

Chapter 1

I do not believe there has been a time in the history of man that people have not thought that repentance was for other people, of another time. I find in Malachi 3:6, "For I am the Lord, I change not." And in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever."

The subject of repentance is mentioned at least forty-five times in the Old Testament, and at least sixty-five times in the New Testament. This was a surprise to me because I was taught that repentance was an Old Testament doctrine. I knew that the Old Testament took up over two-thirds of the Bible, so my assumption was that the majority of the mentions of repentance would be found there. It seems that God has not decreased His emphasis on repentance!

We find in the book of Revelation, the last message to the churches, in chapters two and three, five of the seven churches are commanded to repent. Six times the subject is mentioned in those two chapters alone. We find that people are commanded to repent, not only in the past and the present, but also in the future during the tribulation.

The doctrine of repentance is a greatly neglected doctrine, and yet, every real Biblical revival that I have studied has been preceded by a movement of real repentance. Heb. 5:5&6 reads, “So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” These verses explain that Jesus became our High Priest, not after the Jewish law; but after the Melchisedec priesthood, which goes back before that of the Jewish law. Continuing in Heb. 5:7 & 8, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;”

I do not claim to understand everything spoken of in the book of Hebrews. There are many things in this book that I cannot fully grasp. But I do see in verse eight that Jesus’ tears were with strong crying and that He was heard by His Father. It is not that the Father was unable to hear quiet prayers, but it is possible that He does not pay as much attention to those we do not put our heart into.

Heb. 5:9. "Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Obviously, He is not the author of salvation to them that want to disobey Him. There are many people who want salvation but do not want Jesus. They have no desire to be obedient to the commands of God, and for that reason they are not saved.

You are not saved by obedience. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." (II Cor. 5:17) Part of being made a new creature in Christ is that He gives you a heart that wants to obey. Those that do not want that heart and want to hold onto their sins with one arm, will never get hold of Jesus with the other arm. Repentance is not cleaning up your life; it is getting ready for God to clean it up for you. It is getting your heart changed about sin – hating it instead of loving it. Obedience is necessary. Many people make quick professions of salvation but there is never a change or mark of Biblical salvation.

Heb. 5:10 & 11 tell us, "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing." He has said he would like to tell them more of Jesus but they just

could not handle everything at this time. God knows how much we can handle. He said there are many things to be said, but they are hard to say because these folks were hard of hearing spiritually. Most people are satisfied to know about a half dozen facts about Jesus. There are countless things in the Scriptures about the Lord Jesus. If we would just tune our ears to them, we would hear them. We would know how to draw closer to Him. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” (James 4:8)

Heb. 5:12 continues, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” Verse 13 adds, “For everyone that useth the milk is unskillful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe.” When they should have been spiritually on a level to teach others, instead, they needed to be taught themselves. There is something wrong here. He said they had not even laid hold of the first principles! You may have a smattering of facts from here and there, but do you have those first basic principles of God’s oracles to mankind? Do you have a solid foundation laid, or just a few ideas with some Bible stories and a few things gathered from a preacher or two?

He said that they were not ready for the meat of the Word because they still needed milk. It takes more than time to get some people off the spiritual bottle. It seems that some never get beyond milk. There is nothing wrong with having milk for the rest of your life, but you ought to be able to have meat also. Meat can be given too soon, but there should come a time that a baby will consume more than milk. It is sad to see someone thirty or forty years old still needing to be fed like a baby. What is worse is to see professing Christians who were born again years ago that are still spiritual babies.

Verse 13 says they have never learned to be skillful in the handling of the Word of God. They have never really grown up spiritually. Verse 14 adds, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." You can tell when a person has never grown up mentally. They may not be able to talk correctly, move about normally or care for themselves. But how does one discern that someone has not matured spiritually? This verse says that you can tell if someone is "of full age" if they are using their God-given senses to "discern

both good and evil". They can look at a situation and pick out good from evil.

