

Series: Exodus
Title: True Repentance
Text: Exodus 8: 8, 15
Date: October 15, 2017
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Repentance is a new mind, a new heart. Repentance is to be turned from ourselves, our dead works, our vain thoughts of God. Repentance is to be turned to God, to rest from our works, and believe on Christ for All! But repentance is a gift of God.

Proposition: Repentance is only true when it is given to a sinner by God.

Until God grants us this gift, the sorrow of this world works death: it works a repentance to be repented of.

2 Corinthians 7: 10: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

A vain, pretend repentance is what we see in Pharaoh. After the LORD poured out the second plague of frogs, we read:

Exodus 8: 8: Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD...[the LORD took them away according to Moses intercession]...15: But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Subject: True Repentance

Proposition: Repentance is only true when it is given to a sinner by God, the gift of God's grace.

JUDGMENT OF GOD

Exodus 8: 8: Then Pharaoh called...

It was only after Pharaoh saw the judgment of God in the plague of the frogs that he called for Moses. But as soon as Pharaoh saw respite he hardened his heart. The judgment of God alone will not make a sinner repent.

We see this same thing throughout scripture. The judgment of God comes, men sorrow and repent, but as soon as there is respite they harden their heart. Pharaoh does it at least two more times. (Ex 9: 27-30; 34-35) One of the most striking examples was in King Zedekiah's day.

Jeremiah 34:7: When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah. 8...King Zedekiah made a covenant with all the people that were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them 9: That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother...11: But afterward...

When God gave them respite from the king of Babylon they turned back.

Jeremiah 34: 12: Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,...15 And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name:16: But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. 17: Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

That particular instance reminds us of preachers who do what was done to them. They frighten men into legal repentance using the fires of hell just as they were. They give lip-service to liberty by Christ. But afterward they turn and bring the professing believers back into the bondage of the law just as was done to them.

When sinners are made afraid by the terrors of God's fiery wrath they sorrow unto repentance but it is a repentance to be repented of. As soon as they have respite they harden their hearts. And they will not hearken to the word of the Lord but bring others into the same legal bondage.

Be sure to understand why. The terrors of God's judgment will not give a sinner a new heart unto repentance. In time, when they see respite, when they do not see Christ return immediately they go back:

Ecclesiastes 8: 11: Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil...13...because he feareth not God.

Isaiah 26:10: Let favour be shewed to the wicked, [the man whose heart has not been made new by God] yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness [when there is respite and things are good] will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

Romans 2: 3: And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4: Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; [Paul went on to declare to them our second point]

God's judgment is not enough to make us repent because we have a heart problem.

Jeremiah 17:9: The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Genesis 6:5: And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

Ecclesiastes 9: 3:...yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

THE GIFT OF GOD

True repentance is the gift of God. It is given within the new heart that God creates within the sinner. This is the work God performs according to his covenant to his people.

Ezekiel 36: 25: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27: And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*...31: Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. 32: Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

It is not repentance and a profession of faith that comes first; a sinner must first be born from above. Nicodemus was taught this most clearly by Christ:

John 3: 1: There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

True repentance, like true faith, is given by the gift of life by the Spirit of God. Repentance is not the cause of the new birth—repentance is the result of the new birth. When a sinner is born of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God convinces him in the new heart:

John 16: 7: Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8: And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9: Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

The Holy Spirit bears witness of Christ in our hearts. He makes us behold our sin of not believing on Christ therefore makes us see we are yet in our sins, unrighteous. He makes us behold Christ's righteousness—the only righteousness of God, the only righteousness there is, the only righteousness with which God will receive a sinner. He makes us behold the judgment accomplished by Christ: all the works are finished, judgment is settled before God toward all for whom Christ died.

So by this work of God, Christ grants repentance.

Acts 5: 30: The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

This is why God commands his preacher to be patient with sinners.

2 Timothy 2: 24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

It is through this word—the gospel of Christ's works—that the Lord works grace in the hearts of his people. The word that calls on us to repent but at the same time declares our absolute utter inability to do so. God sanctifies his word to our hearts, and gives us repentance. When our sovereign Savior turns us then we give him all the glory and are ashamed of our sins.

Jeremiah 31: 18: Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. 19: Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

Amen!