

WRITTEN TEACHING · TWO PARTS

True Repentance: The Gate to Glory

A teaching from the Book of Ezekiel on the heart as the true temple of God, and the willing heart that opens what the law alone could never open.

Ezekiel 39 · 43 · 44 · 46 • Acts 1 · 14 • 2 Corinthians 4 · 8 • Hebrews 11 • 1 John 1

There is a temple in the book of Ezekiel that has never once been built with brick and mortar — not in the days of Zerubbabel, Zechariah, Nehemiah, or Ezra, and not in ours. Israel rebuilt the temple twice in her history, yet neither structure carried the glory God promised: that the glory of the latter house would exceed the glory of the former. If we reduce this prophecy to a physical building, it has failed. But God was never speaking of stone. He was speaking of something spiritual — a temple made not of walls, but of the human heart.

PART ONE · THE GATE TO GLORY

The Spirit Is the Catalyst of Restoration

In Ezekiel 39, God promises the restoration of Israel — but the order matters. Before there can be restoration, there must first be an outpouring: *“Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel”* (Ezekiel 39:29). The Holy Spirit is not a byproduct of restoration; He is its cause. Without Him initiating the work, no true or lasting restoration can take place — whatever man attempts on his own will fall short.

This same principle appears in Acts 1. When the disciples ask Jesus, “Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” His answer seems, at first, to sidestep the question. But He is not avoiding it — He is answering it more fully than they expected: *“You shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you... and you shall be witnesses unto me.”* That is how the restoration of the kingdom comes — not by human timing or effort, but by the Spirit.

Not Brick and Mortar — the Temple Is You

When Ezekiel is shown the temple's blueprint in later chapters, he is not looking at architecture. He is being shown, in vision, the pattern for something spiritual — a temple whose true dwelling place is the human heart. Paul makes this explicit: *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"* We are not talking about hammer and nail. We are talking about the building of a life — your life — as the place where God intends to dwell.

Repentance: The Prerequisite to Revelation

Ezekiel is told to show Israel the form of the house, its measurements, its ordinances — but only under one condition: *"If they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house"* (Ezekiel 43:11). Shame here means repentance. God's detailed plan is revealed only to a heart that has truly turned.

This is a sobering truth: many people want to know God's plan for their lives, but they have not truly repented. It is not that God is withholding out of cruelty — it is that repentance is the very ground on which revelation stands. A true repentant heart is not denied anything good. Paul could say, "I have finished my race," with full confidence — even from the comfort of a Roman prison, with no outward sign that his life was ending — because he knew the plan from beginning to end. That confidence was the fruit of a repentant heart, not of circumstance.

The East Gate

In Ezekiel 44, the glory of God enters the temple through the east gate — and after that, the gate is shut. No one may enter by it except the prince, the one who walks where God walked. This is the same glory Ezekiel had already seen by the river Chebar, but here it has found a resting place — a permanent dwelling.

Only a heart that has been made truly repentant qualifies to enter that gate and sit at the table, breaking bread in the presence of the Lord — partaking not merely by sight or by hearing, but by handling: *"Our hands have handled... the Word of life"* (1 John 1:1). Revelation is not simply observed; it is entered into, tasted, made real in a life that has been prepared to receive it.

Your heart is what opens or closes that gate. No angel stands in your way out of jealousy — if a door will not open, it is your heart, not heaven, that holds the key. As it's often put: your heart is the remote

control of the gate, and the only signal that unlocks it is true repentance.

What True Repentance Actually Is

True repentance is not a single dramatic moment, nor is it lip service. It is not saying “I’ve changed” while quietly drifting back to the same patterns. It is a progressive, sustained turning — a change of direction that you keep walking in, day after day. If you claim to have repented but are progressively sliding back toward what you left, that is not repentance; it is only a performance of it. The gate itself will always tell the truth, whether or not our words do.

The Heart as Dwelling Place

The Holy Spirit seeks a heart that is a conducive dwelling — one at rest, free of the sharp, thorny things (bitterness, resentment, unconfessed sin) that make it impossible for Him to settle. Where He does rest, what flows out of a person’s mouth becomes life-giving — “leaves of the tree of life, for the healing of the nations.” Where a heart has instead degenerated under envy, jealousy, and hatred, what is spoken becomes something else entirely — words that wound rather than heal.

This is the anatomy of the spirit: what dwells in the heart shapes what comes out of the mouth. A heart given over to true repentance becomes fertile ground for the Spirit; a heart left to degenerate becomes home to something far less than life.

