

Revival: The Word + Repentance + Worship = Revival

Week 4: Repentance Part II

- I. We sum up what we're about in our mission: to push through boundaries to share God's story from Norfolk to the nations! We do life together as a community as we live into our mission. I am confident you'll find the Tab community to be a welcoming place and one that challenges us all to spread the hope of the gospel in word and deed in the situations God may place us.

This gets to the heart of:

[Slide]: Revival

- A. That's what we've been praying for as we start 2023. That God would do a distinct work in us and through us to reignite the passion of God's gospel power in our lives. God has made the way for anyone to know Him in a personal way and it's through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We enter a relationship with Jesus by placing our trust in Him for the forgiveness of sins and new life that grants us access to the presence of God for all eternity.
- B. When God does a distinct work in lives and brings about a passion for the gospel there are some key ingredients consistently involved throughout the testimony of Scripture:

[Slide]: The Word + Repentance + Worship = Revival

1. Last week we talked about repentance unto salvation.

Part of our job description as believers is to share the gospel which can involve an unpopular message:

[Slide]: Turn from sin and turn to God!

- a. We all must go down this path to God. Whether we're a convicted murderer or a southern belle who's never uttered a curse word, in comparison to God's perfection, we're all corrupted to our core. That can be difficult for us to grasp when we consider ourselves to be moral people. There isn't anything in the gospel message that equates morality to God's approval. No matter what our past entails, we all stand at the doorway of God's grace.
- b. I felt compelled by God last week to preach about repentance unto salvation because of Romans 2. But also because of the week prior and reading Luke 15, the story of the Prodigal Son. What makes me cry when I read that story is that the oldest son refused to go to the party. The party is a foreshadowing of heaven! The older brother checked off every box to earn the favor of the Father and in the end refused to acknowledge God's grace. Neither going to church, nor even being the pastor of a church, gets anyone a pass to eternal life. The only option any of us have is God's grace! There might be some listening today and you're still convinced it's possible to earn God's favor. Please repent unto salvation.
- c. Repentance unto salvation is a work of God's Spirit that leads us to turn from sin and turn to Christ. This is our conversion or regeneration. We are born again! But a spirit of repentance doesn't stop there.
2. There is an ongoing repentance that I'd like for us to discuss today. Our rebirth only happens one time. As Christ followers, we don't repent because we've fallen out of relationship with God and it depends on us to restore it. That would be a salvation of works. That's not gospel. As Christ followers, we never end our battle with sin until we are in the presence of God. We're not spirit beings in heaven. We will get new bodies and they will be glorified bodies. Those bodies will be without sin and able to withstand the direct presence of God. We can't imagine what it will be like to be in the direct presence of God, but it will be so awesome we will need glorified bodies. That's what's ahead of us for Christ followers.
- II. But for now, between our regeneration and glorification, is our sanctification. This is the messy process of growing in our maturity in Christ! Sometimes this feels more like a rollercoaster ride than an escalator. We fail forward by:

[Slide]: Repentance

- A. We acknowledge our sin, ask God to forgive us of that sin, and we do an about-face toward God! When the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives, God changes our spiritual taste buds. We're freed from sins penalty but not its pull. We're certainly not free from the consequences of sin. But what has changed is that we have a more acute awareness of sins deception and lack of fulfillment. It's like running 5 miles in July or ending a football practice and trying to quench your thirst with a Coke. It doesn't work! Your body is longing for pure

water! When the Holy Spirit resides in us we know what the piano chord is supposed to sound like. Sin is like a bad chord. We now know that something is off.

B. What do we do?

1 John 1:9 (NLT) [Slide]: But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

We confess and God cleanses!

- 1. Let's look at repentance in the life of a believer today in the 2nd letter Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church.** Repentance is a major theme of the letter, also, how to move forward in a relationship once an offense has been repented of. The apostle Paul loved the Corinthian Church even though it was a messy church. Sexual immorality, prosperity gospel, divisiveness, idols, believers suing believers, you name it, the Corinthian Church struggled with it. Because of the wealth in Corinth, the church there became a target for false teachers who would tickle the ears in order to drain the cash. Paul refused to take a dime because he was passionate about ensuring the Corinthians knew and embraced the pure gospel.
- 2. Paul, according to 2nd Corinthians, has written another letter that hasn't been preserved in between the 2 letters we do have in the New Testament.** This letter lost to history was a direct instruction to the church to repent of their embracing of false teachers knowing good and well it was out of line with the gospel handed down from the apostles. 2nd Corinthians is a letter of healing and response that arises from a repentant heart.

2 Corinthians 7:1-3 [Slide]: 1 So then, dear friends, since we have the promises, let us cleanse ourselves from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. 2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, corrupted no one, taken advantage of no one. 3 I don't say this to condemn you, since I have already said that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.

