of the Lord is a very solemn and wearisome thing. And, we do wander from the way of the Lord whenever we walk according to the flesh -- and not according to the Spirit. It is our natural and innate proneness to follow the flesh. We are fallen sinners. We need to be taught and trained to wait on the Lord...and to follow the Spirit of the Lord...and to forsake the world and follow only Christ.

This divinely inspired determination on your part is brought upon you when you suddenly see the Lord's sovereignty over all your experience. You then declare of Him: *"For He hath torn -- and He will heal us! He hath smitten -- and He will bind us up."* We see that He has done it all!

We ultimately learn that He has never really ever left us nor forsaken us. We have only ceased to be able to sense His presence...and, therefore, we have ceased to believe that He is there. But, when the pure

truth of the gospel reality of His omnipresence is, once again, by us reckoned and remembered, then we understand that He has to be there -- or, He isn't God! Then we understand that what has happened -- is that He has only ceased to make Himself known unto us. *"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."*

This descriptive declaration is intended to be a statement for us of encouragement and endurance. It is a descriptive statement for all of God's children. It is, in fact, also a statement of conclusion in reference to the Spirit fostered experience of returning unto the Lord.

The fact is, God is sovereign over every detail of our life -- our walk -- and our relationship with Him. As fallen persons with feet of clay we are so prone to pursue -- in this life -- the things of the flesh rather than the things of the Spirit. And, *"whatsoever a man sows to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption..."*

The gospel of God's great and all powerful grace, however, is the good news of the Lord's healing -- and of our total transformation. Where we suffer the wounding of walking awry -- our Lord and Savior causes us to return unto Him -- and He binds up our wounds. And, by the leading of His Spirit, we learn the truth of verse three that *"then shall we know Him -- when we follow on to know the Lord."*

The word, *"if"*, is literally not really even found in this verse! As a true child of God -- a child of the Light -- a real recipient of God's grace -- the fact is, we will *"follow on to know the Lord"*. It is not a conditional reality at all! It literally says: *"Then shall we know. We follow on to know the Lord."*

There is almost heard an echo from here -- in our Lord and Savior's own voice -- that declares: *"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness -- for they shall be filled."* Mt.5:6 Hence, this is a dogmatic descriptive declaration that the Spirit of Truth will lead every one who is truly born from above -- who has genuinely been regenerated -- to follow on to know the Lord.

How is this desire brought to so much prominence in the life of the child of God?

The text specifically says that He has torn and that He has smitten. The

question may be posed: Would a loving God do this? And, an answer to this question is given in Re.3:18 from where the Lord, Himself, says: “As many as I love -- I rebuke and chasten.” And then, as a result, He says: “Be zealous, therefore, and repent!”; “follow on to know the Lord.”

Or, there is even a more elaborate and explicit declaration from He.12:5-10 which says: “And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children -- ‘My son -- despise not thou the chastening of the Lord -- nor faint when thou art rebuked by Him. (6) For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth -- and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. (7) If ye endure chastening -- God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (8) But, if ye be without chastisement -- where all (I.e. all of God’s true children) are partakers -- then are ye bastards -- and not sons.

(9) Furthermore, indeed, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us -- and we gave them reverence -- shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? (10) For they, verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure -- but He for our profit -- that we might be partakers of His holiness.”

And then there is Job 5:17-18 that even more substantiates for us that which Hos.6:1-3 is teaching us when it says: “Behold, happy (or, blessed) is the man whom God correcteth. Therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. (18) For He maketh sore -- and bindeth up. He wounded -- and His hands make whole.”

So, we see how the “pure milk of the Word” (1Pe.2:2-3) relates to us -- how that the Almighty sovereign Lord of our lives -- because He loves us -- because He would have us to truly be profited as persons of His peculiar choice -- because he has purposed that the peaceable fruit of His righteousness is to be reaped from our miserable and undeserving lives through having Christ’s powerful resurrection power come forth from us like a bountiful harvest -- He chastens us. He rebukes us -- and we are torn and smitten and scourged and wounded. And then -- after we have -- by Him -- been chastened and been disciplined -- He heals us...He binds us up...He makes us whole.

Oh, my friends, we have too much of this world -- that caters so to the flesh -- within us -- within our hearts. And, Christ must cut it away. He

must circumcise it away! And, He is the only one that can do it! We cannot perform this much needed operation on ourselves. We will not do it. It is the destruction -- the rendering powerless -- of our own very flesh that we are talking about! As Ro.2:28-29 accurately says: *“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision -- which is outward in the flesh. (29) But, he is a Jew which is one inwardly -- and circumcision is that of the heart -- in the Spirit and not in the letter -- whose praise is not of men -- but of God.”* And, this circumcision is all of Christ, and none of it is of ourselves!

Col.2:11 tells us this very same thing. It says: *“In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands -- in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”* This is Col.2:11 -- and Col.3:11 nails this Truth down when it says that *“Christ is all and in all.”* In other words -- if it is not all Christ -- then it is all wrong!