Let me mention that one mark of spiritual retardation is that the individual often says, "Judge not!" That is the way a little baby is. You do not expect them to be able to discern what is safe to play with and what is not. You have to decide for them. You may ask, "But doesn't the Bible say, 'Judge not'?" Yes, it does! It was written to hypocrites. Examine to whom it was addressed and see if you want to be on the receiving end. He also said at another time, "Ye are of your father the Devil." Do you also claim that?

When a Christian matures spiritually, he is no longer dependent on someone else to tell him what is right and wrong. He will exercise the senses God has given him. We do not have very many grown up Christians today. Many people are so ignorant of the Word of God that they do not know how to apply it to their lives without some magazine or program to advise them.

Hebrews 6:1 reads, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God." The key foundations are:

- 1. Repentance from dead works**

- 2. Faith toward God**
- 3. Doctrine of baptisms**
- 4. Laying on of hands**
- 5. The resurrection of the dead**
- 6. Eternal judgment**

These six things are the basics, the foundation. If you do not have these you are not ready to go on to the other doctrines.

Jesus started His preaching with, “Repent and believe the gospel!” John the Baptist also preached repentance. When Jesus sent out his disciples He instructed them to preach repentance. When He gave the great commission we were commanded to preach repentance. The book of Acts opens with the preaching of repentance. The subject of repentance is saturated throughout Scripture.

It is best, when constructing a building, to put the foundation in first. Some people try to get all their theology right before they get their foundation settled. David wrote, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psm. 11:3)

Repentance is not cleaning up your life. God and God alone can clean up a life. Repentance is a change of heart; a change of mind. There are

many people who love the world and plan to keep loving the world, but also claim to be saved. They want to live for the devil and go to heaven when they die. All your prayers cannot save you; only Jesus can! I know a man who said he had prayed and prayed to be saved, but did not know if he had said the right words. That was his problem – he was trusting the “right” words to save him. There are no right words. It is Jesus who saves us. When a person sees the awfulness of his sin and the need to be delivered from it, he will find that Jesus alone can save him.

Now let’s look at Luke 13:1, “There were present at that season some that told Him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.”

If you know much about the Jewish religion you know they only had one temple, and at that temple they had an altar of sacrifice. They were to bring their sacrifices to that temple in Jerusalem and offer them on that altar. They could not build their own altar or temple wherever it was convenient or desirable. They were to see that sacrifices were offered at Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was not in Galilee; it was in Judea. Between these two areas was Samaria and most Jews would not go through Samaria, even for a

short cut, because the Jews hated the Samaritans. They would go the long way around in order to get to Jerusalem. To offer their sacrifices these Galileans were obeying the laws of God to the best of their understanding. They had taken a religious pilgrimage to be obedient to what they knew. A man by the name of Pilate was the Roman governor in Judea over the Jews, a very brutal man. As they were offering their sacrifices Pilate came into the temple and had those Galileans put to death. Their blood mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. These Galileans were religious martyrs, - obedient and dying for what they believed.

In Luke 13:2 Jesus answered and said unto them, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?" In verse 3 Jesus went on to say, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Jesus said that those men were lost. "Perish" is the same word we find in John 3:16. You can be religious and be lost. These Galileans were. You can obey teachings of the Bible and still be lost. You can be a religious martyr and still be lost if you don't repent. They had done a whole lot, but they hadn't repented. Many people haven't done as much as those Galileans did.

In John 1 we read that the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He was teaching about grace here. We have so many people naming the name of Christ who have never given up on their sin. They still love it. Their lusts are ruling their hearts. They are lost! They can talk right and seem to believe right, but if they have never repented and trusted in Jesus, they are lost! This is what Jesus said. He is the one who made heaven and hell, and surely can tell who is headed which way.

Luke 13:4 continues, “Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?” You could call this an accidental death. In verse 5 Jesus repeated Himself, “Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Jesus wanted it clear that if you don’t repent, you will surely perish.

