

BASED UPON SEPTEMBER 13, 2020'S SERMON

DELIGHTING IN REPENTANCE



OLD MADE NEW

2 CORINTHIANS

PRAYER

Martin Luther in his 95 Theses made his first point - "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' (Matthew 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." Now that is a very strong statement. But he is correct. Everything about the life of a believer comes down to trusting Jesus and repenting of the ways, large and small, that we have wrongly followed.

This week as we talk about repentance, I want to encourage you to spend time in silence and reflection, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any thought, attitude, or action that you should repent of. If and when the Spirit shows you, follow through by confessing and repenting to the Lord. By doing so, I firmly believe that you will be setting the tone for your time in the curriculum.

One final note, I know talking about repentance, especially the confessing of sin in order to repent, can be awkward or embarrassing. However, when you act with transparency and vulnerability with your group, I believe God will take those conversations and work in and through them to grow you and the members of your group. I pray that the discussion of repentance is one that sows seeds for future fruit in your group.

- JF

O Thou Good Omnipotent, Who so carest for every one of us, as if Thou caredst for him alone; and so for all, as if all were but one! Blessed is the man who loveth Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee. For he only loses none dear to him, to whom all are dear in Him who cannot be lost. And who is that but our God, the God that made heaven and earth, and filleth them, even by filling them creating them. And Thy law is truth, and truth is Thyself. I behold how some things pass away that others may replace them, but Thou dost never depart, O God, my Father supremely good, Beauty of all things beautiful. To Thee will I intrust whatsoever I have received from Thee, so shall I lose nothing. Thou madest me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it repose in Thee. Amen.

Augustine of Hippo

READ

2 Corinthians 7:1-16 | ESV

1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

2 Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.

3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.

4 I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.

5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within.

6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

8 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while.

9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

12 So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God.

13 Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

14 For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true.

15 And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling.

16 I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

DISCUSS

Lead your group through the following discussion questions. Help them thoughtfully reflect and respond to God's direction.

1 | Paul finished his previous discussion in chapter 6 with an appeal for the Corinthians to set themselves apart from the cultural expectations of their environment, which may dull their affections for Jesus, & keep them rooted in the old life. In his call for them to be reconciled to God, Paul urges this body of believers to live lives that reflect the truth of their reconciled state.

Chapter 7 opens with the reminder that all of the promises of God are at their disposal, and that they are called to fully embrace the new life by living a life that is clean, pure, and holy in the sight of God. In 6:11, Paul stated that his life (i.e. his words and his heart) was open to the Corinthians; he would leave nothing hidden in darkness, but instead, he has completely exposed himself to the point of vulnerability on their behalf. Now, he calls for a reciprocal response; that they too would leave nothing in the dark, so that Christ might be exalted in all of their life.

Have you experienced this depth of transparency from other Christians in your own life? What kind of effect (or lack of effect) has it had? What experiences or factors have encouraged or discouraged you from living life in the open like this?

2 | While Paul's focus is on confronting the Corinthians' behavior, he approaches them relationally and his motives are pure. His purpose isn't to condemn them, but rather to be unified even more with them, by joining together in repentance and transformation. In light of verses 3 and 4, Paul encourages them in repentance by stressing the overabundance of his confidence in them; it is his greatest joy to witness the full effect of the gospel in their hearts.

Seeing Paul's confidence, joy, and love for the Corinthians, when there were obviously still some issues to be settled, what do you think is the basis of Paul's conviction? Do you believe God has confidence in you, that He boasts on your behalf, even when your life does not look the way it should? Have you struggled to believe this? How can you encourage one another to this end?

3 | In verses 5-9, Paul alludes to some of the history he's had with the Corinthians, referencing previous letters, and an attempt by Titus to serve as an intermediary. All of this is a part of Paul's effort to call the Corinthians up in gospel accountability.

Have you ever had an experience where you were corrected or confronted in such a direct and loving way? What was its result in your life? Have you been the one calling another up in gospel accountability? What does this require from both, the one calling up, and the one being called?

4 | Paul makes the outstanding assertion in verse 10 - "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death." He reminds them that this "godly grief" is the very thing that has already led them to experience freedom and transformation in other areas of life.

What are the differences between godly grief and worldly grief? What does each one produce? Have you experienced delight in repentance? How can you and your group grow in accountability so that your joy in repentance may increase?

CONCLUSION

Prayer | O God of Repentant Sinners,

We praise You for Your love and mercy upon our lives. Your desire is for us to confess our sins and to repent of our ways that leads us to anything or anyone other than You. We ask that You would search our hearts and our minds. Anything that is not glorifying to You or needed for our benefit, remove that quickly so that we may fill our lives with You. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Restore to us the joy of belonging to You through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Benediction | May the God who wipes out your transgressions for His sake, and Who will not remember your sins, continually set you free from the burdens common to humanity, that you might praise His name.