Just as everything divinely necessary for our salvation and acceptable standing before God’s holy justice is done for us in Christ -- God’s only begotten and eternal Son -- even so is also this operation upon our inner beings. He must do it -- or it will not ever be done! Every true Jew of the tribe of Jesus Christ -- the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Re.5:5) -- becomes a true Jew by this circumcision of their heart.

How is it, though, that the true child of God experiences by God being torn?

Oh, my dear ones, He will graciously and lovingly tear away from us our worldly fleshly lovers -- our worldly fleshly habits -- the worldly fleshly places that we are prone to haunt -- our worldly fleshly ways of dressing and our general appearance. Suddenly, the warning exhortation of 1Th.5:22 closes on our hearts with deep substantive meaning when it, by the Holy Spirit, speaks to us and says: *“Abstain from all (I.e. every form of) appearance of evil!”*

When Christ reveals that He is indeed truly a part of your life -- look out! He comes in and changes everything! Oh yes He does. He changes your heart. He tears away that old hard stubborn, selfish, pride filled heart -- that may be in you right now resisting everything that I am trying to show and tell you from His Word.

Pride in a true child of God is just begging to be humbled by God. You cannot be a true child of God with a humble and contrite spirit -- and be proud. Only the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ can deliver you from that proud heart. Why? Even because it has reigning control of your whole being. Without Christ being your Lord -- that wicked heart of yours -- lords over you! But, when Jesus shows up -- and He can come into your life whenever He pleases -- but when He does -- that old heart in you...that has made you to be what you really are as an enemy of God and His pure gospel of grace truth -- that old heart has got to go! That inner spirit in you that has so often exuded an independent rebellion from you against God and His pure gospel truth -- has got to go! It is only under the reigning and controlling power and influence of God's new heart and new Spirit -- that the things of His eternal Spirit -- and the things of the person and work of His eternal Son -- will forever unite and bond with your desires -- with your intents -- and your motives!

Ez.36:26-27 declares it: "A new heart also will I give you -- and a new Spirit will I put within you. And, I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh -- and I will give you an heart of flesh (I.e. an heart that is moldable and responsive to the holy will of God), (27) and I will put my Spirit within you -- and cause you to walk in my statutes -- and ye shall keep my judgments -- and do them."

So then, it makes no difference who we may think we are. It makes no difference how good we may think we are living -- or, what good we may think we are doing in this world at this present time...if we are not "following on to know the Lord" -- then we are continuing on in our feeble and worthless -- our vain and self-righteous -- attempts -- to justify ourselves and our present state. Our present state as being all that we think we can make of ourselves before God and man. And that, dear ones, is just so much "hoey"! And, we still need disciplinary action from our loving heavenly Father. Discipline that will involve our -- being torn -- being smitten -- being scourged -- and being wounded. And, let me say this: Preachers especially need to have torn away from them -- any and every doctrine that they hold to -- that is nothing but iniquity in their lives -- in their perspective opinions -- where the pure and plain truth of the gospel is concerned! And, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only one who can perform this task...because of their pride!

Pride in a fallen human being just begs to be wounded by just its stinking presence! And, preachers are some of the most proud-ful people that I have ever seen -- especially where the pure and plain Truth of God's Word is concerned. The problem seems to me to be that most of us think that -- where gospel truth is concerned -- we've already arrived! Its outrageous for us to even imagine that there might be -- that there indeed is -- some really gross perversion of the Truth that is continually being propagated through our preaching.

Take a test! The Spirit of the Lord commands! As the Word, itself, says: *"Examine yourselves...whether your in the faith! Prove your own selves!"*

Preacher -- are you preaching the pure and plain truth of the gospel of God's Word? Is it the gospel that the Word of God says is only truly believed in -- by the faith of Jesus Christ?

Re.2:18 is where glorified Jesus addresses the church at Pergamos and says: *"I know thy works -- even where Satan's seat is -- and thou holdest fast my Name...and hast not denied my faith."*

His faith -- He says! We do not want to -- we must not ever -- deny His faith! And yet, most preachers today, either openly deny it -- or, just live and preach in a kind of quiet, unassuming -- and yet compromising denial of the pure truth of the faith of Jesus Christ all the time. And beloved, this -- especially where preachers are concerned -- if they are truly God's children -- Christ will cut out of the equation of their preaching as they also, by God's grace, truly will follow on to know the Lord. He will either cut it out of them -- or, cut them off!

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In closing, let me address the two portions of this context from Hosea that I have not yet directly acknowledged. They include that which is related to us from vs.2, which says, *"After two days will He revive us. In the third day -- He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight."* And then that which makes up the last part of vs.3 which tells us that *"His going forth is prepared as the morning -- and He shall come unto us as the rain...as the latter and former rain unto the earth."*

Herein -- in these portions of this context -- we have the gospel being

declared unto us -- the good and great news -- of the glory only of the Lord Jesus Christ.

