

(Christ--the Way God Makes Man Righteous) 7. Conviction Leads to Repentance

by Denny Kenaston

The sermon emphasizes the importance of conviction and repentance in the process of salvation, and how these are necessary for a person to change their mind and purpose in order to be saved.

Duration: 1:04:21

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:38, Acts 26:20, Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 3:6

Topics: "Conviction"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny emphasizes the importance of both reform and regeneration in the life of a believer. He explains that reform without regeneration leads to failure and frustration, as it is only through the work of God that true change can occur. The purpose of the law is to bring man to the end of himself and his self-righteousness, leading him to recognize his need for God. Repentance is a crucial step in this process, and Brother Denny encourages the audience to understand its significance and embrace a life of walking with God.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Good morning, brethren.

Have a good morning. Yeah, I did too, very much so. How many of you appreciate being stretched a bit these days? I mean, don't us men like that? I mean, it doesn't always feel good, but don't we like that? I mean, it's shake off boyhood and put on manhood this month.

I mean, that alarm goes off, you have to get out of bed, you have to get up, you have to wash your face, you have to get something from God because somebody is going to ask you about it. That is good. You

know, they say that if you do something 30 times in a row, it becomes a new habit.

So, some of you fellows have the opportunity to establish some new habits through this month. Alright, a little bit of an assignment for you for tomorrow. The word that you want to memorize, the definition of the word you want to memorize is the word repentance.

Repentance. We'll be looking at that today. I want you to memorize that.

And also for tomorrow, I want you to read Romans 4 and 5 two times. Mark that down. Romans 4 and Romans 5 two times for tomorrow.

Alright, let's get into our message this morning. Stand for a word of prayer. O Father, this morning, how privileged we are to gaze into the things of the eternal.

That God, you would open our blinded eyes and let us see things in the eternal. Lord, we pray this morning for that gift of grace that reveals, that gift of grace that illuminates our own hearts. That gift of grace which takes that which we hear in our head and moves it down into the realm of our hearts.

We ask you for that this morning, Father. Fill us with the Holy Ghost, O God, today. We may speak and we may hear according to your will.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. You may be seated.

The title this morning of our message, and it flows very well from yesterday's, is sorrowing unto repentance. Sorrowing unto repentance. We were looking at conviction yesterday.

And we will continue to do a bit of that this morning, finishing up from yesterday. Conviction. That is how God brings a soul to the place where he sees his need.

Now, conviction is a legal term. In a court of law, the offender is convicted when he is found guilty of his crime. And if you think about it in a legal sense, that is exactly where God would want to bring every lost human being.

That they come to that place where they are convicted and they are found guilty of their crimes. Again, note the definition of conviction. The work of the Holy Spirit convincing a sinner of his sins and his sinful state.

Notice both of those. I am a sinner and I have sinned. And by the way, it is not I am a sinner because I have sinned.

I am a sinner and therefore I sin. Remember the diagram here. Something is missing in the middle of my being, in the center of my being.

Convincing a sinner of his sins and his sinful state, bringing him to a place of guiltiness before God. It is important that we don't get too heavy on the human side of this process. It is not our job to convict people and to pronounce them guilty.

Please note that. That's not our job. That is the work of the Spirit of God.

But God does use human instruments to make that happen. But we must be careful not to get too far on the human side of that thing and be in everybody's face. It's the Spirit of God.

We are simply to be His vessels in the many means and opportunities that God gives us. And may God give us the grace to be bold enough to speak when we need to speak. Amen.

We finished our last session with a key statement that I would like to focus on this morning. And the two messages flow very well together in light of this statement. But remember what I said yesterday toward the end of the message, that reform without regeneration brings failure and frustration.

But this brings man to see his need. It is actually a good thing. This is one of the purposes of the law.

To bring man to the end of himself. To bring man to the end of his self righteousness. To bring man to the end of his own efforts to change his life.

Because remember, God is after more than just reform. Let's look at the reality of this frustrating process now this morning to begin with. You can turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 7. I think I've had you read that a couple of times.

As we look at the work of the law in the heart of man. Now Paul is giving his testimony here. And there's a lot of controversy about Romans chapter 7. And some commentators will vehemently say that Romans chapter 7, especially the second blessingers who promote a strong emphasis of a second work of grace, you know, of holiness, they would say that this is Paul's experience as a Christian until he got the second blessing.

