

## **Revival: The Word + Repentance + Worship = Revival**

### **Week 3: Repentance**

I. We've been working through a series of messages prayerfully asking God to help us realign our lives around His purpose. We've been asking God for:

[Slide]: Revival!

A. What does that mean? I'm glad you asked! We're asking God to revive us. We're asking God to do a distinct work in us empowered through His Holy Spirit that we would be reignited with the hope of the gospel. God sent Jesus, His Son, to live the total human existence, yet without sin. Jesus was perfect and didn't deserve death and still He died. He died for you and me, to cover our sin debt. Many times, we emphasize the gospel to be the payment of our sin debt. Yes, that is true, but it isn't the best part!

1. Do we know what the best part is?

The gospel is a full course meal! The payment of our sin debt is a necessary and vital part of the gospel, but our sin debt has been wiped clear, so that we can come alive to God! And it is in our coming alive to God, that we know without doubt our sin debt has been paid! Justification, or being justified before God, isn't limited to the forgiveness of our sin debt. It's the new position this forgiveness affords us:

[Slide]: Right standing before God!

B. We'll be in Romans 2 primarily today but let us begin with Romans 5:1-2 because it's helpful to start our conversation with the end in mind.

Romans 5:1-2 [Slide]: 1 Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

1. Our faith in Christ puts us in right standing before God. Not just to be forgiven of sin, but to become lovers of God. We surrender to the weightiness of God. That's what His glory means. That anything this world has to throw at us, even death, will eventually give way to the authority of God! It might not feel that way today, but tomorrow is coming. God is in a covenant relationship with those in Christ to see that His favor does ultimately prevail in our life.

2. We're praying that God would reawaken us to this reality! That revival would begin with us here at Tab.

C. The last two weeks we've considered:

[Slide]: The Word.

1. That's the first key ingredient when we look at Revival taking place in Scripture. God gives His people a hunger for the truth of God as recounted in His word. We come to the word with open hearts seeking God to bend our lives to the Book. That means we don't just aim to know Scripture intellectually but instructionally. We're not reading the word thinking about how this is the perfect Scripture for someone we know. I've been guilty of that. Reading the word instructionally means I'm praying for humility before I approach the word and I'm asking God:

[Slide]: Where does my life need to come into alignment with Your word?

a. God is the Author of life and He's given us the manual. Take it from your hardheaded pastor, not heeding God's word is like choking our spiritual oxygen supply. That's why God says to not get hammered because you're probably going to do something that you regret. That's why God says don't sleep around before you say I do. Disregarding God's word is substituting momentary pleasure for a dump truck load of pain. God loves us and doesn't want us to go down a path that leads to death. We read God's word and expose our lives to it.

2. When we get out of alignment, we realign our lives through:

[Slide]: Repentance.

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

a. Do you remember how we started today talking about the gospel as a full course meal? That the gospel does mean that in Christ we've been forgiven of sin, but it doesn't stop there. We've been made alive to God in Christ! Likewise, repentance is a much more robust concept than simply asking God for:

[Slide]: Forgiveness.

- b. Let me unpack the idea just a bit. Many times, we treat repentance like it's acknowledging a mistake. We acknowledge the mistake and then we try to distance ourselves from that mistake. That's not repentance in the Biblical sense.

Jesus said in Luke 5:32, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

What does that mean?

(1) There is a repentance involved at the time of conversion, which leads to salvation. Conversion describes the moment a non-believer becomes a believer. There is a moment in a person's life when the Holy Spirit brings us to the reality that we are sinners and Jesus Christ has made THE way for us to be forgiven of sin and be in relationship with a Holy God. There is a lot of variety and ways that the Holy Spirit does this. The point is though that we have become aware of our sin debt which leads to our separation from God AND we've trusted that Jesus is the way our sins are forgiven, and we're made alive to God.

(2) There is a repentance that leads to sanctification, and this is the regeneration process. The Holy Spirit gives us a heart transplant. We turn from sin, and we turn to God! Repentance literally means an "about-face." Just because we have a spiritual heart transplant, it doesn't mean that we're finished with the battle with sin. On the contrary, a new battle is just beginning!

- c. The sanctification process, which is our maturity in Christ, isn't a sin-free process. Our hearts are fickle and prone to wander. "Prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love, here's my heart Lord take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above." When we sin against God as believers, we aren't repenting unto salvation again. That's a work of God that happens once, but we do repent in that we acknowledge the sin we've committed, and we turn from that sin, and we keep pursuing the holiness of God.

3. Next week we'll talk about repentance as believers, but today we're going to talk about repentance unto salvation. Why? The Bible speaks to this, so we will too. Maybe someone today isn't a believer, and you're here and I pray God uses my words to call you toward repentance. Lastly, maybe someone is here, and you've been here a long time and church has been an important part of your life. Maybe religion has been a part of your life and that's a good thing. Unless religion has inoculated us against a relationship with God? This gets to the heart of Romans 2. Let's look at Romans 2:1-5 today:

Romans 2:1-5 [Slide]: 1 Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. 2 We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. 3 Do you really think- anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same- that you will escape God's judgment? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed.

