Union Church of Guatemala

***The Joy of Tearful Repentance***

2-11-2018

***“The first characteristic of the kingdom of heaven is the overflowing joy that comes from contrition and repentance…Tears of contrition soften even the hardest of hearts.”***

***(Basilea Schlink[[1]](#footnote-1))***

1. A new season of the Christian calendar
   1. The Christian calendar provides us as Christians with movements and rhythms that help us maintain our focus on Christ and the Gospel.
   2. By observing and participating in the different seasons of our calendar, we enter into a deeper and more ***incarnational*** knowledge of Jesus that encourages us and moves us to worship and evangelism.
2. Lent
   1. This Wednesday marks the beginning of a new season in the Christian calendar, the season of ***Lent***.
   2. Lent, a 40 day (excluding Sundays) season of repentance, penitence and preparation has been observed by the Church since at least the 4th century, as was discussed in the Council of Nicea.
      1. Originally, it was a 40 day preparation period for new ***catechumens*** who were preparing for baptism on Easter Sunday.
   3. The season begins with ***Ash Wednesday*** and ends on Easter Sunday.
3. ***Penthos[[2]](#footnote-2) – (***πένθος), the spirit of Lent.
   1. Psalm 51:17
   2. The spirit of Lent is “a broken and contrite heart”
      1. Inward godly sorrow – 2 Corinthians 7:10
      2. Blessed, holy mourning
      3. Deep, heartfelt compunction
      4. A ***“prayer of tears”***
   3. ***Penthos*** is countercultural.
      1. We are a culture of victims.
      2. We hold seminars and read books on forgiving, but seldom on repentance and asking for forgiveness (admitting our sin, repairing and restoring).
      3. The light of the Gospel produces ***penthos*** in us – Acts 2:36-38
4. “…what shall we do?” – Psalm 32, a ***penthos*** prayer of tears
   1. Forgiveness from God: the source of true happiness – v.1-5
      1. There is no greater blessing than being forgiven by God. -v.1
         1. It presupposes we acknowledge our transgression.
         2. It acknowledges our sinful condition.
            1. “We are not sinners because we sin, ***we sin because we are sinners***. (R.C. Sproul)”
      2. God’s forgiveness allows us to live in the light and freedom that only Truth can bring. – v.2
         1. 1 John 1:5-10
      3. Hiding our sin from God is a futile pursuit that only ends up hurting us….even physically! V.3-4
      4. Confession brings freedom and forgiveness – v.5
         1. We acknowledge our sins always before God – Psalm 51:4-6
         2. We seek help from our brothers and sisters in the church to encourage, rebuke, discipline and walk with us the path of restoration – Galatians 6:1-5 / 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15
            1. We are quick to “carry others’ burdens” but, how willing are we to ***let others carry ours?***
   2. Confession and Repentance – the Holy Spirit’s work in us!
      1. A call for each one of us – v.6-7
         1. We need to ***pray without ceasing*** (1 Thessalonians 5:17) to find the help we need in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16), especially when confronted with our sin and temptations.
         2. We are always safe with Him and with our confession, we are in His presence, guided by the Spirit (John 16:8 / John 16:13 / John 14:6 / John 8:31-32)
            1. John 6:37
      2. This -our confession and repentance- is His work, and we can trust He will take us there – v.8-9
         1. Psalm 25:8
         2. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
      3. We are now free to trust and rest in Him, and free to go out and help heal, through the Spirit, the ***“…sorrows of the wicked”*** v.10-11
         1. We were once counted among “the wicked”, but God… (Ephesians 2:1-10)
         2. We are now free to rejoice and be glad in Him, because it is He who has forgiven us, made us righteous and liberated us to love and serve others.
5. Let us come together as a church (local) and join the Church (universal) in this season of reflection, repentance, forgiveness and hope as we prepare our hearts to contemplate God’s grace at the Cross and rejoice in the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. <https://www.amazon.com/Repentance-Filled-Life-Basilea-Schlink/dp/0871235927/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1517865095&sr=8-1&keywords=Repentance+the+joy+filled+life> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://biblehub.com/greek/3997.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)