Others would say that this is the experience of a lost man trying to do better. And my personal opinion on it is that it's both. It's both.

But nevertheless, we can see what a frustration this law of God can be to someone who does not have things right in the inner man. Romans chapter 7 and verse 14 and 15, we begin to see this frustration. Paul says, For we know that the law is spiritual.

The law is spiritual. But I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not.

For what I would, that do I not. But what I hate, that do I. Pretty frustrating, isn't it? Drop down to verse 18 as he goes on. For I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

For to will is present with me. But how to perform that which is good, I find not. There's no power.

For the good that I would, I do not. But the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, this is a clear description of frustration, is it not? How many of you would say you've found yourself there before in your own experience? Probably some pre-conversion and some after conversion.

I've got in my heart this desire to do that which I'm supposed to do. But I don't find the power to do it. And that brings frustration.

But it also brings self-realization and self-revelation. As that man begins to realize, what do I do? What do I do? Now, if I do that, I would not. It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. I've got a desire there that wants to do what is right.

And by the way, that's God. That's God. That desire to want to do right is God.

But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. It's like there's war going on inside of me. I have this desire to do what is right.

But I don't have the power to do it. I keep having these desires. But I find myself wanting when I get right down to the doing.

And he finishes with this beautiful crescendo, as they say in music. Oh, wretched man that I am. Beautiful words.

Beautiful words. Oh, wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Who? Hallelujah.

He goes on in the next verse and says, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul says in the book of Galatians chapter 4 that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Again, that's where God is going.

That's where God is going in your life. That's where He's going in my life. That's what God wants.

That's the whole purpose of the atonement. That's the whole purpose of everything we're talking about. God is wanting to bring us to Christ.

You know, I told you at the beginning of our sessions here last week that I'm still wrestling with a title. Well, try this title on for this series. Christ... The Way God Makes Man Righteous.

Is that not the truth? Christ is the way God makes man righteous. And that's the only way that God will accept any righteousness that we have. It is that which is wrought by Christ in our lives.

And that's where God's going. See, that's where He's going. Christ in my life.

Dwelling in the center of my being. That's where God is going. And so the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

Frustration? Yes. Some soul pain? Yes. Some misery? Oh yes, some misery.

But oh, at the end, that oh glorious end, is Christ in reality. In your life and mine. The hope of glory.

That's where God is going. To bring the sinner to the place where they say, I can't do it. I can't do it.

Oh, how well I remember. Many times in prayer rooms through my many years. Many times in a prayer room having somebody come, sit down there to get counsel.

Only to hear them say, I'm done. I quit. I can't do it.

It doesn't work. This whole Christian thing. It just doesn't work.

And I, having been around a while, I know where God is going with that person. And see, those aren't despairing words to me. And I don't put my arm around him and pat him on the back and say, Oh, it's okay, sonny boy.

I don't put my hand on his back and tell him that. I realize, whoa, God's convicting spirit is bringing this soul to the end of himself. Christ is right over the hill.

And it's important for us to understand that when we begin to guide and counsel souls, that that's where God is going. And many times when they find themselves in despair, they're actually in despair because of this very principle that we're looking at right here. And it's God.

And they don't need a pat on the back. And they don't need any sympathy at that moment. God is bringing them to the end of themselves.

And I've shocked a couple of them by just listening to them pour their hearts out for a couple of minutes and then just look them right in the eye and say, Good. God's been waiting for you for a long time. Good? Yeah.

Why? Christ. Fulfillment, joy, peace, strength, power, blessing, all the other things that we've been speaking about. And maybe you find yourself in that very place even as you sit here.

It's a good thing that you're going through. People ask me pretty often, Brother Denny, how do you deal with your children? You know, they grow up in a Christian home and they come and they hear a sermon and they're afraid of hell and they want to get saved because they don't want to go to hell. How do you deal with your children in the area of salvation? This is what I tell them.

I try to discern where they're at when they come. And if they're afraid of hell, we're not ready for that. If they just want to go to heaven, they're not ready yet.

If they want to be a Christian because their friend is, they're not ready yet. But if I sense deep down in their soul that cry that Paul gave there, Oh, wretched man that I am. I'm so sick of me and the way I'm living.

