

Sunday School Notes June 20, 2021; Part 3-4

Repentance from Dead Works Part Three

Repentance

- First sermon of John the Baptist – all four gospel accounts
- First sermon of Jesus in Mark 1:14,15
- First sermon of Peter on Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:38
- Primary message of Paul in Romans, Acts, etc.

In New Testament Greek work is *metanoein* and it has one basic meaning: “to change one’s mind”.

Repentance is never an emotion, although emotions may be manifest with repentance.

Repentance is always a decision; an act of one will.

Also, repentance is not a ritual or spiritual function, like “doing penance” as some churches require. People go through a prescribed ritual without ever coming to repentance, i.e. changing their minds and of course their wayward behavior.

This understanding is consistent with the Old Testament use of the word repent. It always refers to a “return”; “to turn back” or “to turn”.

The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-32

- He came to his senses
- He repented
- He arose and turned back (changed his mind)

He first made the internal decision to change and then he put the decision into action.

This is what every person must do when they come to Jesus. All of us (sinners) must accept the fact that we are in need of repentance as our first step in being reconciled to God.

The amazing part of this parable is the father – looking, seeing, running, restoring.

Repentance vs. Remorse

Judas Iscariot

Matthew 27: 3,4 – Judas “repented himself” – yet he went and hanged himself. The Greek work here is *matamelein* which means an emotion of remorse or sorrow; not repentance as described above. Judas did not appear to change his mind about what he had done or change direction and return to Christ.

WE must also remember that “Satan” entered him when Jesus gave him the morsel of bread during the last supper (John 13:27)

Esau

Hebrews 12:16-17 records that Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup and later could find no place for repentance. He regretted his decision but was never reconciled to Jacob who stole the inheritance.

Romans 9:13 – Jacob I loved but Esau I hated (quoting Malachi 1:1-3)

Are we like Judas or Esau? Do we sell out for worldly pleasures, carnal pursuits, and betray our Lord forsaking all His blessings and covenant promises only to be remorseful later and never repent?

Jesus After the Resurrection

- Luke 24: 46-47 repentance and remission of sin is to be preached to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.
- Notice the order – repentance is always first, then forgiveness (remission)

St Paul

- Acts 20:20-21 repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ
- Again the order – repentance first, then faith

KEY POINT – REPENTANCE IS ALWAYS THE FIRST RESPONSE OF MAN TO THE GOSPEL. THIS IS DEMANDED BY GOD.

Comment:

“Respect the dignity of every human being.” This is largely misapplied in progressive churches. Respect is connected with acceptance without repentance or amendment of life. God is love and all are welcome without qualification.

We come to Him through GRACE not MERIT OR WORKS. However, God is also Holy and can not abide sin. His holiness crushed Jesus on the cross bearing our sins and paying the penalty for our transgressions so we can come. The door is opened to all who repent.

Acts 17:30 – God has commanded that all men everywhere are to repent

True repentance always precedes true faith. Without repentance the confession of faith is empty of power to transform our lives.

Repentance from Dead Works

“All acts and activities of mankind that are not based on repentance and faith” (pg 15)

ARTICLE XIII. *Of Works before Justification. (Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion 1571)*

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

Even good works that are consistent with gospel teaching are as “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6)

They are done in the flesh and are “wood, hay and stubble” (I Cor 3:12-14) All our “works” will be judged in light of the motivation of the heart –

Pharisees did many good works but Jesus condemned them because their hearts were not connected to God’s heart (Matt 15:8-9)

Religious activities must be grounded in true repentance and true faith are not acceptable to God.

Lastly, All Repentance has its origin in God Himself seeking us and leading us to repentance.

John 6:44 – no one can come to me unless the Father draws him.

The supreme moment or crisis in every human heart is when God confronts them with His reality and our sin. The Spirit drawing us to repentance leading us to true faith. I believe you must act on that moment.

2 Cor 6: 1-3 – now is the day of salvation

Luke 13:3 – unless you repent you will likewise perish

Romans 2:4 – the kindness of God leads us to repentance

Faith and Works Part Four

- Faith is what we BELIEVE.
- Works is what we DO

What we believe is the Gospel defined by St Paul in I Corinthians 15:1-4

1. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures
2. Christ was buried
3. Christ rose from the dead according to the scriptures

Note:

- The FIRST attestation to the gospel is scripture;
- not the EYE WITNESSES and resurrection appearances.

The Point: The final authority for our faith is the scriptures.

In believing the gospel we are accounted righteous before God – not based on anything we have done.

Romans 4:3-5

For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in^[a] him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

How as Abraham accounted righteous? Abraham believed God.

Grace:

- Unearned
- Undeserved
- Can not be purchased
- God’s favor towards us that is free through Jesus Christ

Relationship Between Faith and Works: All works must precede from faith. Right order essential.

Ephesians 2: 8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- Grace saves through faith
- Not anything we did to earn or deserve it
- It is a gift

- No one can boast its because of works
- We are created for good works but they follow grace

Performance Orientation

1. Works produce pride
2. If we could have earned righteousness by works Jesus would not have had to die
3. Keeping rules fosters legalism
4. Fallen nature can do good things but they are unacceptable towards being right with God

Articles of Religion Book of Common Prayer

XII. Of Good Works.

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

XIII. Of Works before Justification.

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

XIV. Of Works of Supererogation.

Voluntary Works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

So Christianity is NOT a system of rule keeping to get right with God.

Romans 3:20 – by the works of the law no flesh will be justified

- God's law shows us our problem (diagnosis) – sin
- God's law does not solve the problem
- God's law points you to the solution – God Himself and grace

James 2:10-11 – if you stumble in one part of the law you are guilty of all.

Only Jesus kept the law perfection. Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin

John 10:31- 33

The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. ³² Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” ³³ The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.

You can not live under the Law and under Grace – mutually exclusive

Romans 6:14

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 7:4 – 6

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.^[c]

- Died to the law to be married to another
- Law stirred up our sinful passions – you can do it by your self, you can be God, you can be independent
- New life is through the Spirit not the law.

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Your faith makes you righteous before God – Christ fulfilled the Law making an end to have obedience to the law as the basis of righteousness.

Galatians – Paul is extremely harsh towards this church – Why?

Galatians 1:6

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel

Galatians 3:1-3

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by^[a] the flesh?

Romans 8:3-4

For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,^[e] he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

What is the Righteous requirement of the Law?

- Matthew 22: 35 – Great Commandment
- Romans 13:6 – owe no one any thing but love
- Galatians 5:6 – faith works through love
- Galatians 5:13 - For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
- I Tim 1:5 - But the goal of our ^[e]instruction is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* a sincere faith.