First of all, as far as vs.2 is concerned, when the apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write to the Corinthians in 1Cor.15:4 that he declared unto them that Jesus “*was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the scriptures*” -- it was most likely that this particular Old Testament scripture was a part of the repertoire of scriptures that he was referring to when he wrote this. This is because there definitely is an obvious parallel with the resurrection of Christ that is being made here.

But what does that mean to us where the loving chastening of the Lord upon us is concerned?

I think it is obviously this. Whenever we are genuinely exercised and trained by the chastening of the Lord -- there is a time -- however short, or long it might be -- that we feel as if we have, indeed, been slain -- that we actually feel dead inside. We are smitten and sense no hope at all for recovery from, or by, ourselves. And, that’s because there isn’t any! The Lord has withdrawn Himself from us. He has seemingly killed us by His doing this. The sense of His lively and quickening presence -- He has removed from us. He is our life -- and with Him gone -- we feel like we are dead. This, in turn, ignites in us a real burning desire to, once again, have there to be restored, by Him, the good and Godly sense of His presence in our lives.

Therefore, do we begin to really seek the Lord in prayer. We are absolutely in no way content to exist without Him being first and foremost in our lives. Therefore, what good news it truly is -- what a comfort it is -- and what a source of strength it then becomes for us to know that “*After two days will He revive us. In the third day -- He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight.*”

This is the resurrection power that Paul was inspired to describe for us from Phil.3:9-10 which He wrote after denouncing all of his life as a Pharisee that he lived according to his Jewish tradition and self-righteous religion. He descriptively declared his new heart’s great desire from this portion of scripture. In his own words he defines this great desire: “*...that I may win Christ, and be found in Him -- not having mine own righteousness -- which is after the law -- but that which is*

*through the faith of Christ -- the righteousness which is of God by faith -- (10) that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death...*”  
Then in Phil.3:12 he, as it were, echoes Hos.6:3 when he says: “...But I follow after -- if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of [or, lit., that I may lay hold of that which I also was laid hold of] by Christ Jesus.” Surely, to be able to apprehend the same things that the Lord has used to apprehend us -- is the same as saying: “Then shall we know. We will follow on to know the Lord.”

We follow Him in death -- and also in being revived by His resurrection power! “His going forth (and our following Him) is prepared (or, lit., established, fixed, appointed and rendered sure) as the morning”. This is scriptural -- so, therefore, it must come to pass.

Dear true child of God -- do not despair of your seeming lack of growth in grace. Wait on the Lord -- trust only in Him -- God is faithful -- it is certain to happen as sure as Jesus said in advance of His own atoning death -- that there will be a resurrection morning. Mal.4:2 describes our Savior when it says: “But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings...” “He hath torn -- and He will heal us”!

Times of chastening -- disciplining -- and the afflictions that they bring into our experience -- are times of both profitable training -- and of a foreboding darkness. But then the loving hand that has chastened us for our profit causes the Sun of righteousness to rise up and to shine its blessed light upon us...and He causes the peaceable fruit of that same holy righteousness to be reaped from our lives.

And, from Re.22:16 the Lord, Himself, says of Himself: “...I am the root and the offspring of David (or, “I am the root and the fruit of the Messianic line) -- and the bright and morning Star.” And, dear ones, as the wise men at the time of Christ’s birth into this fallen world were led to follow the Star as it moved across the heavens right to where the Savior Lord and King was -- even so do we follow the Lord who is our “bright and morning Star”. “We follow on to know the Lord.”

Also, as the brightness of the sun is a blessing to us -- even so is the rain. Both are necessary -- the sunny days, bright and cheerful -- and the

rainy days, dark and dreary. These two are needed for a healthy growth of good things that come forth from this earth.

As I understand it -- in the land of Israel they principally have only two main rains per year. One during the time of the sowing of the crops, and the other right before the time of harvesting the crops. These are the latter and former rains. And, just as the earth cannot help but receive these good and healthy rains in their divinely appointed seasons -- that, again, are so necessary to the earth's fertility so that it will bring forth a most bountiful harvest -- neither can we through His loving discipline upon us help but receive the dark and rainy -- yet healthy -- times of God's chastening. This makes even these dark times a blessing. We need this so that we may grow more intimate in the grace and knowledge of our loving Lord and Savior. "We will follow on to know the Lord".

He.6:7 aptly declares: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it -- and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom also it is dressed -- receiveth blessing from God." It is, indeed, from this portion of scripture that the applicable exhortation is also delivered from vs.11-12: "And we desire that every one of you do show (or, that every one of you do indicate by word and act) the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end -- (12) that ye be not slothful (or, be like dull of hearing bastards) but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Even so, Lord Jesus, make us to be thy true children and faithful followers of you...unto the end.

Amen.