I want help. Then I bring them through. See, there's a big difference between I don't want to go to hell, let me become a Christian and I see who I am in myself and I want deliverance.

And blessed are those children who grow up in a Christian home where they have much light dawning upon their soul and this whole process of trying to make this thing right and do it right and do this right and say this right. That process comes full force on the child who grows up in a Christian home. You say, well, that's not fair.

No, listen to what Paul said. So what advantage has the Jew or what profit is there in circumcision? And Paul says, much every way. Because this whole process is speeded up in their life.

And again, the end? Christ. Glorious Christ. To bring the sinner to the place where they say, I'm done.

I can't do it. Yet, many who are surrounded with much Christian influence have more of a tendency to do this because Christian home. And some do a pretty good outward job of it.

But guess what? Something is missing inside that gnawing, silent witness that just keeps saying, but yet something isn't right in here. There is no grace and power in their life, though they're trying to reform. There is no grace and power in their life, though they know to do what is right.

There is no grace and power in their life to walk with God or read His Word or have a good time of prayer. That's all missing. Just a whole lot of struggles to bring this body and soul into order without God in the

center.

Man says, I can't do it. God says, I've done it. Man says, I can't stop sinning.

God says, I will take away the sin of the world. Man says, there's no hope for me. In his despair, and God says, I will be your hope and your very life.

Man says, I need God. Oh, beautiful words. And God says, I will be your Father and your all in all.

Welcome home, son. Oh, the joy of coming to Christ and finding Him. Finding that He is all I need and to begin to walk with God, living by the life of another.

Welcome home, Adam. Welcome home. Welcome back to the simple life of walking with God.

But before this can happen in reality, there must be repentance. There must be repentance. And thus that leads us to our next definition which you're supposed to memorize for tomorrow.

Repentance. This is a beautiful definition. Not that I wrote it, but I spent hours on it.

It is godly sorrow for sin which leads to a forsaking and a renouncing of sin and a turning to Christ for salvation. Repentance is twofold. It is a turning from sin and a turning to Christ for deliverance.

It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That's what repentance is. Some might say, why is repentance so important? Why make such a big deal about this? There are two reasons.

Number one, because the Bible does. Amen? That's the only reason I need. Because the Bible does.

But number two, because we are dealing with a person, not a doctrine or a set of beliefs. If all I need to do is give a mental assent to a group of doctrines, then repentance doesn't mean a whole lot. But if I am dealing with a person, and we are, and that person is God, then all of a sudden repentance comes right into full view.

In a person's life. Isaiah 53, 6 says, All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way.

The Lord has laid on Him, Christ, the iniquity of us all. Listen, if the revelation of that verse right there falls upon your heart, it's going to rot repentance in your heart. I have gone astray, and I've turned to my own way.

And in my rebellion, the Lord has laid the iniquity of me on Christ. That will rot repentance all by itself. Repentance.

The Greek word is metanoia. It means to change one's mind and purpose. This word appears sixty times in the New Testament.

It is no small emphasis in the Bible. I think it's very clear that God is trying to tell us something again. When you see a word that shows up that many times, either repent or repentance.

Sixty times in the New Testament. Now, repentance, brethren, is not a popular thing today. In, quote, Christian circles.

It is considered a negative message. And the people like to feel good about themselves. So the preachers are compromising and not preaching repentance.

Like one famous man said recently, who had, I don't know, thirty or forty thousand people coming to his church on Sunday morning. And some secular man asked him, Why? Why are all these people coming to your church? Why are you telling them that they're all coming like this? And he said these words, Well, we found in this day and this age that we live in, that people like to feel good about themselves. Great revelation, sir.

That people like to feel good about themselves. So, we say the things that make them feel good. And they just keep coming and coming and coming.

Yeah, right. Only one problem with that. Someday, God's going to make them feel bad.

But it's going to be too late. And blood will be on that man's hands. I guarantee it.

Yes, we live in a day and an age when the people have itching ears. And they gather themselves men who will tell them the things that they want to hear. Oh, don't tell us what we need to hear.

Just tell us what we want to hear. Make it fun. Make it light.

Make it good. I want to feel good about myself when I go home on Sunday morning. To delete repentance out of the work of God in the soul of man is no little thing, brothers.

