

~Other Speakers S-Z: Robert Wurtz II:

CHAPTER 14 GENUINE REPENTANCE (PART 5)

The Foundation of Repentance

The foundation is the base on which structures are built. It is the support for the walls and other components of a building. No building is any stronger than its foundation. If the foundation is not properly placed, the entire structure is in question. If it is not placed deep in the earth it will be carried away by the elements. If it is not laid strong it will not support the weight of the structure. Repentance from dead works, faith towards God, and the accompanying elements of these two serve as the foundation of our relationship with God. (Hebrews 6:1, 2) It is the foundation that we are told not to be laying over and over. It is a foundation that is to be laid and then built upon. Unfortunately, many never take the time to ensure that the foundation of repentance and faith towards God is properly laid and in turn they end up with the situation Jesus speaks of in Luke 6. Here we read... And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great. (Luke 6:46-49)

Digging Deep

Genuine repentance is a radical change of life that results in God gloriously transforming a person from death to life, darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto the power of God. (Acts 26:18) It is a deep process. It requires a tremendous amount of convincing and conviction. The minister brings a message to convince and the Holy Spirit convicts of sin. The two are in most cases totally dependent one on the other. The Holy Spirit has been known to bring great conviction of sin apart from a person hearing a sermon- but certainly no minister can bring conviction of sin without the Holy Spirit. Deep conviction that brings godly sorrow leads a person to repentance. Deep repentance is not sorrow for the consequences of sin that has occurred as a result of their disobedience, but is a sorrow brought about by God Himself and makes God the center of repentance. God is the one who was sinned against. God is the primary offended party in all sin. God is the one to whom we must turn to for relief from our sins. These are but a few aspects of genuine godly sorrow that leads to life. On the contrary, there are many that believe they have repented when all they were is in some way 'sorry' for what their sin caused or sorry they were caught. Genuine and deep repentance is a condition in which a person sees their sin as God sees it, changes their mind about it, repulsively forsakes it, is sorely vexed because of it, and turns from it to God for relief from it. Repentance is turning from trusting in yourself, which results in your sinfulness- to trusting in God and His righteousness. Salvation that does not include true and genuine repentance is no salvation at all because it is the foundation. Genuine repentance leaves a person feeling such about their past sin that they seek to make restitution or reconciliation whenever possible for the things they have done (i.e. Zacchaeus Luke 19:8). They also realize how vile they formerly behaved and immediately seek to impress on others that they have forsaken the old life. This is quite different than a person who is embarrassed to say they repented. A person who genuinely repents is embarrassed for who they used to be, not who they are now.

A Foundation on the Rock

Jesus Christ must be the chief cornerstone of any foundation we lay down. In genuine repentance we turn from sin to righteousness and from the power of Satan to the power of God. The life that we now live is in accordance to the teachings of Jesus Christ. We do not simply call him Lord, Lord; but He truly is the Lord of our life. We confirm this by doing the things that He says. In our obedience we exalt Him to His rightful place of King and in that submission we are made citizens of the Kingdom of God. Our submission to Christ is what allows for the Kingdom of Christ to come near to those whom we minister to. If we don't submit to God and His authority, how could we ever be ambassadors with His authority?

Foundationless Faith

In Luke 6:48 we read... "But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man without a foundation..."

Repentance that does not result in obedience to God is not genuine repentance. Disobedience is regarded with disdain to the truly born again. If you do not hate sin- you have no real foundation with which to walk in obedience. If you live in denial that you need to repent you have not hated your sin as you should.

When David saw his sin for what it was he did not react with denial. He made no excuses. He gave no explanations. He knew that sin, as it were, comes in many flavors, but the core 'substance' is rebellion against God. That is the 'substance' of the sin itself. The 'flavor' is immaterial. It is all the result of the rebellious law of sin that is in our members that desires to rebel against God's law simply because HE decreed it. The sinful nature is gratified by rebellion- it is the 'flesh's meat. The 'meat' of the born again is to do the will of God. Understanding this point is a main key in gaining the victory over sin and hating sin as we should. When we stop focusing on the 'flavor' of the sin (covetousness, fornication, hatred, etc.) and key in on the substance of sin we realize that the sin we commit gratified the flesh because it rebelled against God. David understood this clearly and answered the prophet... "I have sinned against the LORD." Later he wrote... "Against God alone have I done this evil in His sight." (Psalm 51:4) The foundation of repentance is only as strong as our hatred of sin and our desire to walk in obedience to the faith.

