

# Where the Light Enters

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John 16:33

*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

I think we can all admit that at some point in our lives we have experienced tribulations ... trials, challenges, tough times ... call it what you like. We've all had a rough go at times. We've been injured, wounded, and hurt. While some of our wounds have been physical, in many more cases our injuries have been at the emotional and soul levels, caused by the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that we held, and perhaps, still hold.

In Psalm 37:3-8 we are told: <sup>3</sup> *Trust in the LORD and do good. Then you will live in the land and enjoy its food.* <sup>4</sup> *Find your delight in the Lord. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants.* <sup>5</sup> *Commit your life to the Lord. Here is what he will do if you trust in him.* <sup>6</sup> *He will make your godly ways shine like the dawn. He will make your honest life shine like the sun at noon.* <sup>7</sup> *Be still. Be patient. Wait for the LORD to act. Don't be upset when other people succeed. Don't be upset when they carry out their evil plans.* <sup>8</sup> *Keep from being angry. Turn away from anger. Don't be upset. That only leads to evil.*

If we looked carefully at some of our life challenges, we may find that we are overlooking the advice in these last verses. We are impatient and restless; we compare ourselves to others and succumb to anger and

discontent when we see others succeeding in hurtful and immoral ways. We don't trust God and the perfect plans that are promised.

Sometimes it all just looks like chaos around us: in our lives, our families, the nation, and the world. Let me just say that it is OK to feel these feelings. Just try to see it from a higher perspective. It is like cleaning out a drawer or a closet. We have to take everything out first, put it in the middle of the floor, and then start looking through the pile of chaos in front of us.

Of course, if a neighbor comes over and sees the room in this state of disarray they may form an erroneous conclusion: we are a mess; we live a life of tangled disorder and jumbled confusion. But they would be wrong; we are just in the process of creating order. We still need to go through things, making decisions

about what to keep; and what is valuable and what needs to be discarded and replaced. With effort, discernment, and patience we create a new space: where there was once chaos and disorder, there is an orderly and attractive place that holds comfortably what we want with room for more.

So it is in the world; so it is in our lives. It may be true that we are what we think, and that new productive thoughts can produce new productive results in our lives, but we must create a place for new thoughts before we can become something new. We are told in 2 Corinthians 5:17 – “... *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*”

When we can be still and attune our thoughts, hearts, and minds to Christ within, we are changed, our thoughts are changed. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can supplant our old ways of thinking with new, powerful, and productive thoughts.

I read about a process, or technique for exchanging our thoughts. It goes like this: We look at our lives and consciously assume that everything we have in our lives and see in the world is an exact mirror image of our thoughts. It is basically taking the idea that we are what we think to its logical conclusion. If we are what we think, then everything that we have, even our perceptions – how we see the world – is a result of what we are thinking. Then, when we see something in our lives we want to change, we ask ourselves, “What am I thinking for this to show up?” By honestly and deeply

answering this question we can often uncover “old junk” in the closet drawers of our minds that we didn’t realize were still there. Thoughts like, “I am not worth much,” “I’m not good at this,” “It’s no use; I may as well just give up,” “I’m stupid,” “I am not deserving of love or happiness,” “It is evil to have money,” “It is more spiritual to be poor than to have abundance.”

The next step is to determine what we want to see in our lives or the world, and ask, “What is it that I must think in order to reflect what I want to see?” Once we have established that new thought and hold it dear, then by God’s law we must become that new thought; that thought must be reflected back to us from the world, and who we are. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Now comes the waiting period and a time to step over some of the pitfalls our fears create along the way. Once we have created the new thoughts, either we will see new results, or without realizing it we have changed our thoughts again.

Well Patrick, why would we want to exchange a thought for something we want to see in the world with one that we don't want to see? It's not that we are trying to sabotage our desires, or that God is testing us; it is because we have fears. We don't want to have the feelings we have felt in the past.

