

LESSON 13 ~ GENUINE REPENTANCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

Background Scripture: Romans 8; 2 Corinthians 7; Psalm 34

Lesson Passage: Romans 8:12-17; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 Psalm 34:18 (NKJV)

Introduction: *Repentance* is a biblical word. The Old Testament thunders, “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin” (Ezekiel 18:30, NKJV). The New Testament also vigorously exhorts men and women to repent (Luke 13:3, Acts 3:19; 17:30). The Bible commands it, our wickedness demands it, justice requires it, Christ preached it and God expects it. The divine, unalterable edict is still valid: “God commands all men everywhere to repent.” But this theme proclaimed so emphatically in the Bible by prophets and apostles is scarcely mentioned by contemporary preachers. The clear trumpet blast calling men and women to repentance is conspicuous for its absence from the modern pulpit.

We have preached the dignity of humanity rather than our depravity. We have declared our goodness rather than our wickedness. We have vindicated ourselves rather than confessed our guilt. We have made of ourselves, despite all of our inherent sin and evil, little cherubs of perfection with halos on our heads, harps in our hands and wings on our shoulders. Gone is the mourner’s bench, gone are the tear-stained cheeks of godly sorrow for sin and gone is the joy in heaven over wanderers returning to the Father’s house. Hardly any of us want to accept blame for our sins. Sorrow is painful and filled with grief. "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11) David mourned and bowed deep in sorrow over his sin but he realized the wonderful day of salvation when - acknowledging his sin - returning to the Lord in a godly manner - he stood forgiven and cleansed. Sorrow in a godly manner is how we come to God. A change takes place and while we are ashamed, we look to that time when we can once again enjoy the favor of our God and the fellowship of His people. From that time on we find wisdom to guide our steps more directly and help others to bear their burdens also. Repentance is not a mechanical duty, but rather a heartfelt response to the conviction of sin. It involves not only grief over sin, but it also includes a decision to change one’s ways.

Scripture Reference Romans 8:12-17 (NKJV)

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Scripture Reference: 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 (NKJV)

9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For

observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 34:18 (NKJV)

18 *"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit"* (Psalm 34:18, NKJV).

Topic Explored: *"Genuine Repentance"* ~ What is repentance? Few things in the life of a believer are as disheartening as the long struggle with persistent sins. This is particularly true when we have experienced victory over sin in other areas of our life. We know God has the power to get rid of our sin, so why won't He? It may sound counterintuitive, but sometimes victory over some sin carries because God desires to teach us how to truly repent of that sin. God desires His people to know not only how-to walk-in holiness, but also to obey His command to rend our hearts when we fall short of His glory (Joel 2:13). Yes, sin in our life is a problem, but so is a life where we haven't learned how to truly repent of sin. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation. Repentance carries with it the idea of changing—changing your mind, changing your attitude, changing your ways. If we are truly repentant, our will is brought into action and we will make a reversal of direction. And God, seeing that we are in earnest, gives us the gift of eternal life.

Memory Verses: *"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit"* (Psalm 34:18, NKJV).

Lesson Focus: 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 (KJV)

Verses 9-11 ~ The problem Paul had addressed was sexual immorality among the brethren at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5). He rebuked the brethren at Corinth for being "puffed up" and directed the man who was in sin to be delivered "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The result of the action of the church as Paul instructed was the man repented and joy filled the saints at Corinth.

Paul shows the importance of the discipline of the body of Christ upon sin. The reason the brethren were "puffed up" was because sin was among them and they chose to do little about it. Sin was not viewed as serious nor important to purge out. As with the chastening portion of corrective discipline, Paul had not rejoiced that he should cause them to suffer. The cause of Paul was to bring them to suffer so that repentance could have its full work. This type of sorrow will lead to a change in life - repentance.

The sorrow Paul describes is the sorrow that is of a godly manner. The pain of sin, the ugliness of sin, the cost of sin and the measure of sin is brought to bear upon the mind and a change is made. Godly sorrow is not the type of sorrow that produces a need to "do the honorable thing." Godly sorrow is the full recognition of the sin committed is an abomination to God. This is not a tame emotion; but rather godly sorrow produces an explosion of deep feelings toward one's relationship with God.

In the psalms, David expressed his feelings with the depth of sorrow only found in the godly manner (Psalm 6:6,7; 32:3-5; 38:3-8). David knew the heavy burden that sin had upon his life and how he would harvest the seed sown in sin. He summed up his relationship with God as he

wrote in Psalm 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart -- these, O God, You will not despise." In all four of these psalms, David shows the sorrow that tormented him because of his sin and yet the rejoicing of repentance that brought him back again in favor with God. Sorrow in a godly manner is sorrow that is characterized by a profound understanding of the consequences of sin. There is shame in sin and the shame must be felt to understand the penalty of sin. The man of 1 Corinthians 5 had not felt the pain of sorrow for his sin. Paul admonished them by the name of "our Lord Jesus Christ" to cause the man to become fully aware of his sin.