Perishing people don’t like to hear that. Some saved people aren’t sure they like it either. But Jesus told us what we needed, not necessarily what we wanted.

Repentance isn’t just for lost people. God told churches to repent, too. You see, when God saves us He lays a foundation for everything that follows in the Christian life: right attitude toward the

Scriptures, right attitude toward the Father, right attitude toward the Holy Spirit who drew us into salvation, right attitude toward sin, and right attitude toward holy living. All these things God deals with when He saves a sinner. They aren't there in full depth, but they are there in seed form so we can grow into maturity. When we were born the first time God put in our body's chemistry all that was necessary for us to become adults. When we were born the second time, God included all that was necessary for us to become a spiritual person. It is part of the miracle of the new birth. It is not of the flesh but it is of God. He worked it out for our good and for His glory.

He said we need to repent because we will be doing it the rest of our lives. Repentance is evidence of a desire for holiness, obedience and humility. We want to resist the old nature and stand against sin in the future. What kind of salvation would it be without those things? The issue is not getting relief, but the issue is repenting.

In verse 6 of Luke 13 He gave a parable. The fig tree is a picture of Israel. There was no fruit thereon. John the Baptist had already taught the need for fruits of repentance. Jesus said for three

years there was no fruit and told the dresser of the vineyard to cut it down. The dresser asked for a little more time for the fig tree. After Jesus went back to heaven God wasn't finished with Israel as seen in the early chapters of Acts. But as a nation they didn't repent and God cut them off, grafting us in. This is the age in which we live. It is a warning to us that He may one day cut us off and reinstate them. (Rom. 11:17-24; Rom. 2:4)

I don't know of any time in history when there has been less preaching on repentance. When you hear of a church having a time of repentance it is something of which people take notice. Sinners rarely know they are supposed to repent. I knew of a man holding special meetings at a fairly large church. At the end of a service a sailor came up wanting to be saved. When he was dealt with by the evangelist and was asked if he was ready to turn from his sin, he responded, "No!" He wasn't interested if he had to repent, so got up and headed out. The pastor found that the sailor hadn't been saved and hurried out to catch him. He got a decision from him. The pastor didn't mention repentance to the sailor. He didn't want to confuse the issue. The evangelist said that the pastor had just made him two-fold more the child of hell than he was himself. That sobered the meeting and the relationship.

My father was once asked to sit with a pastor who was dealing with a person about salvation. The man said he had some sin that he liked and wanted to stay in. The pastor told him not to worry about his sin, he just needed to get saved. What did he think he was getting saved from? Dad nearly wept. The pastor ran through some verses, a sinner's prayer and pronounced him saved. That man wasn't saved. The years that followed showed that he had never been saved. He still loved his sin.

People don't get saved unless they get saved from sin. The angel knew enough to tell Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name 'Jesus' for He shall save His people from their sin." That requires repentance.

In Luke 5:32 Jesus is speaking, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If you think you are in fine shape today, Jesus is not calling you. He doesn't have much to offer you. He didn't come for the likes of you as long as you think you are fine. If you could clean up your life to get ready for Jesus, you wouldn't need Him. He came to save sinners. Jesus found it necessary to leave heaven and His glory behind, to take on the limitation of a human body because of the importance of repentance.

He came and called sinners to repentance. He came to die and shed His blood for sinners. He spent longer calling us to repentance than He did dying for our sins. He said that except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. He was trying to open their eyes so they would repent and respond to His call and not have to perish! He kept calling me to repent. One day I did. Some of you He has been calling to repent. He wants to help you. It may cut deeply and hurt, but it is for your good. It is sinners that He calls to repentance.

Chapter 2

The Bible teaches repentance in both the Old and New Testaments. It is a word that has been left out by many in the teaching about salvation today. It is certainly a word that God has included in His Word on the matter of being saved. Repentance is not only for those who need to be saved, but it is also for those who have already been saved if they are ever going to be useful to God. A person is not holy unless they are repenting of their own dead works. Saved people are certainly in as much need of repentance today as lost people. Lost people need it to be saved and saved people need it to ever be right and useful to God.