For the most part, if you delete repentance out of it, you've deleted God right out of the picture. Man is a sinner with specifics. But, if we come to these people and say that man is a sinner, generic.

No specifics. Just a sinner, generic. By the way, just about anybody would acknowledge that.

As long as you don't get specific. Just keep it generic. So we tell them man is a sinner, generic.

And then you don't give them any repentance. And oh, no confession of sin either because there's no repentance and we didn't get specific about anything. Add to that the idea that we're justified by faith in Christ.

And then encourage them to just pray. And ask Jesus to come into their heart. And the fruit of this theology of salvation is horrifying.

It's horrifying. It produces worldliness. It produces reprobate silver in the church.

It produces fornication and evil and wickedness and pornography and all kinds of things. Oh, then throw on top of that eternal security. You prayed this prayer.

This verse says that you are eternally secure. So, relax. I don't think we need to be real smart to figure out this kind of a salvation theology is going to produce a life that is not changed.

But remember, because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience. I don't care how many times they say they're justified in Christ. Because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.

Let no man deceive you with vain words. Let me give you a little bit of my testimony here. My soul winning testimony.

Years ago when I was in Bible school, we had to, no, we got to. We had the privilege of going soul winning every week. If you didn't go soul winning every week, they threw you out of the school.

Praise God for that. Well, we also had to turn in a little report. How many people did you witness to? And how many people came to Christ? Well, you know, when I went to Bible school, I didn't know anything.

I was just a hippie, six months old in the Lord. And I went to Bible school and I just took everything they gave me. Amen? You know, that's what an ignorant hippie is going to do.

And I started winning souls the way that they taught us. And so every Saturday or Monday morning we'd fill out our soul winning report and I'd put down there, witness to four, two of them were born again. Witness to five, three of them were born again.

Two, three, four, five. I mean, some of these guys came in today, they had this thing rolling. I mean, they'd come in on Monday morning and say, I won ten to the Lord.

But all of a sudden one day it began to dawn on me, none of these people that are praying these prayers ever come to church. And none of them get baptized. My own little heart started saying, maybe we're doing something wrong.

And I went back to the Scriptures and started searching the Scriptures. And all of a sudden the light of repentance began to dawn upon my heart. And I thought, these people aren't repenting.

That's why they're not coming to church. That's why none of them will get baptized. I'm going to try this thing.

So I started, I just kept right on going, soul winning every Saturday. But when I got these people down to that place where we're going to just really get down to business, I started preaching repentance to them. Do you know what happened? My soul winning report went down.

Like the stock market. Souls one, zero, zero. Next week, zero, one, zero, zero, one.

My soul winning report went down. Do you know what? I could clearly see as I began to minister to those people on that level, they don't care one bit about repenting of their sins. They just would like to have a one-way ticket to heaven.

Well, who wouldn't like a one-way ticket to heaven? But it's not heaven that we're dealing with. It's God. It's very clear as we see the glorious revelation of Christ and His salvation dawning upon human history that God led every one of His messengers to preach repentance as a requirement to enter in.

John the Baptist was clear on this subject. Matthew 3, verse 2, he said, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And later on in that same chapter, he said, to the ones who were not repenting, he let them in.

He didn't let them in that way. He said to them, Bring forth therefore fruits, meat for repentance. Let me see your repentance.

A change of mind which produces a change of action. So, John the Baptist, you know, that's what he did. He was the man who said to the people, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Make a way for the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for God. Was he talking about a desert? With dust and sand? Or was he talking about the desert of our heart? Which one do you think he was talking about? The desert of our heart.

Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. How? Repent! Repent! Is what he said. Oh, he was not a popular preacher, by the way.

Our Lord Jesus, from the beginning of His ministry, preached repentance to the people as the only way that they could come to Him. He said this in Luke 5, verse 31, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

That's what I came for, Jesus said. To call sinners to repentance. When Christ was giving the Great Commission to His apostles, He made it very clear what was to go along with the good news of salvation that they're supposed to preach.

He said it this way in Luke 24, verse 47, And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The apostles took His word very seriously and obeyed His command to preach repentance everywhere. Peter said it this way, in Acts chapter 2, verse 38, After the men said, Men and brethren, what shall we do? We were on that yesterday.

Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And even Paul the apostle, who did not hear or see all that the others heard and saw, still, he is right on on this subject. Acts chapter 26, verse 20, he says, But I showed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance.

Sounds like he was listening to John the Baptist's sermon, doesn't it? All these men emphasized repentance. That beautiful church that we heard about yesterday, as Brother Dean Taylor was up here sharing with us, this is what produced that beautiful church. Now, not only this, Amen, the other end, the end of this, is Christ.

But you don't come to Christ if you're not willing to repent. I rest my case. The Bible teaches repentance.

Again, not a very popular teaching today in this land of comfort and good and ease, in this feel-good-about-myself humanistic philosophy that's all around us. Repentance is not a very popular message. And by the way, I also want to remind you, brethren, of the environment that these early apostles were preaching repentance in.

The environment that they were preaching it in. They could have lost their head for saying what they said. But they said it anyway.

Here's a little definition or a little commentary on repentance out of Barnes' commentary, one that I read that I felt, this is good. He said, Repentance implies sorrow for past offenses, 2 Corinthians 7.10, and a deep sense of the evil of sin as committed against God. Repentance is also a full purpose to turn from transgression and to lead a holy life in Christ.

A true penitent has sorrow for his sin, not only because it is ruinous to his own soul, but chiefly because it is an offense against God. I have sinned against the holy God. Repentance.

It is a 180 degree turn. That's what repentance means. It means to turn around and go the opposite way.

If we can just act it out here, on the platform this morning, it's an individual who's going their own way. Oh, we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. But when God arrests a man's attention on the road of life, and he begins to realize that his own way is a wicked way, that his own way crucified the Lord, that his own way is a way of misery, that his own way is going to bring judgment upon his life, he hears those things, the conviction of the Spirit of God comes upon him, and he turns around. Amen? But brethren, he doesn't just turn around.

Amen? I mean, if you realize you're going the wrong way, you don't just turn around from going the wrong way. You start going the right way. That's repentance.

Like Paul said, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And I'll tell you what, that will produce a life. A beautiful life.

So remember what the definition says. It is a turning from sin and a turning to Christ for deliverance. It is a change of mind which brings about a change of actions.

Bring therefore fruits, meat for repentance. I think of the dear Anabaptists of the early days of the movement, of the Anabaptist movement. They believed that repentance was amendment of life.

If there was no amendment of life, you can talk about how sad you are and how sorry you are for what you did until you're blue in the face. That doesn't mean anything if the life is not going to change. It's not repentance.

But oh, some of the beautiful examples that I read of the early Anabaptists. Oh, how powerfully this whole process of conviction and repentance was displayed by them and among them. Those early preachers gathered small groups together and in brokenness shared their own testimony how God had changed them and then preached Christ's call to the people.

And amazing things happened. Men and women came under such deep conviction that they simply fell on their knees and began to tremble. And by the way, let me remind you of the context of that.

I mean, when those fellows gave Christ's call, come and follow Me, and it landed on the conscience of the hearts of those people, those people knew, if I yield to this conviction which is coming upon me and truly repent and follow Christ, I could be in jail in ten days and lose my head in twenty. But they came. Oh, they came.

They came by the hundreds. They came by the thousands. How the Spirit of God descended upon them and the people just broke and began to weep and were compelled by God to turn away from their selfish life and to follow Christ even unto their death.

And many did. That's repentance. There is a portion of Scripture this morning that defines this matter of repentance so well.

I want you to note a few things while we turn there to 2 Corinthians 7. Note a few things as we read. Note the key words in this passage. After you've been listening to me for a half an hour on this subject, note the key words in this passage.

Note also the fruit of repentance described in this passage. And thirdly, I would like you to note this passage that we're going to read It was written to Christians. To Christians.

Repentance is not just for back there when I come to the Lord. Repentance is a way of life. We'll say more about that later.

It might be helpful to know some of the background of this text here in 2 Corinthians 7. It is the result of a report that Titus brought back to the Apostle Paul. Remember, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to them. And it was a pretty strong letter, 1 Corinthians.

He admonished them and rebuked them about several things. And back in those days, it was alright for a minister to rebuke the people when they actually listened to him. And bowed their heart to the things that he had to say.

And then they'd just say, oh, well, that's what he thinks. Who is he? They didn't do that back in his day. And so he wrote a letter to them as he heard and found out how things were going.