A change took place in the life of David and no doubt in the life of the man at Corinth. Paul's second letter are words of joy at the change of life this man had experienced. He rejoiced that the church at Corinth had the courage to realize the grave danger of sin and sought to bring out sorrow after a godly manner.

In our politically correct world in which we live, feelings of individuals are more important than the cause of Christ. It is not the intent of Paul to create an environment of militaristic dogmatism in the church of Christ by demanding brethren to be abusive to one another. What he does point out by direction of the Holy Spirit is that sin is not to be viewed as a "mistake" or an "oops" but rather as the true nature of sin. Individuals may be unwilling to acknowledge sin because of the embarrassment that will be felt. Sin is not an embarrassment - it is a shame - a deep shame - one that sorrow after a godly manner will bring a person to their knees and they will beg God for pardon.

Godly sorrow produces actions and does not hide them. With sorrow there is pain and suffering and that is what produces the clearing of the mind. In the exposure of sin there is indignation at the cost of sin. The recognition of sin brings about fear before God and the penalty of sin moves one with zeal to seek grace from the Father. A vehement desire is instilled in one's heart to fall prostrate before the God of host and beg for mercy. Godly sorrow is not passive - it is powerful!

When we lose the ability to acknowledge our sin and to bring the shame of sin to bear upon the minds of others who stand in the same avenues of temptation, we have lost the knowledge of godly sorrow. Sin must be acknowledged as David shows us in his life and in his writings. "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." (Psalm 51:3). Paul wrote to the church at Corinth to remind them of the price for sin. When sin is allowed to remain in the camp unchecked, the glory of God will soon fade away.

Lesson Focus: Psalm 34:18 (NKJV)

Verse 18 ~ Contrition is an element of true repentance. Contrition, or "godly sorrow," as it is called in 2 Corinthians 7:10, is not a shallow sentiment nor empty emotion. It is a sincere regret over past sins and an earnest desire to walk in a new path of righteousness.

Lesson Focus: Romans 8:12-17 (NKJV)

Verses 12-13 ~ True conversion is necessary if we are to produce good works that please God. Such works are not done to secure our place in the kingdom, for nothing sinners do is good enough to merit a right standing before God. These good works prove that we have been justified in Christ alone through faith alone, demonstrating that we are citizens of heaven (Ephesians 2:8-

10). Moreover, genuine conversion involves a twofold turn—away from sin in repentance and unto Jesus in faith.

An authentic conversion involves death and resurrection. The old man in bondage to sin must die, and the new, free man in Christ must live (2 Corinthians 5:17). In our lesson Scripture, Paul focuses more on the ongoing results of a genuine conversion than the decisive death to sin that happens when we first trust the Savior. Typically, we speak of conversion as a one-time event. In leaving the darkness for the light, we die to the power of sin and are raised to victory over evil in Christ. This act is thoroughly modernistic, effected by one person—the Holy Spirit of God. We have no inclination in ourselves to die to sin, and we cannot raise ourselves to life. Without the sovereign, gracious intervention of our Creator, the thoughts of our hearts are evil continually, and we do not seek to please God in what we do (Genesis 6:5; Romans 3:9–18).

On account of the Son’s work and the Father’s plan, the Spirit gives us the gift of repentance (John 3:5–6; Acts 11:18). Our once-for-all conversion happens in conjunction with our regeneration. The Spirit changes our hearts, guaranteeing we will repent and trust in Jesus. Yet though conversion is a decisive event, it produces the ongoing fruit of repentance in us. Sin’s power is broken in the Christian, but its presence remains. The old man, which was dealt a mortal blow through the work of Christ and our union with Him, keeps trying to regain control until we are glorified. We have to mortify the flesh, by the Holy Spirit through true repentance. Such repentance is sorrow for offending God, not merely sorrow for getting caught (Romans 8:12–13; 2 Corinthians 7:10). Even here the Spirit must give and strengthen such righteous desires, so let us pray that He would give us a yearning to follow after Jesus our Lord in a life of repentance (Ephesians 3:14–19).

Let’s talk about it. . .

Making it personal:

- If the world ever needed a spiritual awakening, it is now. Sin has cankered many, and at this moment it threatens to destroy us. There is hope, but it is only in God. There is forgiveness, but it can only be found at the foot of the cross, where Christ died for our sins (Acts 3:19).

Closing Prayer: *“Dear Lord, thank You for your forgiveness. Thank you for not abandoning us to our mistakes, but for reaching out instead to bring us home. Help us to acknowledge our sin and to accept Your mercy without shame. Thank You for the love You have poured out for me and all of your children. Help us to live out of that love today. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen!”*