Luke 13:1-3 tells of Galileans who had been obedient to many of the commands of God, but one command they had never obeyed, -- the command to repent. Jesus said that no matter

how good you might seem to be, even if you will die for your beliefs, except you repent you will all likewise perish.

In John 3:16 the Bible says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should NOT PERISH”. You must repent so that you can believe. Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. Repentance, in a sense, is the gate that opens the door to true faith in the Lord Jesus. They are closely associated. These Galileans hadn’t repented. Luke 13:4 tells of a tower falling on 18 men, crushing them to death. He goes on to say that except they repent they would all likewise perish. Some died by Pilate killing them and others by an accident. The issue was the condition of their soul when they die!

In Luke 5 we saw that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. I can call you to repentance but it is even better when Jesus calls you to repentance. If all you hear about repentance is what you hear when I’m talking, you’ve not heard enough. It needs to ring in your heart, day and night, like a bird singing, “Repent, repent, repent.” When you read your Bible it’s, “Repent”. Jesus came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If

God shows you your sinfulness, hear the call of Jesus to repent.

It is not that He is trying to mistreat you. He is trying to help you. He calls you to come for what you need, deliverance from your sins. We need this old doctrine back in our thinking and in our way of life. Biblical repentance is the foundation of your Christian experience. It is the first thing of the doctrine of Christ, the milk of the Word and the foundational truths. Jesus preached, “Repent and believe the gospel”. It is only a foolish man who would try to turn the order around. God’s order is always repent and then believe.

Luke 15:7 tells of the parable of the lost sheep and how the one was found and brought back. Jesus said, “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.” He sums up this teaching with one word, “Repentance”. In heaven there is joy when one sinner repents. Heaven doesn’t pay attention to everything that happens here on earth. Jesus wanted us to know that there is one thing that heaven notices. When one sinner repents there is joy in heaven.

Think a moment what heaven must be like. Seraphim and cherubim are rejoicing in praise. Add to this Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Noah and Melchizedek, Enoch, Elijah and David and the multitudes praising God with one voice, "Worthy is He that sits upon the throne." Further, add those who have been saved since Calvary, rejoicing and delighting themselves in the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. All of a sudden, over this great multitude, their attention is turned for the moment to earth. Out of well over 7,000,000,000 humans, most living in rebellion against heaven, somewhere one sinner repents and heaven takes note. There is joy in heaven over one sinner repenting!

We have become so calloused and confused by religious statistics that we have lost sight of the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. We hear of great multitudes professing some form of Christianity and we are told they are saved.

Repentance is such a rare thing it only takes one sinner repenting for heaven to take note. Just one. It is not millions repenting, but just one. One here and another there. Joy throbs through the heavenly kingdom over just one sinner repenting. Repentance is such a work of God that it isn't contained within a human body. It flows from this

planet and affects heaven itself. Jesus said that when the Son of Man comes it will be as it was in the days of Noah. Eight souls were saved. He wasn't saying only eight would be saved at the Rapture, but He was making a point. When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8b)

Notice that it isn't when someone goes to church that heaven rejoices. It isn't when someone joins a church that heaven experiences joy. It isn't when they get baptized that heaven takes note. It isn't when they get active and pass out tracts that heaven has joy. It is when a sinner repents that heaven rejoices! God says it is so important that heaven will take note.

Now look at Luke 15:10, "Likewise, I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." This sums up the parable of the lost coin. Heaven looks down and sees one in Africa that just repented and joy swells through the very presence of those angels. A little later there is one over there in Asia that repented and joy swells around the throne again. Perhaps soon there will be someone in North America who will repent. We think it is so common, but it isn't. It didn't say there is joy when 100 repent, or over the constant repenting

on earth. It said when there is that one sinner, just one sinner, —saved or lost sinner, heaven rejoices. It is a sad thing that preachers can go for years without seeing real Biblical repentance. I want you to see the awesomeness of true repentance. Heaven takes note.

