

Avoiding Purgatory-Our Spiritual Decline PART 2

10.17.25

Blessings dear family, may the Lord grant us great love for Him and for others and a truly repentant heart. Amen. Mother Clare began, *"Repent and do the first works"* that's Revelation 2:5. It means to turn away from a spiritual decline, remember the early, loving actions and devotion that characterized the years of your conversion, and return to doing those "first works" of love, faith, and service. Failing to do so carries a severe warning of the church losing its effectiveness or even its existence. Remember where you have fallen. Acknowledge the spiritual decline or departure from original principles and passion. Repentance is a call for a change of heart and mind, a turning back to God and His ways. Do the first works and return to the foundational acts of love, service, evangelism and community support that were central to the church's early days.

The apostle John records Jesus exhorting the church in Ephesus to *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works"*. If they fail to heed His words, Jesus gives a warning: *"If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place"*. Paul had written a letter to the church in Ephesus roughly 30 years prior to Jesus' letter. At that point in the Ephesians' growth, Paul commended them for their love. Jesus also commends the Ephesians for some things, their toil and perseverance, their intolerance of evil people, their discernment amongst false apostles and their endurance for Christ. Jesus' issue with the Ephesians is that they "have forsaken their first love" that's in Revelation 2:4. The church at Ephesus was a hard-working, faithful church, but they were lacking in love.

In response to this abandonment of their first love, Jesus exhorts them to "repent and do the first works." Repentance is confirmed in the follow-through; repentance is followed by reformation. John the Baptist stressed the need for action in his preaching: *"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance"* that's Matthew 3:8. Jesus points to the early days of the church in Ephesus and to remember the service they had accomplished and the love they had expressed and then do those things again.

There is also a relationship between works and love here. The apostle John attests to this reality in 1 John 5:3: *"This is love for God: to keep His commandments."* This echoes Jesus' words in John 14:23: *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word"*. It seems that, as one grows in love for Christ, he or she will desire to obey even more. What does it mean, then, to "repent" and do the first works? Repent, in its most literal sense, simply means "to change one's mind." A change of mind often results in a change of attitude, emotion and action. This meaning can be seen clearly in Acts 2. Peter is presenting Jesus as the rightful Messiah, King of Israel. His hearers are comprised of the very people who had crucified the Lord via the Romans. Peter tells them they needed to repent or change their mind and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Their repentance involved changing their minds about Jesus being a mere man and their own need to be forgiven. Happily, about 3,000 people repented and were saved that day.

In Revelation 2:5, Jesus exhorts the Ephesians to repent, and that change of mind would lead to a change of attitude. The follow-through would be a return to their first works, encouraging their love for God. Jesus' message to the church of Ephesus should be a warning to all of us. We can do great works and persevere through trials and still lose sight of loving God. Saying or doing the right thing is meaningless without love. We must not forsake our first love and we must continue doing the things that encourage

our love for God. And here is what we have to focus on if we want to go directly to Heaven; repentance. There are sinful habit patterns we have all carried for so long they have become ingrained in such a way that we hardly know what we are doing. Jesus died on the cross to redeem us, but we still owe a debt to the ones we have hurt. For instance, if you borrow my truck and back it into a tree, you need to make it right by restoring the bumper and rear lights. You're not going to jail, but you must repair the damage. That is one reason why prison has work crews to help with community projects, to make up for the damage they've done to society by their crimes.

We cannot enter Heaven with sinful attitudes, for instance: When the Lord took me to Heaven and we were at the Carmelite monastery, Saint Faustina walked in and I became jealous. Everyone in the room knew what had happened, so she rushed to my side, knelt down and said, "Everyone here has experienced that feeling in their lives on earth Clare, we do understand." Her heart was to make me feel better. After a tour in Purgatory, you have no more jealousy, you become pure sweetness to everyone even those who have come from Earth with abundant fruit. I was horrified that I actually felt that way. Oh how ashamed I was for feeling jealous of this wonderful saint that I follow. How embarrassing to have that exposed before others in Heaven!

That's what I am talking about, purgatory, getting these bad habits out of our souls. Dear ones, Jesus has asked me to help all of Heart Dwellers to repent of their hidden and unacknowledged sins. He wants us to go straight to Heaven in the Rapture, but the majority will go to a building Jesse duPlantis was not allowed to enter, where there are tiny isolated rooms, a door for one person every four feet, no interaction with others, and a searing sense of conviction for the sins we didn't make satisfaction for or repair the wrinkles, spots, and blemishes. Jesus is asking us to prepare for our purgation so we can enter Heaven sooner and not have to suffer. These days everyone is complaining about how hard life has become. I will let you in on a little secret, you are doing your purgatory now, while on this earth, and your attitude should be gratitude for the bag of gold the King just tossed into your prison cell to help pay your debt so you can be released into Heaven. Be thankful! You have no idea what He has given you.

Have you ever wondered about those living alone for years in a nursing home? "Lord, would You please address this?" So, there are two things to remember, one is that you have been redeemed but you still have work to do to change and rid yourself of toxic attitudes which I guarantee will embarrass you to no end when they pop up in Heaven. Think of it this way, you have just lived seventy years of your life on a toxic planet with a toxic culture and have sinful thoughts you work desperately to hide and erase. The Lord in His mercy and care for you takes you to a place to detoxify and be restored to your baptismal purity, until you have nothing to hide. When you step out that door from purgatory you are going to be the happiest you have ever been in your whole life. You will see and understand like never before the souls all around you and God's magnificent plan for your future life with Him. You will be done with guilt, deceit, rebellion and pride. You will have the constant sweetness of Jesus in your heart for all creatures. There will be no more striving for positions, preoccupation about what others think of you and the pressing need to prove yourself. All of that gone, forever. Amen!