- a. Romans 2 is a tough pill to swallow for all of us. Or it should be! Paul is writing a letter to the church in Rome as they are pursuing the messy process of integrating their church. In its historical context, Roman's is Paul's magnum opus on how to think correctly about a relationship with God. He's doing so with a group of Christ followers that represent a melting pot. The gentile worldview and the Jewish worldview were totally opposite, and Paul is writing under the authority of the Holy Spirit and aiming at unifying this diverse church around the hope of the gospel!
- b. Paul begins by acknowledging that those outside the church are sinful and are living outside of God's design. Paul isn't pulling any punches on the sinfulness of the Roman culture. Not only that, those in the culture, living an "anything goes" lifestyle, know that they're rebelling against God.

Romans 1:18-19 [Slide]: 18 For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, 19 since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them.

- (1) Paul doesn't back down from the reality that God has made Himself evident to all, and by and large the world has rejected this truth. There's no way to know how the original audience responded, but they're likely good with this challenge, since it's talking about:

[Slide]: them (not us).

Those people out “there” are the “them” and they’re bad news. If we keep enough attention out “there” on “them” it makes “us” look good or at minimum doesn’t make us look so bad. Paul never denies the truth that those who are standing in defiance of God are doing evil and will be judged against the truth of God. But what emotion does that evoke in us? Does that make us grieve or do we have some sense of satisfaction? Perhaps some who hear Paul’s words are excited to be talking about “them” and God’s impending wrath?

But Paul’s going to put that thought to a grinding halt in chapter 2.

Romans 2:1 [Slide]: 1 Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things.

- c. This isn’t a new argument, but a progression from the prior verses! How in the world is Paul transitioning from speaking about those on the outside of the community of faith, to now speaking in the 2nd person? And what does this have to do with repentance?

It’s like Paul is spotlighting the brokenness of the culture in Romans 1 and then with one word:

[Slide]: Therefore

- (1) turns the spotlight and puts it squarely back on the church of Rome. And not just the community, but those individuals who comprise the community. “You, O man (or woman) who judges is without excuse.”

#### 4. What is the connection between judgement and repentance?

- a. Let’s first get a better understanding of what it means to judge. Judgement in a spiritual human sense is when we exert spiritual superiority over a person’s life by assuming we know what God’s punishment should be for their actions. The Bible prohibits us from doing this.
- b. This is not the same as speaking truth to someone. Speaking truth and determining God’s judgment for someone are two different things. The way we distinguish between speaking truth and judgement is by asking ourselves the question, “Is my motive to see this person draw nearer to God or make myself look spiritually superior?”
- c. In the context of Romans 2, what’s likely occurring is that there are Jewish people who have begun participating in the life of the Roman church, but they’re having a difficult time accepting God’s favor or grace through a relationship with Jesus apart from the Law. Paul is a Jew, and he is burdened that his fellow Jews accept Christ. And this is why he gives such a difficult message.

Romans 2:3 [Slide]: 3 Do you really think- anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same- that you will escape God’s judgement?

- d. There is a danger of becoming inoculated through religion against a relationship with God, because when this happens, we still believe that it is OUR worthiness that ultimately makes way for God’s approval. This is why Paul uses “judgement” as a gauge for genuine repentance. We all are guilty of passing judgment. This isn’t the unpardonable sin, but a spirit of judgementalism is no light matter. Romans 2:3 should be sobering for us all.
- e. If we’re sitting on the throne as judge, then Jesus cannot be sitting on the throne of our life. There was some hearing Paul’s letter that were still depending on their works to gain approval before God, because their perceived spiritual superiority had drawn them to the conclusion that they knew how God should punish those doing evil around them.

#### 5. Paul poses a question that should make us all think deeply about repentance:

Romans 2:4 [Slide]: 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

There’s no room for judgment when we recognize the grace of God. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” There is plenty of evil in our culture and what do we do with that in connection with the grace of God? It should grieve us and call us into action. But if we look at those doing evil around us, or just the sin in our community, and it causes us to despise the kindness, restraint, and patience of God, then just maybe we’ve failed to understand what true repentance is about. If we’re more focused on God’s judgment or wrath, than we are on the power of God’s grace to change a life, then we need to do some deep contemplation on the status of our repentance and relationship with God.

#### 6. Paul is still speaking to those who are sitting in church pews!

**Romans 2:5 [Slide]: 5 Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed.**

- a. How do we determine if we're still depending on our works to get us into heaven? We work hard to keep the focus on "them." If we're going the religious route as opposed to the relationship route, it becomes vital to have a comparison. But the more we use the culture around us as a footing for spiritual superiority, the only thing we're doing is hardening our unrepentant heart. Those that are despising God's patience and eager to see His wrath, might just find themselves under the very wrath they were eager to see.**

**D. God doesn't show favoritism. That's really good news!**

**Repentance is on the table today, no matter what we've done or haven't done.**

**We're all in the same boat before God.**

**Sinners, with an invitation for forgiveness and to come alive in Christ!**

- 1. For revival to occur, we need God to break our hearts for what breaks His.**

**We believe that God's grace has the power to break through!**

- 2. God bring forth revival as we embrace: The Word + Repentance + Worship!**