There is a third parable given in the chapter. The first was the lost sheep, the second was the lost coin and the third is the lost son. We call it the story of the prodigal son. When that fellow came to himself and repented, he got out of the hog pen. All three of these are talking about repentance. If you study those parables, they will give you some insight on what repentance is. It is not a wandering sheep staying out on the hillside away from the fold. It is not a lost coin staying off to itself, but getting where it belongs. It is not a lost son in rebellion, continuing in rebellion. He returned to his father, willing to lose everything just for the sake of being made right. He said he would become a servant, -- like a slave. He didn't expect to be received as a son, but as a servant. We'll be willing to lose everything just to make something right. That is true repentance.

Toward the end of chapter 16 we have a story you well know about a certain rich man who died. There also was a certain beggar named Lazarus,

but God was gracious not to name the rich man. Lazarus died saved, but the rich man died lost. He died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. He was in hell before Jesus ever died. When the beggar died angels came and escorted him to paradise. Paradise has been relocated into heaven, -- Jesus cared for that.

In verse 27, in hell and in torment the rich man said, "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house." What good would that have done? The rich man never let him in before. What makes him think the rest of the family would let him in? He is desperate. "For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also, come into this place of torment." In hell he knew that his brothers hadn't died, but that they were still lost and headed to this awful place where he was. He didn't want them to come. Your friends in hell don't want you to come. If Granny died lost she doesn't want to see you there. She's begging someone to tell you so you won't go there. The rich man wanted someone to go see his five brothers – even an old beggar!

Verse 29 continues, "Abraham saith unto him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them'". Abraham said that they have the

Scriptures; let them listen to the Bible. The Scriptures are better than Lazarus. Verses 30 and 31, “And he said, ‘Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.’ And he said unto him, ‘If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’”

Jesus rose from the dead and it hasn't changed most of lost mankind.

Somehow that rich man in hell knew that his five brothers hadn't repented yet, and he knew that they needed to repent. In hell they are concerned about people repenting. Repentance is an event that heaven takes notice of, and is understood and known about in hell. Repentance not only affects the sinner and those around him, it affects hell. That man had a burden for five lost brothers. He would have known if one had repented and he only had a burden for four. If there is anything that can lessen the suffering in hell it is the repentance of loved ones here on earth.

Repentance is not a small matter. It is one of the greatest things a person ever does in his life. Heaven, earth and hell are affected by it. Jesus came and spent one year preaching repentance for every day He spent dying for our sins. I don't want to undervalue the work on the cross, in the

grave and in the resurrection, but recognize the absolute importance of repentance.

Luke 24:45-47 “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Repentance is a part of the great commission. Jesus said it should be preached ... and preached in that order. There is no cleansing or forgiveness except to those who repent.

Duncan Campbell, who had been in revival in the Hebrides, said that we sing, “Calvary Covers It All”, but that it won’t cover what we won’t uncover. To preach remission of sins is foolishness unless it is preached to those who have repented of the sins they want remitted. There must be repentance. How can they hold onto their sins and get them washed away? God will not forcibly wash the unrepentant.

Look back to chapter 3 of Luke beginning in verse 7 to hear the message of John the Baptist, “Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath

warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" He went on in verse 8, "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." Repentance produces fruit. You can say you have repented, but words never filled any hungry man's stomach. Food will. It is not words that are needed.

I tried to pastor a church and the men of that church said that we had a problem. I offered to try to get it straightened out. One of the men told the other one that when I gave the invitation they should both walk forward at the same time and that would make everything right. What does that have to do with repentance?

Most people don't repent. Some might say they are sorry, and they might or might not be. We have heard so little about repentance that we hardly know what real repentance is.

