

## FROM RESOLUTION TO RESTORATION

This is the time of the year resolutions are made. There is nothing wrong with resolutions. It is always good to make a firm decision to do right. I want to encourage you to go past the resolution to restoration, become one with whom you are, the person God made you to be. I received my challenge from Ruth 4:15, *"And He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born Him."* Naomi is promised through Boaz and Ruth to have a kinsmen redeemer. Even as Boaz championed Ruth and Naomi's cause, the offspring of this union will be the Restorer of mankind and God through the Kinsmen Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. The word I want to emphasize in this passage is "restorer." It is also found in Psalm 51:12, *"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."* The Hebrew lexicon defines "restoration" thusly, "to recover to build, to turn back, but not necessarily with the idea of return to the starting point."

I see something that I hope you see as well; it means to build, but not meaning you go back to the starting point but you start where you are. In many instances you don't want to go to a chaotic starting point; you need a fresh vision for today. We need a new step for a new day. God is into starting anew: *"Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert"* (Isaiah 43:19). God wants to do something that is better than the beginning.

### **1. Let us be restored in reality with Jesus.**

Jesus said to Simon Peter, *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"* (Luke 22:31,32). Convert means to turn about. Earlier Jesus asked His disciples whom people thought He was. They replied some thought He was John the Baptist come back to life or Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But then our Lord said, *"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"*

(Matthew 16:15). Our Lord wanted to know what His disciples thought of Him, almost to say, "Am I real to you for who I am?"

Christ only becomes real to those who humble themselves before Him. Isaiah 57:15 says, *"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."* In a city in Scandinavia is a famous statue of our Lord, looking down with His arms outstretched. One day a visitor standing before it was very disappointed, and he didn't hesitate to share his feelings with an attendant. "I can't see the face of Christ, " he complained. The attendant replied, "Sir, if you want to see His face, you must kneel at His feet." The visitor knelt and he saw!

## **2. Let us be restored from ruins in relationships.**

Joel 2:25 promises, *"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you."* This is a promise to Israel in general and Judah specifically. Go to Athens and the tour guides will show you the ruins of a once mighty civilization where the likes of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Philipp of Macedon and Alexander the Great once walked. Take a trip to Rome and they will show you the ruins of the society that once conquered the world and built magnificent temples--now in ruins. God said to Judah, I will bring you back from ruins. That's the way He deals with His people.

Do you look at any of your relationships in the ruins? Your marriage? your children? your job? Charles Allen said the saddest word in the English language is the word "hopeless." I agree with him. Too many of God's people look at some broken relationships as irrevocably irrecoverable. The Word of God is resplendent with examples to the contrary. The Bible records, *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man"* (Luke 2:52). *"And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men"* (I Sam. 2:26). God is interested in the early formative years of a child's life that they learn to get along with each other. Once Jacob got right with God after wrestling with the Angel of the Lord all night, God declared a name change, *"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed"* (Genesis 32:28). Jacob was promised power with God and man. When we obtain power with God, we simultaneously obtain power with man!

The Lord wants us to take the initiative in getting along with each other, *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"* (Romans 12:18). Husbands are to take the lead in keeping relationship intact with their wife. *"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered"* (I Peter 3:7). God also said John the Baptist would bring parents and their children together. *"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse"* (Malachi 4:6). When we walk with God in the light of His Word, we tap into this promise: *"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man"* (Proverbs 3:1-4).

### **3. Let us be restored from running from anything.**

If we run from our problems in life, we will be running for the rest of our life. That is not the way God intended it to be. *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"* (Romans 8:15). *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (II Timothy 1:7).

### **4. Let us be restored in the route of our journey.**

When we have established reality with Jesus, restored relationships and stopped running from everything, we are going to have a restored journey. *"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in"* (Isaiah 58:12).

A dad was taking care of his young son when he had to go out for thirty minutes. He didn't want his hyperactive son to get into trouble so the dad took a pretty complicated jigsaw puzzle of the world and placed it all mixed up on the coffee table. He called his son into the living room and said, "Son, I am going to be out right now, but I'll be back in about thirty minutes. Work on this while I'm gone. The father, who knew it would take a couple of hours at least to put this together, was confident this would keep his young son busy until he got

back. Much to his surprise when he returned just thirty minutes later, the son had put every piece of the puzzle together. The dad asked, "Son, how did you do this so quickly?" The boy said, "Dad, get on your back with me and scoot under the coffee table with me. He looked up from beneath and there was the unmistakable likeness of George Washington from the under side. The boy said, "Dad, it wasn't hard at all. You see, when I put the man in his place, the world (pictured on the other side) came together. When we put Jesus in His rightful place, our world comes together as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.