For instance, a couple of weeks ago I shared that I am reluctant to get out on the dancefloor. This is because when I was younger I felt foolish and awkward; it was humiliating. I don't like feeling humiliation, so why would I

want to see myself getting out on the dancefloor as an adult when I could feel foolish and awkward?

You see, it is an error to assume that just because we hold a “positive” thought in mind, “I want to be free and have fun expressing myself through dance,” that we are actually going to feel positive. The exact opposite can occur: I can think the positive productive thought, but my fearful feelings from the past put a kibosh on my plans to accept an invitation to dance. Out of fear, I use the excuse, “I can’t dance,” so that I can avoid those feelings.

Many of us do this. We allow our fears to produce choices that Spirit does not intend. Because of fear we must choose to allow our past hurts, embarrassments, and negative experiences to keep us from accepting our



good, or moving fully into what God has planned for us. For instance, God may nudge us by giving us an opportunity to share something significant we learned in our lives with other people. We have a choice: we can stand in front of an audience and be a benefit to others by sharing our lives, enriching people, and expanding their knowledge, or we can stay in our seats and avoid the irrational past fears of feeling self-conscious, nervous, and out of our comfort zone. We can enjoy the experience of sharing with others and receive their recognition, thanks, and appreciation, or we can play it safe and avoid the old feelings.

Either choice is fine; there is no judgment because God knows that accepting a positive thought is only half the story. We must also stay with that thought and face the feelings that positive thought brings up. It is those feelings

that are the real obstacle, and not the new thought.

The negative feelings and hurts we cling to are not there to sabotage us, but to protect us. Hurts do not endure because God wants us to experience pain; we cleave to them out of fear of the old feelings the new thought brings. Our fear and reluctance is trying to shield us from the pain of those feelings. If we can move past that emotional block and simply “be with” the discomfort, “feel the pain” that we fear, we can often heal the source of the original wound.

From the writings of Rumi, a 13th-century Persian poet and Sufi mystic, we have a conversation between two characters. I have seen the characters represented as a person and God, but I believe it was originally intended as

Josef from the Old Testament and a visiting friend. Here is a loose translation:

“I said: what about my eyes?

He said: Keep them on the road.

I said: What about my passion?

He said: Keep it burning.

I said: What about my heart?

He said: Tell me what you hold inside it?

I said: Pain and sorrow.

He said: Stay with it. The wound is the place where the Light enters you.”

The wound, our wound, is the place where the Light enters. What is the Light? It is the Truth of God, the revelation and healing of Spirit. It is the whisper of Christ into our hearts, minds, and awareness. For many of us, we have wounds that are still open. We feel vulnerable and are in pain from past injuries. We feel

uncertain because plans haven't worked out the way we wanted. We feel anxious and confused.

When we can move into prayer and face our pain, we become the watcher of the pain, as Eric Tolle refers to it. As we allow the Light of Christ to enter through our wounded self, healing begins when we feel those old feelings, and just be with them. We no longer identify with the pain and injuries but are the observer. The old feelings no longer control us or hold any power over us. We can speak to them lovingly, as if they are ghosts of long-lost relatives wandering around in a house and have not yet crossed over into the loving hands of God. We can encourage them to leave, bless them on their journey, and let them know they are no longer needed. We may still experience their pains for a while, but we know that we are not that pain; we are not those weaknesses,

limitations, or feelings. They belong to the World, not to us. Let Spirit handle them.

Light enters as we release our fears and accept ourselves as a Child of God. We are in the process, not yet complete. We may still have piles of chaos in the middle of our floors, but this doesn't mean our life is a mess or that we are in any way less worthy of God's Grace. We are just still sorting through things, swapping out the old for the new and the nonproductive for the useful.

*As Romans 12:2 teaches: Don't become like the people of this world. Instead, change the way you think. Then you will always be able to determine what God really wants--what is good, pleasing, and perfect.*

I pray the we can co-create the new thoughts that Christ is whispering into our souls, and then face the feelings that arise from past fears with stillness, patience, and trust in God. I pray that we will watch as the old ways pass away and see that all things are made new.

Let us pray....