- 3. If we're not careful we can overcomplicate the Christian life which should all point toward a simple devotion to Jesus.** All the promises of God culminate in the death and resurrection of Jesus! The resurrection is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises because in Christ we've now become "the temple of the living God!" God has laid claim to our lives and that is why sin is no light matter. God is with us all the time. It's out of devotion that we pursue the holiness of God because He's given us possession of the promises! "We have the promises, let us cleanse ourselves." God's not dangling a carrot out in front of us. God has already signed over the will that gives us possession of everything. We repent of our sin because we recognize it is an affront to God's love and generosity.
- 4. As Paul is writing in response to the repentance that's occurred, it's easy to see the impact of sin on the community.** The previous letter that God had used to bring about repentance had initially split the Corinthian Church's relationship with Paul. But when we call one another to repentance, it's not about trying to one up the other. Paul is humble in how he seeks to restore relationship. He says it's about us "dying together so we can live together." Isn't that an interesting phrase?
- 5. We often think of death coming after life but that's not the case when it comes to the Christian life.** The Big C Church is comprised of those who have died to self and come alive to God. It's a reminder of the words spoken by Jesus to "take up your cross and follow me." We should all be in the process of dying to self, turning from sin and turning to God, and we're linked arm in arm as we spur one another down that path. There's a communal aspect of repentance because in Christ we all belong to the body. We can sense the love in Paul's words as the Corinthian Church turns away from sin and toward God.

Continuing in verse 8:

2 Corinthians 7:8-10 [Slide]: 8 For even if I grieved you with my letter, I don't regret it. And if I regretted it- since I saw that the letter grieved, yet only for a while- 9 I now rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death.

- 6. The sin that had taken root in the Corinthian Church wasn't viewed primarily as an affront to Paul.** Although it is clear that Paul was wounded by the sin of Corinth. Sin never happens in isolation. There's always horizontal impact on the lives around us. The rejection of the gospel Paul imparted wasn't primarily an offense to Paul but disobedience to God by denying the truth of Jesus. These super apostles had attempted

to dilute the Corinthian Church by going around the cross of Christ and going straight to the crown. A gospel that foregoes the cross is no gospel at all.

7. God allowed the previous letter to grieve those in Corinth. Grief comes from the Greek word:

[Slide]: ΛΥΠΕΩ - which means "severe emotional distress." We might sum it up with one word:

[Slide]: Pain

a. God worked through Paul to cause pain through the letter he wrote. We obviously don't enjoy the reality that God allows us to go through pain but sometimes we have to be wounded in order for us to be completely healed. It's not an easy truth but perhaps this helps.

b. Not all pain is a direct result of our personal sin, but sin will sooner or later be accompanied by pain.

Even then, God hasn't abandoned us. Our pain can still be complementary to God's grace if it leads us to repentance! King David expressed this in Psalm 32:

Psalm 32:4-5 [Slide]: 4 For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was drained as in the summer's heat. 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not conceal my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

8. Paul doesn't find joy in the pain of the Corinthian Church, but he does rejoice that the pain gave way to repentance! There is a godly pain or grief that leads us to repentance. Turning from our sin and turning to God. This is a repentance unto salvation without regret. I believe Paul to be speaking about repentance within the sanctification process here. Again, for a believer we're not repenting unto salvation every time we sin. The difference for Paul here in adding "without regret" is that we experience the peace of our salvation having a clear conscience before God. Sin dilutes our communication with God and can lead us to a place of doubt. Repentance is good for the soul because we serve a merciful God who is able to clear out the pollution of our sin.

III. On the other side of repentance is worship! Remember how we described revival earlier:

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A. Don't hang on to the weight of our sin. Sin not only dilutes our communication with God, it dilutes our worship of God! Repentance reignites our worship of God because we find that through our confession God extends His open arms!

1. We get to see what godly grief produces and it's one of the most beautiful depictions of worship in all the New Testament. It's just a hidden gem!

2 Corinthians 7:11 [Slide]: 11 For consider how much diligence this very thing- this grieving as God wills- has produced in you: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter.

2. Their pain that God willed in order to bring about repentance has been made evident in the behaviors of the Corinthian Church! They have a renewed focus or diligence on the things of God. They have a desire to walk blamelessly before God. They've got indignation or righteous anger over those who have attempted to pollute the church with false teaching. They have stood in awe before the Lord. They have deep longings for the things of God! They have passion and hunger for God! They petition God to make right the wrongs that have occurred. The Corinthian Church has shown themselves pure!

3. Repentance flows into a heart of worship because we experience God's goodness. And this is how good God is, He doesn't cover up our scars, He often does the opposite. He takes our scars, even those brought about by our own sin, and He gives us a new story!

4. We're sitting in a room today and joining with countless others online who would raise their hands right now and testify that we're a walk'n, talk'n miracle not because of anything we've done, but because God brought us to a place of repentance! Yes, we might have some scars, but those scars tell the story of a redeeming God who loved us enough to send Jesus to be our Lord and Savior. We still fail forward, but when we confess our sin, He is faithful to forgive us of sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The more we taste of the goodness of God, the less we desire the futile things of this world and the more we want to tell others that He can do the same for them too.

B. Thank you God for taking our pain and producing in us a spirit of repentance! As we turn from sin and we turn to God, let us worship Him who has redeemed us and restored us. In Christ, God won't let us go. He lovingly and patiently guides us until the day we're in His presence, completely free from the pull of sin.