Loving Righteousness and Hating Iniquity

When you have genuinely seen sin as God sees it and your mind is properly changed about it- that change should result in utter disdain for sin. It will be hatred based in the knowledge that your sin was against a God that is wholly good. You will view it as malice projected at the God that has bestowed upon you every good and perfect gift. (Romans 2:4; James 1:17) When you finally survey the wondrous love of God and the extent to which His anger has been restrained from consuming you; and His divine providence has sustained you- you ought to pour contempt on all your pride. As Paris Reidhead once stated... "Our preaching is not to convince good men that they are in trouble with a mean, bad God; but its to convince bad men that they deserve the wrath and anger of a good God." (paraphrased) And in that moment of understanding the true meaning of sin as a whole- you should hate sin no matter what 'flavor' it is. The realization of the enormity of your sin against God and His holiness; the revelation that not only was the God you were sinning against infinitely holy, but willing to take upon Himself the very penalty of your sin- ought convince any sinner that he or she utterly deserves hell. One ought to marvel at how a God as holy as He is would be mindful of sinners that are bent on profaning that which is holy. A sinner seeks to sin simply for the fulfillment of desecrating that which is not yet tainted with sin- so that in that defilement the flesh can be gratified. When you realize this one fact- you will hate sin as it is. The enemies' whole strategy is to camouflage the true nature of sin and present it as something it is not. Sin is rebellion against God.

Genuine repentance has a cultivating effect upon the heart. Going through our lives at times and earnestly seeking God to reveal areas of our lives that we have refused to repent will point us to areas of hardness that have come about by sin. Allowing God to show us places where we quench the Spirit and harden ourselves will stir the fallow ground as we repent of those things.

Radical Repentance

When you radically repent your zeal for God combined with your hatred of sin will cause you to take aggressive steps in fortifying yourself against sin. Josiah was a radical individual when it comes to repentance. He destroyed the groves and the high places in Israel. Not only did he hate the sin, but also he (as it were) "hated even the garment spotted by sin" (Jude 23). What does that mean? He distances himself from sin as much as in him is. The facilities of sin and the vehicles of sin are utterly forsaken. The stepping stones back to sin are removed. Failure to remove these facilities, vehicles, and stepping-stones is ultimately an indicator that you are not interested in victory over sin- but in word only, and not in deed and in truth.

Many talk repentance- but few are willing to go through their life and eliminate the provisions and stumbling blocks for their sin. They convince themselves that they can 'handle' certain weights that allow sin to close the gap in the race we are running and knock us off the track (Hebrews 12). Josiah knew that if the groves and high places remained that Israel would keep stumbling over the same old sins. If you want to stop plowing iniquity (Job 4:8) you need to rid yourself of the 'equipment.'

Exercising Your Senses

In Hebrews 6 we learn that we are not to be laying the foundation of repentance over and over again. We are to go on unto perfection. In the closing verses of Chapter 5 we read that growth towards perfection requires that we move from the milk to the meat of God's word. This can only happen if you exercise your senses. You have to take control of your 5 senses. You have to control your eyes, ears, etc. You have to train your senses to discern good and evil. This is how a person moves towards Christian perfection. When a person controls their senses as they should it make it easier to control the tongue, as we should. The one who controls the tongue is

a perfect man (James 3:2). But, the tongue can no man tame for it is unruly evil and full of deadly poison (3:8). When you begin talking your heart is exposed. When your heart is exposed, what comes forth from the good treasure of it- is what has been carried in through the senses (Proverbs 4:23; Luke 6:45). The tongue totes out what the senses take in.

When you radically repent you will hate sin to the place that as much as in you is – you have fortified yourself from an onslaught of temptations. You will recognize that if Timothy needed to flee youthful lusts so do you. If Paul had to bring his body into subjection- so do you. You will do everything in your power to not just “think” you stand, but you will “take heed” lest you fall. (I Corinthians 10:12) The context of this passage is temptation. Matthew Henry comments here saying... “He that thinks he stands should not be confident and secure, but upon his guard. Others have fallen, and so may we. And then we are most likely to fall when we are most confident of our own strength, and thereupon most apt to be secure, and off our guard. Distrust of himself, putting him at once upon vigilance and dependence on God, is the Christian's best security against all sin.”

Victory – 101

The attitude of genuine repentance is found in the Psalm of David who wrote: “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.” (Psalm 101:3) To set your sin in front of you is to keep laying the foundation of repentance over and over again. No one is strong enough to keep access to gross sin in their midst and continually resist temptation. Unfortunately many have already subconsciously planned to return to their sin. They would reject the notion if asked and defensively react when it is mentioned. But the truth is, when you have allowed the stepping stones to your besetting sins to remain in place when you could have removed them it is evidence that backsliding remains an option. Time will tell. Everyone needs a certain distance between them and their besetting sin. The distance between you and your besetting sin is proportional to the length of your desire to repent. Have you destroyed the groves and high places in your life? Why not? David said, “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.” Why? Because he knew he was weak at times and vulnerable to sin. He guarded himself. He said wickedness would not cleave unto him. That Hebrew word means to “Catch by pursuit.” This was David’s approach and as he stated- wickedness never did catch and overtake him.