

## Crossroads Community Church

Sunday May 24th, 2015

This lovely May morning we entered God's presence with gladness, we worshipped the Lord with joy. Pastor Don shared announcements and prayed, 'Dear Father God, Thank you for your Mercy and Forgiveness, help us change our ways so we may honor you, give us strength and peace so we may be open before you to confess our sins, in Jesus' name Amen.'

I am sure we have all driven with the emergency brake on. It is a loud rumbling sound and we don't get very far as the car doesn't run to full potential, it drags along until we realise the brake is on. Once we disengage the brake the car drives smoothly to full speed. Our lives can be halted or slowed down in the same way. When we carry past sins, guilt, shame and regrets, they weigh heavily on our conscience, (Proverbs 28:13). It seems the more we try to ignore them the louder they get and the less we function to full potential, unless we take off the brake we will not. So where are we to go to be relieved from this burden of weariness and regain stability? Proverbs 3:5-6 says; 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.'

The first step in cutting off our past is realizing we need God to help us remove that which drags us down, only He can disengage the emergency brake. Guilt can destroy our confidence; it can damage our relationships and constantly leave us on the defensive, (Proverbs 28:1). Guilt cannot change the past any more than worry can change the future but both make us miserable. If we try to conceal our sin we will not move forward, (Proverbs 28:1). Sometimes we keep struggling with the same sin out of guilt, fear and shame, we may feel we are too far gone to come to God. We need to realise that we are all sinners and fall short of the glory God but we can be forgiven and restored. King David lived through his share of sin and guilt cycles but when he writes Psalms 32 he praises God for his forgiveness and restoration. When we admit our sins to God He forgives them and does not recount them against us, He erases our record of wrongs and we gain much blessing and joy, (Romans 4:6-8).

We can be confident that He will forgive our sins because that is what he promises, (1John 1:9). This is the first fruit of forgiveness; it is Jesus filling us with the happiness of forgiveness, God removes the heaviness of sin as David describes in Psalms 32:1-3. When sin entangles us and wears us down, God wants to help us, He genuinely wants to forgive us, He showed the ultimate forgiveness through the sacrifice of His own Son, (1John 2:12). So if we keep running away and keep denying our sins and keep repeating the same sin this hurts God's heart. It is as if we don't trust Him enough as our loving Father who longs to guide us, cleanse us from all wrongs. Even the deepest stains of sin He washes them white as snow because He loves us, but He can't if we don't come to Him to confess and repent, (Isaiah 1:18).

When He forgives there is no looking back, there is no dredging up the past, He removes our sins as far as the east from the west, (Psalms 103:12, Isaiah 43:25). If He does this for us there is no need to wallow in the past. That being said we ought to let Him search our hearts daily to uncover any sinful behavior so He can help us overcome and restore us. He will set us free from the heavy burden of guilt which leaves us weary and restless. God's hand brings blessing and will also give us conviction and correction. David appreciated the Lord's discipline even though it was unpleasant, (Psalms 32:4). We know that discipline is necessary to change a child's ways, but the Lord also disciplines us and it is good, it changes our hearts and our lives, (Hebrews 12:10-11). Sin brings sorrow but God's unfailing love brings forgiveness and joy, he also corrects us and instructs us so we don't continue in sin. Let us not allow, shame, fear or stubbornness deny us this freedom in Jesus Christ.

Beloved, we all enjoy coming to church where it is warm and friendly but we also need to engage with people to lead them to healing and deliverance from sin. We need to offer a safe loving place where people can trust God. We can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from the error of their way will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins, (James 5:20, Peter 4:8). We ought to do it in an atmosphere of love not judgement which will allow their hearts to be tender towards God and help them surrender their burdens unto Him. When we all lay our hearts bare before God He will restore us and fill us with His peace and Joy, once forgiven we will also be able to forgive others and ourselves, we will be made new! Praise the Lord, Asherey Shalom!