This was written and experienced before knowing about 10 Days of Prayer…

Dear Friends,

On another note here’s that follow up email to the one I sent you during the week. It relates to one of the things I feel the Father has been revealing to me. They are thoughts that might inform our steps ahead together.

A while ago I had a dream which stirred in me much emotion. It’s not a dream I could make much sense of at first, I couldn’t understand why I was having it but I can tell you, it felt unfortunately very real. First I shall explain the dream which is something I wouldn’t normally share for reasons that shall become obvious. Then it’s important that you read on to put it into context.

The dream

I dreamt that somehow, it had emerged that apparently a decision had been made that it was alright for my wife to have extra marital relationships with others. I had no time to comprehend this decision. The dream started abruptly with the knowledge that a decision had been made, as if I’d agreed to it, but with no time to spare the love of my life was already packed, about to leave, she was in the process and final stages of leaving me, for another. In one moment I was naively supporting her and helping her leave, in the next, as the truth dawned on me, I began desperately pleading with her not to go whilst trying to grapple with how this decision could have come about. She acted as if this was completely ok, that the decision was made, she was going! When I realised what was happening a sudden wave of very strong emotions hit me. I felt betrayed, desperate, confused and heart broken as my spirit started to feel like it was being cleaved apart. These emotions hit me to my core as I began to cling to her legs in a desperate plea for her not to leave me. There must be some misunderstanding, I would never have agreed to this. I clung to her and wouldn’t let her leave although I felt there was already a barrier of coldness coming from her as her mind was already made up. The emotions were very raw. Then I awoke. ( I did tell you I would never normally tell you this, read on to find out why.)

At first I have been confused by this. Charlie and I love each other very much. This love is only increasing and deepening as the years go by, bearing in mind that we started dating at 17 and have been loyally married to each other for 20 years this year. When I confessed I'd had the dream to Charlie she assured me that I have no reason to feel insecure.

Hold onto that thought.

Recently however I have been challenged, as I know many of you have, about the need for us to repent - individually, as a group, and as a nation, and then to pray for God's’ guidance when we are of one heart. I found myself reading Jeremiah’s call to repentance and by the next morning I had an epiphany. This is how God feels about a nation that serves other gods just like Jeremiah’s prophecy about Israel. I was able to read this passage with the emotional intensity and heartfelt perspective of God that was originally intended. Something my own emotional and physical understanding, my heart, didn’t comprehend until I experienced it in this dream. The bride was leaving the Groom. Israel had ‘played the Harlot’ …[and] committed adultery’ (v6&7).

Jeremiah 3

A Call to Repentance

6 The Lord said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 And I said, after she had done all these things, ‘Return to Me.’ But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. 9 So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretence,” says the Lord.

11 Then the Lord said to me, “Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. 12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say:

‘Return, backsliding Israel,’ says the Lord; ‘I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,’ says the Lord; ‘I will not remain angry forever. 13 Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the Lord your God, And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,’ says the Lord.

14 “Return, O backsliding children,” says the Lord; “for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15 And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

16 “Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days,” says the Lord, “that they will say no more, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.

17 “At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

18 “In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

19 “But I said:

‘How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?’

“And I said:

‘You shall call Me, “My Father,” And not turn away from Me.’ 20 Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel,” says the Lord.

21 A voice was heard on the desolate heights, Weeping and supplications of the children of Israel. For they have perverted their way; They have forgotten the Lord their God.

22 “Return, you backsliding children, And I will heal your backslidings.”

“Indeed we do come to You, For You are the Lord our God. 23 Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, And from the multitude of mountains; Truly, in the Lord our God Is the salvation of Israel. 24 For shame has devoured The labor of our fathers from our youth— Their flocks and their herds, Their sons and their daughters. 25 We lie down in our shame, And our reproach covers us. For we have sinned against the Lord our God, We and our fathers, From our youth even to this day, And have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.”

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Jeremiah 4

4 “If you will return, O Israel,” says the Lord, “Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved. 2 And you shall swear, ‘The Lord lives,’ In truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; The nations shall bless themselves in Him, And in Him they shall glory.”

3 For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

“Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. 4 Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings.”

I met a pastor a while back and visited him at his church in Yately a few Sundays ago. They had an in depth study on Israel seen through Romans 9, 10 and 11. The Jews at the time had sought righteousness by the law as opposed to the Gentiles who had achieved it by faith,

‘but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.[o] For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. 33 As it is written: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”(Romans 9: 30-33).

One of the speakers points was that there are many in our nation who do not repent because they do not think we have sinned. Ok, the odd sin here and there but fundamentally they think we are good. He then looked back at the original sin of Adam where he took the fruit. Essentially he was choosing his own way over Gods way setting up the sinful nature of the flesh. By choosing to do things our way we are sinning just like Adam. Even though we think we are good, we are attaining good via the law otherwise known as a form of self righteousness. He was saying that just like Israel we’ve missed the point, many of us have tried to attain righteousness by the law and not through Faith. Not only do we need to repent of our sins but also of this sin of choosing our way over Gods way.

I was then handed a bookmark/flyer advertising the church as I left. The only bible verse on the front was the all too familiar…

2 Chronicles 7:14

14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

So in conclusion I feel God is saying we should,

Draw together to…

Pray.

Repent.

Repent of doing things our own way.

Be of One Mind.

Await instruction to do things Gods way.

Obey.

And most importantly he is saying these things for our own good because he loves us so much. His call to repentance is not to heap judgement on us, (we do that ourselves) but rather to free us to be the faithful bride that he desires. His call is a plea of a Groom who desires the best for his bride and their marriage.