You're going to law against each other. You're causing divisions. You're saying I'm of this one, I'm of that one, I'm of Paul, he's my favorite preacher.

You're doing all those kind of things. They were mixed up on things. And they were having fellowship with one who was living in incest.

But when Paul heard these things, oh my, his heart was so burdened. His heart was so broken. He wrote them a letter of reproof.

You know what they did with that letter? They broke their hearts. I mean, Paul wrote this to us. They broke their hearts.

And they repented. There was a season of mourning and grief and sorrow among them. And they responded in obedience to the things that he wrote.

And Titus went there after that letter had come and saw what happened and came back to Paul and told Paul, Oh, Paul, you should see their response to the letter that you wrote them. Oh, it's beautiful. He told him all about it.

And then Paul turns around and writes back to them. And that's where we're dropping in here in 2 Corinthians chapter 7. Listen to what he says. Verse 8. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent.

And what he simply means there is, I have changed my mind now. That's why I'm writing you and saying enough is enough. But he said, though I wrote you a letter and it made you sorry.

And that word, we don't understand that word anymore today. What it means is, it made you filled with sorrow. For I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season, which, by the way, is a good warning to all of us.

If you are taken over with overmuch sorrow, it can destroy you. But for a season, it's good. Now I rejoice, Paul says, not that ye were made sorry.

Oh, no. I love you. I'm not rejoicing that you're full of sorrow.

But I'm rejoicing at the fruit of what happened when you were filled with sorrow. Not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance. For ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. What's that word doing in there? He's writing to Christians. Huh? Repentance unto salvation? These are Christians.

That's right, brethren. Repentance that rots the reality of an ongoing salvation experience in your life. That's what he means.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge, in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter that I wrote to you about. Doesn't sound like they took his letter half-heartedly.

What do you think? Well, we're going to pray about this. You know, all these things. We're going to go pray about this.

I think he's a bit strong on that point. No. In all things you've made yourself clear in this matter.

Now, I want you to notice here. First of all, there are two sorrows in this passage. And they produce very different fruit.

There is godly sorrow and there is worldly sorrow. Do you see those two in that passage? Circle them. They produce very different fruit.

One produces life, abundant life, free and clear. And the other produces death. And many times, suicide.

Peter and Judas are good examples of these two types of sorrow. What a contrast! Peter sorrowed. Did he not? I mean, when he denied the Lord.

Some of you that are being wasted by the waster and beaten by the accuser. Think about Peter. Look what he did.

He denied the Lord. That coward. Couldn't even stand up and face a woman.

But, he went away, the Bible says, and wept bitterly. He sorrowed with a godly sorrow which wrought repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. Didn't it? But what about Judas? He also sorrowed.

Once he realized what had happened and what they are going to do to the Lord Jesus and what he had done. He tried to turn that whole thing back around and they refused his money. What did he do? In the depths of despair and discouragement, he went out and killed himself.

That is the sorrow of the world. If our sorrow is bringing discouragement and despair and condemnation and self-pity, it is not coming from God! And it will not produce the right fruit. See? But they didn't sorrow

that way.

They sorrowed after a godly sort. Like it talks about there in James chapter 4. You know? Draw an eye to God and He will draw an eye to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

That's heart and life again. Be afflicted and mourn. Let your laughter be turned to sorrow and your joy to heaviness.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and what will He do? Cause you to go out and kill yourself? No, He will lift you up. Hallelujah! Repentance! That worketh salvation, the reality, the joy, the freedom, the power, the blessing of the Spirit of God in you. That's repentance.

I want us to notice a few of these words. We just move through them quickly here. What a glimpse into repentance and the fruit of repentance.

Carefulness. Paul says, Oh, what carefulness it wrought in you. That word carefulness means watchful, earnest care.

You get the idea of circumspect, you know, watching and walking carefully. A little bit like walking on a, if you were boys, maybe when you were young, you walked on the top of a fence. You know, how do you walk on the top of a fence? Watchful, earnest care.

Circumspectly. You know, like walking through the forest where you know there are rattlesnakes. You walk with watchful, earnest care.

Right, Justin? An anxious interest to do right. That's what carefulness means. Paul is encouraging them and blessing them that they repented to the point that now they have this anxious, earnest care to do right.

