Genuine Repentance

2 Corinthians 7:8-12
8/7/2011

Introduction:

**** Genuine Repentance is the greatest response to sin***

What is genuine repentance?

I. Genuine Repentance brings <u>No Regrets</u> (v.8)

II. Genuine Repentance brings out <u>Rejoicing</u> (v.9a)

III. Genuine Repentance is <u>Preceded by Sorrow</u> for Sin (v. 9b-10)

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V. Genuine Repentance Results in <u>Changed Desires</u> and Lifestyles (v.11)

Conclusion: v.12

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The word “repentance” is from the Greek word *metanoeo*. *Meta* meaning change and Noeo (from Nous) meaning“mind.” Repentance then is a change of mind regarding sin. A change of mind which leads one to have a change of direction; direction away from the enslaving sin and direction toward God, which leads to salvation (deliverance).

The two sides of repentance - turning from and turning to:

> Is. 55:7 - "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"
>
> Joel 2:12-13 - "Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

Verses on Repentance:

Repentance was the message of Jesus -

> Mt. 4:17 - "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
> Lk. 13:3 - "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Repentance was the message of Peter -

> Acts 2:38 - "Then 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 Holy Ghost."
> Acts 3:19 - "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

Repentance was the message of Paul -

> Acts 26:20 - "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

**** Genuine Repentance is the greatest response to sin***

What is genuine repentance?

I. Genuine Repentance brings <u>No Regrets</u> (v.8)

"A letter" - this letter or epistle is possibly the first epistle to the Corinthians, in which Paul rebuked the Corinthians for allowing a member of their church to practice fornication, while they did nothing about it (1 Cor. 5:1ff).

Or it could be a later epistle addressing another problem evidently between a couple of members of the church (v . 12), an epistle delivered by Titus.

"Sorry with a letter" - sometimes good letters hurt. The truth often hurts. And reading the truth in letter form gives all the more opportunity to deeply reflect on the message given and to re-read so as to not miss the point. Praise God for the Epistles of the New Testament, which, while bringing a convicting hurt, in the end bring a spiritual healing as repentance of sin takes place.

"I do not repent, though I did repent" - Paul is not speaking double-talk here, but is saying that he did not regret the words he gave the Corinthians, though he did regret having to do so. We should never regret telling `someone the truth, though we may regret that the truth hurts and we also regret the sin that necessitated the stern rebuke.

"Sorrow" - from *lupeo* – refers to something that causes pain and grief.

Sin always brings on sadness; and the correction and rebuke that comes also brings sadness.

People often have different reasons for being sad due to sin:

1) Some are sorry they got caught in the sin (not so much that they sinned but that it got "found out"; "be sure your sin will find you out")

2) Some are sorry because of the felt consequences of their sin; the effects of sin hurt

3) Some are sorry that they could not complete their journey in the sin. They are sad that it had to end. This I what Paul is perhaps referring to in verse ten, about a sorry of the world that results not in salvation, but in death.

4) And some (few though they may be) are genuinely sorry that their sin was a horrendous offense to a holy God. They are saddened that they hurt God by grieving His Holy Spirit. They are saddened by the effects this sin had on their ministry and stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. And they are saddened by the effects this sin may have had on others and on the cause of Christ.

"Though it were but for a season" - the stinging rebuke for sin which leads to sorrow for sin which leads to repentance and forgiveness is a temporary sorrow. But unrepentant sin brings with it non-stop sorrow.

II. Genuine Repentance brings out <u>Rejoicing</u> (v.9a)

"Now I rejoice" – Paul did not rejoice in the Corinthians' sadness over their sin, but he rejoiced in the repentance that the sorrow led to.

Sin brings shame; but repentance brings joy. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

III. Genuine Repentance is <u>Preceded by Sorrow</u> for Sin (v. 9b-10)

"Ye sorrowed to repentance" – 3 key truths:

1) Sorrow is <u>not the same</u> as repentance

2) Sorrow <u>precedes</u> (comes before) repentance

3) Sorrow <u>leads to</u> repentance

There can be sorrow without repentance, but there can never be repentance without sorrow.

Nobody repents who is not first made deeply sorrowful for his/her sins.

