“REPENTANCE”

Binhi sang Pagtuo
March 12, 2012

Dear Friends,

Greetings!

The Lenten Season has officially started on February 22 – Ash Wednesday. 40 days after that will be Easter Sunday, and another 40 days will bring us to the Day of Pentecost. The significance of using ash in a ritual is that it reminds us that we all came from dust and from dust we will all return. An act of repentance in the Bible is followed by sitting in a dust and sprinkling dust in the head – a symbol expressing deep humiliation and lamentation for the things that were done.

As we approach the Holy Week, let us ponder on the sins that we have committed. Have we repented from our sins? What is repentance?

We can learn about repentance from the story of Jonah and his mission to Nineveh.

The Greek word for repentance is metanoia. The literal meaning of this word is a change of mind and heart or a change of consciousness that will result into a change of attitude and will lead into a change of action.

Jonah 3:10 says “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He had Compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction He had threatened.” This is affirmed by Luke 3:8, “Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.” In a mathematical formula, we can put it this way: Change of thinking + Change of attitude + Change of action = Full Repentance.

When Jonah repented from his sins, God told him, “Jonah, do not just return to me, but go to Nineveh and proclaim the message I give you.” This means that forgiveness is not forgetting our responsibilities. We are still accountable. It is not setting us free from our responsibilities. Rather, forgiveness enables us to go back and fulfill our responsibilities.

Jonah’s act of going to Nineveh and his act of preaching God’s message was a demonstration of his repentance.

Jonah preached to a city which was estimated to have 1 million inhabitants. There is probably no evangelist in recorded history that has not done this. His message was: “You have 40 days left in your lives. Repent!” It was not just a message of doom but also of hope.

The people responded positively. Jonah 3:5 says “They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.” They admitted that they sinned and that they are repenting. The King also repented. v.6 “When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.” And God showed mercy!

God is a just God. But God is also a merciful God. If you will not turn from your wicked ways, then God will respect your decision and you will suffer the consequences. Meaning, God is fair. You will be given the punishment that is due to you. But if you repent from your wicked ways, turn back to God and when He will see that your repentance is genuine because of your action, then He will accept you with open arms.

May God bless us all!

Sincerely,

Rev. Francis Neil G. Jalando-on