

Burning Bowl Service 2018

1/7/2018

Revelation 21:4

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

In this verse John is relating a spiritual experience he had. God is describing what happens when we experience His presence: He dwells with us; He dries our tears, eliminates death and mourning and pain. The former things pass away and God makes all things new.

When we align our minds and hearts and awareness and intentions with God, we are made new. What we were before is replaced by something fresh and different. We abandon our old ways of being, thinking, behaving, speaking, reacting and expecting. A more pertinent set of directives drives us: a set that is more Spirit-ordered, Christ-guided, positive, effective, and uniquely geared to us so that God can express more freely into Creation through us.

This is the entire purpose of celebrating Christmas: to have the Christ lead us, guide us, transform us. But we must do our part; we must allow this process to take place and help facilitate the changes that are initiated by Christ.

Today we will engage in a two-part symbolic ritual called the Burning Bowl and a Letter to God, which work together to help this process of making all things new. It is a spiritual and psychological combination of two ideas: the releasing of the unneeded and unproductive aspects that hold us back, and the acquisition of new elements that elevate us and make us more in tune with God. Yes, although it is seven days into the New Year, the changes we want to see in our life are not a matter of calendar; they are a matter of choice.

For those that are listening to this recorded service, I encourage you to take part in this valuable exercise as well.

In a moment we will enter into prayer and meditation for a few minutes and then we will begin the first part of this exercise: to write down the things in our lives that we would like to release. Perhaps there are attitudes and beliefs that we would like to discard, negative ideas and thoughts that are holding us back. Perhaps there are people we would like to

forgive, or mistakes we have made that still require our forgiveness and to be forgotten.

It is good to remember that the past has no control over us other than what we give it. What's done is done; what's gone is gone. Let no more heartache linger on. We shift our focus to what we can affect, and that is what we are thinking and doing right now.

So maybe we will release our feelings of powerlessness – old physical and mental habits that no longer serve us: fears, doubts, prejudices, attitudes, and habits – whatever is no longer useful or productive. We release the idea that we are in any way unworthy of God's good for us because of our actions and thoughts in the past. We free ourselves from the idea that God is for some reason showing us disfavor or is punishing us. These are erroneous human thoughts of the ego, and we gently and lovingly let them go.

We will write down all that is on our hearts and minds and then those papers will be burned - a symbolic release and letting go of what is not working for us.

Meditation/Song: I Let Go

[Burning Bowl Ceremony] As you place your paper into the flame, say a silent prayer of “I release you and let you go. You have no power over me.”

[After all have finished burning]

We have just released some of the past – conditions, attitudes, thought patterns, belief structures, and feelings that we no longer need. By so doing, we have created a spiritual vacuum, a place for new thoughts and attitudes, new ideas, conditions, relationships, and experiences. The energy of the negative is released and we can now reinvest that energy into positive, affirmative, and rewarding thoughts and ideas.

Let us now reflect again for a moment and then write our visions of what we want this year to bring in a letter to God.

[After meditation]

Now let us write down, in the form of a Letter to God, what we wish to bring into our lives this year. I encourage you to look at the various parts of your lives: Faith, Family, Friends and relationships, Finances and work-related, Health and

Fitness, Education and learning, attitudes and philosophies, emotions and reactions; service to others and the community.

Whatever it is you want to see materialize in your life this year write it down. Do not judge it if you've tried to do this in the past. The past has no power over you and Spirit loves to give second chances... even third, fourth and fifth chances. Affirm what you want your year to bare.

When you have finished, fold your paper and put it in your envelope. Address the envelope to you with your return address and seal it. You will place your Letter to God in the collection basket and the letters will be prayed over throughout the year and then returned to you at the end of the year.

For those listening to this through a recording, I encourage you the next time you are in church to drop your Letter To God in the collection basket. I will add it to those I already have and will pray over yours as well.

[Sing: What a Wonderful World
I Am Free, I Am Unlimited]