



How to maintain a Spiritual Comeback. Hebrews 13:7-16

A Jewish man in Hungary went to his rabbi and complained, “Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?” The rabbi answered, “Take your goat into the room with you.” The man was sceptical but the rabbi insisted, “Do as I say and come back in a week.”

A week later the man returned looking more distressed than before. “We can’t stand it,” he told the rabbi. “The goat is filthy.” The rabbi said, “Go home and let the goat out, and come back in a week.” A week later the man returned, radiant, exclaiming, “Life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there’s no goat - only the nine of us.”

You see contentment is more a matter of our perspective than of our circumstances.

Do you grumble about your circumstances – especially with what the world is struggling with at the moment – the pandemic and for locals with the massive works on the railway lines.

Maybe you feel you have a right to complain, to say it isn’t fair; to denigrate the leaders making these decisions, but as believers, to grumble about our circumstances is to challenge the love and goodness of our Heavenly Father. To be discontented implies that He has not provided us with what we need.

Discontent was the sin of Israel in the wilderness. God had just miraculously delivered them from slavery in Egypt and He was

miraculously meeting their needs, yet they grumbled about their hardships and threatened to return to Egypt

With this ongoing pandemic our lives have changed and how we lived pre-covid may not be how we will live post-covid. We have all had to change – our outlook, lifestyle, hobbies and routines. The only constant is change – it is always happening, never-ending.

With the wonderful exception of Jesus, our Saviour. Verse 8 assures us: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He never changes.

And you know what else – God has already written your life story, which is a real masterpiece – one of a kind – just like you. The creator of the universe has written every word, every chapter of your life, meaning you can only be you.

Now sometimes this is difficult to take in because today we are under pressure to “fit in, to be accepted, to not stand out, to contribute.” And many of us have been robbed of our purpose, goals, sense of identity and belief that we can ever offer something significant to the world.

But God says that we are all needed, we are all unique and a blessing. Even when we go through trials and tribulations and feel we are broken – God uses every broken life to bear fruit for His kingdom. God urges us to grow in the knowledge of Him and strive toward Christian maturity.

But maybe today you are allowing thoughts to infiltrate your mind that tell you that you are not good enough. Or maybe you have allowed worldly

things to place a barrier between you and God which prevents you from running the race that God wants you to run – living a life to please Him.

Where does your allegiance lie?

If you were to obey the old covenant ritualistic laws relating to which food you can or cannot consume, do you think that action would purify your thoughts and desires to become godly? They may influence your conduct but not change your heart.

This is what some of the people continued to do – to stay with the Old Covenant Laws believing this would provide forgiveness and salvation but it doesn't.

Are you being confined or held back by your past, old traditions or belief systems? What holds you back from complete loyalty to Jesus Christ?

If you can identify what it is – have you honestly and openly chosen to share it: in prayer with God; in searching the Scriptures or in seeking guidance from your Pastor or other Christians in your community?

Breaking out of this confinement and making a comeback to God can be challenging.

You may be aware that we have commenced undertaking on-going works around the site – garden improvement, repairs, painting. As Christians these are the tasks God has called us to – we are to be the gardeners and builders – shaping environments, turning weed pits into floral splendour, painting and patching and clearing – in preparation for the more beautiful and breathtaking home God is building.

In verse 13, the writer is encouraging his readers to “go outside the camp.” The carcasses of the sacrificial animals were taken outside the city and burned after the ceremony.

The fact that Jesus Christ was sacrificed outside the city gate – outside the walls of Jerusalem as an offering to God, demonstrates that His death was not exclusive. He planted His cross in the world so that all could access His sacrifice.

Only those who went outside the camp, leaving the Levitical rituals and traditions behind – would benefit from Christ’s atonement, not those who wished to play it safe and remain inside, clinging to the Old Covenant system.

Some people today still want to play it safe when they allow those who are sceptical and make untrue claims about God’s word and Jesus’ sacrifice to confine them to an anxious world, instead of God’s truth and grace only given through Jesus.

So how do you reconnect with God and revitalise your faith? Faith is an action word – it does something; it works.

God gave us our mind, our emotions and our will.

Our mind enables us to perceive. To have saving faith you mind not only has to embrace the content of the Bible, but must accept the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as fact. And then understand the personal implications of those events in your life. Faith is not blind, but it is only as valid as the truthfulness of its object.

Our emotions persuade us. Many people know the gospel but do not accept it. Faith is a real conviction based upon the revelation of God. Faith comes from hearing the message through the word about Christ.

Our Will provides volition. A person's will responds with a personal commitment to and complete acceptance of Christ as the only hope for eternal salvation. Saving faith consists of someone embracing all of Christ with their whole being.

We need to be vigilant to ensure we are not influenced by misinformation; untruths; and sadly, trying to fit in with society's belief that it is all about "me, my life, my choices, looking after number one" instead of obeying all of God's commands.

God doesn't expect us to do this alone, because when we obey His commands He provides us with all the skills, courage and energy we need to follow them.

This week I would encourage you to set time aside to evaluate your Faith and Spiritual connection with God. If it has or is being impacted by various circumstances, don't bury it, do something to start breaking down the walls that you may have put up – seek guidance and prayer.

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, help me to remember that I am never really alone. That You are always with me and You will never abandon me. Father teach me to lean on You as I travel through this maze of life. I'm scared and it feels like my life has been turned upside down, because it has.

God I need Your grace. I'm going to need it everyday. Remind me when I'm overwhelmed that the plans You have for me include a future and a hope.

Even when I am a mess Lord, I am going to claim the promise that You love every part of me and You will faithfully walk every step with me.

You are holding my right hand. You will even carry me when I can't walk anymore.

And God, even as I wrestle with my struggles, help me to remember that this is not the end of my story. You have written more chapters that are woven in your incomparable grace, seasons that will bring me new hope and great joy.

I choose to use my struggles to help others along the way.

Thank You for loving me at all times, on the good days and the bad days.

In Jesus' name. Amen.