PART TWO · THE WILLING HEART THAT OPENS EVERY GATE

Who Is the Prince?

We return to Ezekiel 44 to finish what we began. The east gate, recall, was the gate through which the glory of God entered the temple — and once God entered, it was shut. Only two were permitted to pass through it: God Himself, and the prince.

A prince is one who represents “the first” — and the first is God. The prince, then, is God’s representative on earth, the same role Paul later describes when he calls believers ambassadors: representatives of a government, carrying that government’s likeness even while standing on foreign soil.

Only such a representative could enter where God's glory dwelt, because *"blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* The prince had to carry a heart loyal to God — a heart after God's own heart — in order to sit at the same table, breathing the same air, eating the same bread as the Lord.

A Heart Able to Carry Glory

In the old temple, when the weight of God's glory descended, no priest could enter to minister — the glory was too great for an unprepared heart to bear. Only a heart shaped to carry that weight could stand in it without being destroyed.

Paul describes this in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: *"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."* Suffering is not wasted — it is the very process that renews the inward man, the hidden man of the heart, day by day, forming a heart able to carry what it could not carry before. It is only this inward transformation — not outward performance — that qualifies someone to be a bearer of glory.

The Exception to the Rule

Normally the east gate stayed shut except on appointed festival days. But Ezekiel 46 reveals a striking exception: when the prince brought a *voluntary* burnt offering — one given not because it was commanded, but because his heart was willing — the gate would open, even outside the appointed times.

This is the heart of the matter: **a willing heart sets aside the law.** What the law commands to remain shut, a willing heart can still open. This is why Jesus could heal on the Sabbath and rescue what needed rescuing regardless of the day — His heart was engaged, and where the heart is engaged, no rule stands in the way. As He put it to the Pharisees: if you would rescue your own ox from a pit on the Sabbath, how much more a human being made in God's image?

The realm of the willing heart is the realm of all possibilities — it is, in fact, the realm of God Himself. When the heart is engaged, "nothing shall be impossible unto you." Whatever door in your life remains shut, the answer is rarely more rule-keeping — it's engaging the heart.

The Macedonians: Giving From the Heart

Second Corinthians 8 illustrates this vividly. The churches of Macedonia gave — not out of surplus, but *“out of their deep poverty.”* Their affliction was great, yet so was their joy, because their hearts, not their circumstances, determined their generosity. God had already been at work in their hearts before Paul ever preached to them; what Paul witnessed was the fruit already growing.

Paul urges the Corinthians toward the same standard: not giving under compulsion, but proving the sincerity of love through the willingness of the heart. *“If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”* It was never about the amount — it was always about the willingness behind it, exactly as with the widow’s two mites, whom Jesus called more generous than all the wealthy givers combined.

Where hearts are willing on both sides — the one who has, and the one who lacks — there is equality. No one is embarrassed by abundance; no one is ashamed by need. This is the fellowship Paul describes: not simply an exchange of resources, but two hearts made one by shared willingness — the same language used of breaking bread together.

Faith Is a Willing Heart

The teaching turns to a simple, working definition of faith: **a willing heart, an open heart.** Nothing more complicated than that.

Moses, by faith, refused the riches of Egypt and chose affliction with the people of God — not because he was forced, but because he was willing (Hebrews 11:24-26). Abraham left his homeland “by faith” — not begrudgingly, but with an open, willing heart. Christ Himself, “though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor” — willingly leaving the riches of glory so that we might inherit them. And the crippled man at Lystra, lame from birth, was the first to receive Paul and Barnabas — because his heart was open and willing to believe, and Paul, seeing that faith, told him to stand. He leaped and walked.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1) — and that evidence is nothing other than a willing heart in motion. Where the heart is willing, what is unseen begins to be seen.

Conclusion: The Realm of the Heart

This is where true repentance leads us — not merely to a change in behavior, but into the very realm of the heart, the realm where God Himself operates, the realm of all possibilities. Without a heart

transformed, none of this can be understood, let alone practiced.
Anything of God must first be engaged by the heart before it can be
understood by the mind or lived out by the hands.

May we, like the prince who alone could pass through the east gate,
carry hearts made willing — hearts able to bear the weight of glory,
hearts that open every gate the law alone could never open.

In the name of Jesus.

✦ Branch of Righteousness

“I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” — John 17:23

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