



Reformation & Repentance

SUNDAY EVENING • 5 AUGUST 2007

❖ INTRODUCTION

In many situations in life, moving forward requires that we actually stop trying to move forward and instead reverse course.

- Stuck in a snow drift
- Climbing a mountain
- Run aground on a sandbar

You can determine all you want to go forward and defeat the obstacle, but you'll end up frustrated, worn out and usually, totally defeated.

Our attempts to:

- Plow through a 6 foot snow drift . . . climb a sheer cliff . . . run over a sandbar are much like our attempts at personal reformation.

Many times people have weaknesses, problems, habits, sins they want to get rid of.

- “I need to do better”
- “I need to get back to church”
- We focus is on reforming our behavior.

Sometimes we may hear or even think ourselves that we need to repent . . . and our idea of repentance is . . .

“I've got to stop doing this or that” . . . “I've got to try harder”

Again, there is a focus on changed habits and behaviors that are viewed as undesirable.

We think, “I need to change my bad behaviors” “I need to get rid of some bad habit.”

This is good, but it is an incomplete understanding of genuine, biblical repentance.

We pursue reformation and end up like the car stuck in the snow, the hiker facing the sheer cliff, or the boat stuck on the sandbar.

Our attempts at self reformation leave us defeated.

Perhaps we are actually missing a fundamental necessity to true, lasting life change.

Perhaps, we are pursuing reformation without genuine repentance and we fail!

There will never be lasting change . . . there can be no reformation without genuine, biblical repentance.

❖ The Call to Repentance

Matthew 3:1

Now in those days **John the Baptist** came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;

Matthew 4:17

From that time **Jesus** began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Acts 26:20

[Paul] I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

❖ Understanding Repentance & Reformation

● Defining Reformation:

The attempt to change **BEHAVIOR**. [Reform School] – self-improvement in behavior or morals by abandoning some vice; "the family rejoiced in the drunkard's reform"

● Defining Repentance:

- The literal meaning of repentance is “after-thought” or “reconsideration.” By “change of mind” we do not mean a “change of opinion”; a “change of mind” is the substitution of a new mind for the old. It is new in **CHARACTER**.

- True repentance is a change of mind which will lead to a change of action, but let us be warned that it is possible to have a change of action without a change of mind.
- Making it a little stronger, repentance means not only a change of mind; it is the taking of one's stand against **HIMSELF** and the placing of himself on the side of God. Thus, repentance is self-judgment.

❖ The Need for Repentance

Luke 13:1

Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? 3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

1. We need genuine, biblical repentance in relation to our-SELVES .

"Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? 3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish

- "Sinners": hamartolos – devoted to sin, especially wicked

Romans 12:3

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought**, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am . . .

- Who am I without Christ?

- Withering grass, fading flowers, grasshoppers (Isaiah 40:22)
- Worms (Job 25:6)
- Maggots (Job 25:6)
- Dead in sin. (Ephesians 2:1)

- Alienated from God (Colossians 1:21)
- Hostile to God (Romans 8:7)
- Enemies of God (Romans 5:10)
- Destined to face the wrath of God (Ephesians 2:3)

The Heart of Genuine Repentance:

I am **NOTHING** and I have nothing of value as a sinner or a saint except by the grace of God. I am no better, no more important, no more valuable in the eyes of God than anyone else.

2. We need genuine, biblical repentance in relation to our SIN .

"Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

- "Culprits": opheiletes – debtor, one who owes another one who owes God a penalty or whom God can demand punishment.

The extent of God's hatred toward our sin can be seen clearly in His reaction to man doing the right things but with an attitude of complacency or with the wrong motivations.

- The sin of complacency makes God **VOMIT!**

Revelation 3:16

'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

- The sin of insincere worship makes God **SICK!**

Isaiah 1:11-14

I have had enough . . . I take no pleasure . . . an abomination to Me . . . I cannot endure . . . I hate . . .

- God's **WRATH** will be poured out against all sin.

John 3:36 (NLT)

And all who believe in God's Son have eternal life. Those who don't obey the Son will never experience eternal life, but the wrath of God remains upon them."

Romans 1:18 (NIV)

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men

Romans 2:5 (NIV)

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Romans 2:8 (NIV)

But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

What better way to grasp the ugliness of sin and the wrath of God against sin than to look at the cross!

But I'm a believer, aren't I free from the wrath of God on me?

Romans 5:9 (NIV)

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

This does not change God's VIEW of sin!

The Heart of Genuine Repentance:

All of my sin, no matter how insignificant or great in my eyes or the eyes of man is **HATED** and detestable to God and contributed to the wrath of God being poured out on Jesus.

I DESERVE TO GO TO HELL. My most insignificant sin is enough to demand that I suffer under the wrath of God for eternity.

3. We need genuine, biblical repentance in relation to our SAVIOR.

Luke 13:6 -9

And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. 7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' 8 "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; 9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"

What can barren fig trees tell us about the kingdom of God? Fig trees were a common and important source of food for the Jews. Bad figs or a decaying fig

tree was linked with evil deeds and spiritual decay. The unfruitful fig tree symbolized the outcome of Israel's unresponsiveness to the word of God. The prophets depicted the languishing fig tree as signifying the desolation and calamity of Israel due to her unfaithfulness to God (see Joel 1:7,12; Habakuk 3:17; and Jeremiah 8:13). Jeremiah said that evil people are like rotten figs (Jeremiah 24:2-8). This parable of Jesus depicts the patience of God, but it also contains a warning that we should not presume upon it. God gives us time to get right with him, but that time is now. We must not assume that there is no hurry. A sudden and unexpected death leaves one no time to prepare to settle one's accounts when he or she must stand before the Lord on the day of judgment. Jesus warns us that we must be ready at all times. Tolerating sinful habits and excusing unrepentant sin will result in bad fruit and eventual destruction. The Lord in his mercy gives us both grace and time to turn away from sin and from worldliness, but that time is right now. If we delay, even for a day, we may discover that grace has passed us by and our time is up.

- God is patient with us, gracious and merciful in His dealings with us in order to give us more time to repent and turn to Him.

Romans 2:4

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

The Heart of Genuine Repentance

God's love, grace, and mercy compel me to forsake sin and pursue **CHRIST**.

They are not to be taken for granted and truly understanding and appreciating them will lead me to humble repentance from sin to pursue Christ more fully.

God is patient in discipline in order to give me time to repent before more **SEVERE** discipline will come – but it will come.