Heaven knows when the real thing happens and they stop for the one that truly did repent. John said, "I want to see your fruits. Show me the evidences. Show me what it has produced in you." Verse 8 continues with, "We have Abraham to our father..." In other words, we are members of the right group. "...God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is

hewn down, and cast into the fire.” He is saying that if you don’t have right fruits of repentance you are headed for judgment. If you’re saved, fire will burn up all your works done in the flesh (I Cor. 3:13). If you’re lost, you will burn forever. You need to repent with right fruits showing. If the tree is no good He won’t just lop a branch off, -- He will cut it at the roots.

It was the ministry of John the Baptist to prepare people for Jesus. His preaching was summed up in one word, REPENT. Why did God insist on repentance coming before Jesus was introduced to the people? Because that is how God works. Then when Jesus started preaching He picked right up with John’s message: repent and believe the gospel. For those who had submitted to John’s baptism, they were able to follow with Jesus’ teaching on believing the gospel. Those who rejected John’s message weren’t able to follow by obeying Jesus’ message. Repentance prepares you for Jesus and what He has to say. “There was a man sent from God whose name was John...”(John1:6) He was not that light but was sent to bear witness of that light”.(John 1:8) He bore witness with one word: repent. Lost people will never be ready to receive Jesus or even to meet Him until they have repented.

We are telling people to receive Jesus and they cannot. We're telling them to follow Jesus and He hasn't become real to them. The reason is that they haven't repented. It was after they had repented that John turned to some of his disciples and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." We are too quick to tell people to believe when they have not yet repented. When they repent it is not long before they are ready to believe.

Jesus preached repentance for three years. He died, was buried and rose again to complete the gospel. When the disciples started preaching they began with repentance. In Acts 2:38 Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized" There would be no baptism until they had repented, no remission of sins until they repented. They had to start with that. Several thousand were saved.

Later a lame man was healed and a crowd gathered. In Acts 3:19 Peter continues, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out"

In chapter 5 Peter has been arrested and they were persecuting him. In verses 29-31 he said, "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give

repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” Notice the order. He told them at Pentecost, in the temple and here in the legal assembly. It is repentance that they needed because they had crucified the Lord of glory.

In Acts 8 the disciples have scattered because of persecution in Jerusalem. One made a profession but he was not really saved, and he is exposed by Peter when Peter arrived. He said to Simon, “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” (vs. 22) Repentance is for after the cross also.

Go over to chapter 11. The first Gentile was saved in chapter 10, which caused a great controversy down in Jerusalem. They thought only Jews were going to get saved, or perhaps those half Jews, the Samaritans. But they called the Gentiles, “Dogs”. they held a council and the summation of it follows in verse 18, “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” There is no life without repentance; it is a gift that God gives.

In chapter 13 Paul and Barnabas are sent out on the first of the missionary journeys. As they go

and begin to preach, they are now in Gentile territory. Find what it is that they refer to as a touchstone in their preaching. In verse 24 speaking of John the Baptist, they said, “When John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.” This is how you get people ready for Jesus.

Go on over to chapter 17 where we find the apostle Paul there in Athens, the intellectual capital of the world. He was out on Mars Hill with the philosophers, discussing new ideas and philosophies of the day. He comes with an old idea that is so old it is new to them. Acts 17:30, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” God commands repentance of everybody.

We are a rebellious race on a planet of rebellion that is going its own way, ignoring God and His commands. We think that somehow He must bless us. He has commanded all men, everywhere, to repent. Oh, how I wish in my heart, that such a thing would happen!

In Acts 19:4 we read, “Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ

Jesus.” Repentance was simply getting them ready to believe. In chapter 20, verse 21 is Paul’s summation of his ministry, particularly in Ephesus but in general, “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” This was the focus of his message.

Acts 26: 20 tells us Paul is defending himself to King Agrippa shortly before he went to Rome. “But shewed 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 John the Baptist, doesn’t it? From chapters 2-26 this matter of repentance is constantly mentioned.

II Peter 3:9 reminds us that God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Romans 2:4 encourages us that the goodness of God leads us to repentance. God has been so good to mankind. What has the goodness of God led you to do?

