

times of refreshing

"repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." acts 3:19

there's something refreshing about repentance. it's kind of like how everything seems to be fresh after a rain. you can almost smell it in the air - so clean, so refreshing. it's like a winter day after a snow fall where everything just looks and feels so pure - like the driven snow. repentance makes us feel that way with our maker; clean all over again, restoration.

i'm not just talking about one's initial coming to the Lord. i'm also talking about seasoned christians who sometimes drift from their first love. they forget what it's all about. even the task before them (even though it be for the Lord), may become routine and perhaps little foxes creep in to steal your joy.

i had gotten a little like that recently. yes, my morning prayer times were still intense with burdens on my heart. i was still doing my daily bible readings and performing what i felt the Lord had assigned me to do, but something was missing.

the other day as i lay in bed awaiting sleep, i just started to thank God for all His mercies for me and repented over anything i had done wrong or "missed the mark" on. after a little while i began listening to some worship music and again i entered into the holy Presence.

i was lost in worship once again. there's nothing else quite like it. i had forgotten how long it had been since i had done this. i am reminded of the verse from the worship song - it does as much for us as it does for Him cause we get lifted up. worship is our strength. it is our time of refreshing. we were created for this. we are creatures of worship but we decide what to worship - money, people, fame life itself. none of these other things will bring the refreshing which worship of the Lord will.

yes, we should all do the necessary things which keep us on the "straight and narrow," but first and foremost it's all about Jesus. it's a relationship with Him that He wants and we need. we must never lose our first love - the excitement and anticipation of being "with" Him. we should be like the shulamite maid in the song of solomon, abandoning all else in pursuit of her beloved.

i remember when i was newly converted. i read through my bible so fast because i wanted to know more about Him. it was instructive and beautiful, but it still wasn't enough to satisfy me. the Holy Spirit had brought me in. now He wanted to present me to Him. that's when head knowledge became heart experience.

the spirit realm can be full of traps and deceptions. one must be careful to be sure nothing goes contrary to His written Word. but don't be fearful of where the Holy Spirit may be leading you. flesh can only be flesh but spirit enters the Presence behind the veil.

in scripture God talks about israel as His chosen, as

beulah, the married one. christians speak of the bride of Christ. that's the kind of intimate relationship God wants with His people, with us, with you and me. "that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory." rom 9:23

don't anyone into "predestination" here. just because God knows the end from the beginning doesn't mean He dictates it. none are predestined to doom or failure, but He has predetermined those who are willing to be conformed to the image of His Son. "oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 'for who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has become His counselor?'" rom 11:33-34

friends, the God of all glory wants to know each of us. and He wants to know us intimately and personally. He wants to expose us to the glory that moses could not see and still live. He does not seek robots that will perfunctory obey. He seeks lovers of Him and His ways. and the reward He has for those who will - well, let's just say it is indescribable. we shall dip into His fountain of life. we shall truly know refreshing. we shall be one with our maker. we shall be children of God. maranatha!