

Empowered

The March Toward Freedom

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

I. Be Aware

A. Not Alone

Ezra 9:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ "But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. ⁹ Though we are slaves, our **God has not deserted us in our bondage**. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

B. God Searches

Ezekiel 22:30-31 (NIV)

³⁰ "**I looked for a man** among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. ³¹ So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD."

C. Your Response Matters

Isaiah 58:6-9 (NIV)

⁶ "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to **loose the chains** of injustice and **untie the cords** of the yoke, to **set the oppressed free** and **break every yoke**? ⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? ⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

Fasting = abstaining from food for spiritual purposes

D. Unbelief & Unaware

John 8:31-38 (NIV)

³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³ They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" ³⁴ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

³⁷ I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. ³⁸ I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father."

II. Repent and Believe

A. For the Religious

Hebrews 6:1 (NASB)

¹ Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works (useless rituals) and of faith toward God,

B. Catalyst of Repentance

Mark 1:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe the good news!**"

C. Fruit of Repentance

Matthew 3:7-9 (NIV)

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

D. Change in Position

Acts 20:21 (NIV)

²¹ I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

E. Repentance and Respect

Romans 2:4-5 (NIV)

⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

⁵ But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

F. Sorrow of Repentance

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

G. Failure to Repent

Matthew 11:20 (NIV)

²⁰ Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, **because they did not repent.**

Revelation 9:21 (NIV)

²¹ Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Heavenly Father,

I want to live in a way that honors you. I choose to turn away from anything that hinders or diminishes my faith. May Jesus become a greater reality in my heart than ever before. Grant me a willing spirit and the humility to change. I choose your way, I choose obedience to the truth, I choose Jesus as Lord of all I am. I turn away from ungodliness, rebellion and selfishness. May Jesus be glorified through my life, amen.