

Repentance 2Corinthians - 7: 2-13, Luke 3: 7-17

We are looking today at the question- do you repent of your sins?

We have read 2 passages.

In the first Paul has challenged the believers about their conduct and lifestyles:

“Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation* and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 NIV

In the second Jesus has also challenged believers and told them to repent.

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.” Luke 3:8 NIV

So I want to consider a little more 3 points

1 Question: "What is repentance?"

Answer: Many understand the term *repentance* to mean “a turning from sin.” Regretting sin and turning from it is related to repentance, but it is not the precise meaning of the word. In the Bible, the word *repent* means “to change one’s mind.” The Bible also tells us that true repentance will result in a change of actions (Luke 3:8–14; Acts 3:19). In summarizing his ministry, Paul declares, “I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds” (Acts 26:20). The full biblical definition of repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action.

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you - even Jesus.” Acts 3:19-20 NIV

Jesus sends out the 12 - “They went out and preached that people should repent.” Mark 6:12 NIV

“Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:31-32 NIV

2 Question: What is sin? We need to see sin as horrific

Ultimately It is anything and everything that separates us from God’s holy presence. From Creation to the present day God was looking for a people to dwell with him. To go from his presence (that place of purity and holiness) is not how God intended. Sins are fallout from leaving his presence.

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” John 3:17-18 NIV

What is the sin? It can only be that mankind chooses to go away from God’s presence.

You get a proper understanding of how nasty sin is when Jesus makes the following comment,

“If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.” Matthew 18:8-9 NIV

In our society we get caught up with types of sin. In fact we are fixated with types and we have formulated our own sort of grading system and morality. On one extreme we have murder, modern slavery, sexual misconduct or lifestyles and we say those are bad ones.

At the other end of the scale we might think an unkind thought, a little lie or greed of whatever form or jealousy - we might think of those as small and laugh them off - as everyone does them.

The reality is that the pass mark to enter the kingdom of heaven is 100% purity and righteousness. So our grading of sin is of little consequence, unless you pass by 100% then you have failed! All sin is nasty and horrible. The little and the big.

Let me use an analogy - we all know the problems caused by plastic and waste. But however fastidious you might be we are likely to all contribute to the problem. One discarded sweet wrapper contributes to the whole.

Another analogy is sickness. On a minor level we shrug it off a cold but on a major level it is debilitating and leads to death. But the point is sickness small or large is not Health.

Make no mistake Sin is sin it is horrible - it separates us from God

3 the good news - the promise of salvation

The good news however is:

God made a way for us to be purified from sin through sacrifices in the Old Testament but you will understand that the bible says that these only 'covered' sins. "Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." Psalm 32:1 NIV

It was not until the sacrifice of Jesus that sins were washed away, forgotten and removed.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Romans 3:23-24 NIV

God has made a way through Jesus' sacrifice for sins so that we can once again come back to the Father's presence.

So this morning we are asking again the question - Do you repent of your sins?

We all need to turn around from sin and head in the direction of a new way of holy living. It's about a way of life.

1/ we acknowledge that we have sinned (gone from God's presence)

2/ we acknowledge Jesus as our sacrifice for sin

3/ we turn away from sin. Repentance. Turn back to dwell in his presence.

At this time of Lent we often try to give up certain things as an act of worship to God. Clearly it's not going to make you more holy, however, the value of it is in the self discipline. To deny oneself is to bring your physical cravings into subjection to your mind and will. It's like fasting. Fasting itself doesn't make you holy but the self denial is part of presenting yourself to God as an act of worship. And God delights in those who diligently bow down and worship.

My prayer is that we would all seek to remain in his presence every single hour of every single day. That way we consciously should avoid doing wrong and sinning.

Amen

Questions

1- what do think is the real biblical meaning of repentance?

2- discuss the term 'sin' and why does it matter if we sin? Discuss further the point about moving away from the presence of God

3- try and identify passages from the bible that demonstrate how sin is dealt with in the New Testament Col 1 19-22

4- are there actions you could take to consciously live life in the "presence of God"? There are lots of passages to help here, but you could consider Eph 4:24, Eph 5