Clearing. It is a clear defense against all accusation. You have cleared yourself to such a point that you are defended against all accusation.

Or to put it in another biblical term, blameless. Blameless. The word indignation is very interesting.

It means righteous anger about their sin. Yea, what indignation it wrought in you. This righteous anger against their sin.

Like Paul said to the Ephesians, be ye angry and sin not. A righteous anger about their sin. And by the way, when you hate sin, you won't do it.

How about the fourth word? Fear. A wholesome dread of displeasing God. Paul is blessing them for the way that their lives changed because they received his letter with an open heart, and a humble heart.

Your life so changed that you now have a wholesome dread of displeasing God. Well, that's beautiful, isn't it? I mean, give me a good dose of that kind of repentance that produces a wholesome fear of not displeasing God. A wholesome fear of my old life.

I don't want to go back there. Look at the next one. Vehement desire.

An intensely earnest desire. A longing to do right. Yea, what vehement.

That's a strong word. I've got such a desire to do right. It is a vehement desire.

Intensely earnest. Where did you get that? By repentance. By godly sorrow that wrought repentance in my heart and my life.

What about the word zeal? It means a hot, fervent action motivated by love. Oh, I like that definition. Hot, fervent action motivated by love.

Zeal. Like Christ when He cleansed His Father's house. Yea, what zeal He had that day, didn't He? So much so that the disciples remembered that it was written in the Old Testament the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

And that is exactly where Christ was at. He had a hot, fervent, motivational love for His Father's house which moved Him to action and He chased all the money changers right out of the temple. Out of a holy jealousy for His Father's house.

And lastly, the word revenge. It means to turn on oneself in self-judgment. Yea, what revenge! You turned on yourself and judged yourself.

We have sinned. Now, I want to say in closing that just to remind you, I'm lifting up the biblical standard of repentance. You may not have had this kind of opportunity to repent like this.

I didn't get this kind of opportunity. When my dear aunt preached to me the gospel which I'd never heard before, she didn't even say anything about repentance. So you may not have gotten all of this the way that I've just given it to you.

And I might add, according to the level of the power of the Spirit of God, so also is the depth of this kind of conviction and repentance. We need to pray for the Holy Ghost as we witness to people and preach the gospel. But that does not take away from the need of repentance, nor the need of preaching repentance.

And if God so honors you and gives you the opportunities to preach the gospel to people, even if you're sitting in somebody's living room and the atmosphere is so nice and they brought you a cup of tea and all those things. When you get down to business and start preaching the gospel, give them repentance! Give them repentance! You will bless them the rest of their Christian life if you will hold their feet to the fire on this one. Are you willing to repent? And yet this once more.

Okay, maybe you didn't get this kind of repentance when you came to the Lord. Not a problem. This kind of repentance is not just at the entrance of the gate.

It's all along the road. So have at it, brethren. If you missed it back there, bless God, you can get in on it here.

Right? Because this text that we just looked at is not for the lost man. It's for the Christian. And it seems to me that God even requires a deeper level of repentance to those who know.

In closing, I want to emphasize again, this whole process is the work of the Holy Ghost. He works in mysterious ways. These kind of results are not the work of man.

Though God uses us and we need to preach repentance, we need to remember that when these kind of things begin to happen in people's hearts, it's not the work of man. And it doesn't work better if you say it

harder or stronger or meaner or whatever. If you blast them in the face with it, it doesn't work better that way.

It's the work of the Spirit of God. We need to be faithful and declare. Our responsibility is to preach repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And if we will be faithful in our part, God will also be faithful in His. He will. Let us be filled with the Spirit and be bold as a lion that God can use us in this present evil world that we live in to call sinners back to God.

Do you get that? That's real simple. To call sinners back to God. May the Lord help us.

Let's pray. Oh, Father, teach us. Instruct us.

It's the teachable moment, Lord. Instruct our own hearts. Enlighten us, Father.

God, I pray that You'll put all of these things together that when we are done, we will see salvation so clearly. We will know what to do. We will know how to preach the Gospel.

We will know how to lead a soul to Christ. We will understand how You save a soul. And we can get in there and co-labor with You.

This is our desire, Lord, for all of these young men. God grant it. According to our prayer.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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