The order is as follows:

1) We are <u>confronted with God's truth</u> about our sin (<u>cognitively</u> – our minds are made aware of the wrong)

2) We are <u>deeply affected</u> in our <u>hearts</u> about our sin (emotionally – our conscience is pricked by the impact that truth has on us)

3) We have a change of mind and attitude regarding the sin (volitionally – we choose to turn from the sin and unto God and His will and ways)

True repentance will affect the:

1. <u>Intellect</u> (<u>recognition</u> of sin; <u>understanding</u> of God's holiness and righteous standard)

2. <u>Emotion</u> (a <u>godly sorrow</u> for sin - II Cor. 7:10=11)

   "He that never mourned for sin has never rejoiced in the Lord. If I can look back on my past life and say, 'I have no grief over it,' then I should do the same again if I had the opportunity. And this shows that my heart is as perverse as ever it was, and I am still unregenerate" (Spurgeon, p. 174)

3. <u>Will</u> (a <u>willingness to turn</u> from sin; a <u>change of direction</u>)

"Sorry after a godly manner" - Here Paul contrasts a godly sorrow with a worldly sorrow. A godly sorrow leads one to genuine repentance, but a worldly sorrow leads one to death.

You see, there is a sorrow that is earth directed; that is, someone got caught in the act and now must face the consequences. This sorrow has no real repentance toward God with it. But then there is a sorrow that is God directed. This "godly sorrow" mourns over the sin to God and motivates a genuine change of heart and action and the request of forgiveness.

"That ye might receive damage by us in nothing" - Repentance is a win-win situation. There is no loss or harm in godly repentance; only gain, only benefit, only blessing! Paul's rebuke brought about no harm, only blessing! Praise God for people who love you enough to tell you the truth.

IV. Genuine Repentance Produces Deliverance from Sin and Sin's Penalty (v.10)

Repentance always leads to "salvation" in one form or another. Whether the salvation of a lost sinner, which delivers him from the penalty of sin (this is justification – positional holiness).

Or the salvation of a sinning believer which delivers him from the power of sin (this is sanctification – practical holiness).

So the choice is simple: "salvation" or "death" – which do you choose? Be wise; "choose life."

V. Genuine Repentance Results in <u>Changed Desires</u> and Lifestyles (v.11)

"A godly sorrow" - is a sorrow produced <u>by God's Spirit</u> in the human heart; and it is a sorrow over the sin's offense <u>toward God</u>. And it is a sorrow leading one in repentance <u>to God</u>.

What are the effects of this genuine repentance? What change does it bring?

"Carefulness" - (*spoude*) – diligence; an eagerness or earnestness to do right and to show yourself right.

"Clearing" – *apologia* – a desire to show oneself as clear and clean of the offense.

Indignation" – *aganaktesis* – "here it indicates the indignation at the shame brought upon the church" (Plummer, cited by Cleon Rogers, p. 407).

"Fear" - a fear of God is in view here. Someone who is repentant has a great fear (respect and reverence) for God and His ways.

"Vehement desire" - a longing or yearning to do right. The result of repentance is a desire to be on fire for God.

"Zeal" - an enthusiasm; no more a doom and gloom attitude but a zealous heart to please God and to be a good testimony before others.

Here it was the Corinthians' zealous desire to have such a testimony before Paul.

"Revenge" – punishment; "seeing that justice is done by bringing the guilty person to ecclesiastical discipline" (Hughes, cited by Rogers, p. 407).

"Clear in this matter" – pure in this matter. The Corinthians really wanted Paul to know that they were now pure. Repentance always results in purity; and a purity you are not ashamed of.

Conclusion: v.12

Paul's rebuke was not merely for the benefit of the one who sinned, nor was it merely for the benefit of the one who was sinned against. It was for the benefit of the whole church, and that they might be cared for by Paul. True love cares for that which Christ cares for – His Church!

We need to always view the bigger picture. When one is in sin in a church, the whole body is affected. When one repents, the whole body is blessed!

Repentance is a gift of God (II Tim. 2:25 - "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth") (cp. Acts 5:31, 11:18).

For the unsaved, repentance means basically to turn from anything that is keeping you from turning to Christ 100 %.

For the Pharisee, repentance meant to turn from their man-made religious rules and their self-righteousness and to turn to Christ.

For the Sadducee, repentance meant to turn from their unbelief and financial exploitation in the name of religion, and to turn to Christ.

For the prostitute, drunkard and thief, it meant to turn from these vices which so enslaved their hearts and to turn to Christ.