Chapter 3

I Corinthians 6:9, 10 tells of specific sins that lost people must repent of if they want to be saved. It is impossible for saved people to continue to live in these sins. God will not let His children live this way. We must go with God's Word on the subject and believe that God is right. We have a problem today of calling many people saved when God doesn't claim them. Billy Graham once stated that if one of five of his converts were saved he would be a happy man. He believed that at least 80% of his converts were lost. If you had a church of his converts, for every 20 you would have no more than 4 saved.

At the end of the 1800's Dr. R. A. Torrey who worked with Dwight L. Moody, stated that he was of the opinion 85% of members in Bible-believing churches were lost. He said if you had 20 members you might have 3 saved. Several years ago I heard Dr. J. Vernon McGee on the radio say that he believed 90% of the attenders in evangelical churches in America were lost and headed for hell. Of 20 members, count yourself fortunate if 2 of them are saved.

I am not going to argue which one or whether any of these is right. I think these men were trying to tell us something in their later years from observation and experience. They were facing it in their own ministries. That is not easy. I don't know many preachers today with the understanding or courage to make such honest statements. We have many people living lost, claiming to be saved.

Let's begin in II Cor. 7:1 so that we have the background. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved (saved people) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (that will require some repenting), perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Verse 2 goes on, "Receive us, we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man." Verse 3, "I speak not

this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.” Paul and the brethren traveling with him had this church on their hearts.

I and II Corinthians were not books of cruelty, but books written to deliver them from their wickedness. It was much like that in Galatians 4:16, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” He loved them, and was willing to help them. You see, the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy. (Prov. 27:6) In real love we must speak strongly.

II Cor. 7:4 explains, “Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.” Verses 5 and 6 continue, “For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.” How often God would send a man along to encourage His children. Verse 7 and following, “And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I

rejoiced the more. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent For I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.” He wasn’t trying to leave them in a sorry condition forever; he wanted them in a sorry condition to get needed help. Until they became sorry, there was no hope for them.

Verse 9 continues, “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, (it is not enough to be sorry over sin) but that ye sorrowed to repentance. (A sorrow that just leaves you sorry is not any good. It will never help anybody, but a sorrow that will lead to repentance might well be helpful.) The scripture continues, “For ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.” Verse 10, “For godly sorry worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” You can have a sorrow that came from God or you can have a sorrow that came from the world. Godly sorrow will do you good, but the sorrow that comes from the world will do you great damage. It will dry you up and deaden you quickly. Let me say that if you start using the world’s methods to make people sorry, it will produce nothing but death. This is true whether you are using it in preaching, teaching, witnessing or in running your

home. The sorrow of the world worketh death. Their philosophy doesn't have anything to offer us. God's sorrow is what is necessary. Some will be sorry they were caught, sorry it was found out that they did a given thing, sorry for what the results were – and never recover themselves spiritually because they did not let God make them sorry. They were just sorry like anyone in the world would be.

For a person to be justified, to be born again, God will make them sorry until they repent of their sins and come to Jesus. For a Christian to be sanctified and delivered from their sins, God will make them sorry until they repent and are saved from the power of that sin. First, I was saved from the penalty and now I am being saved from the sin in my life. The same steps are used by God for the saved and the lost.

The kind of sorrow determines whether a person will get help or not. The right kind of sorrow will bring no damage to the individual, but the wrong kind will bring death. The avoiding of godly sorrow will keep you from true repentance. Verse 10 goes on to say that true repentance is not to be repented of. We have many people making professions that change their minds later. This is evidence they didn't really get saved, but were given a counterfeit. That is reality.

Evidences of godly sorrow that works repentance are found in verse 11: “For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you (in other words, you will be careful not to get back into it), yea, what clearing of yourselves (you will want to clear yourself at least as far as your sin is known).

The verse continues, “Yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea what vehement desire (to what’s right), yea, what zeal (for the things of God) yea, what revenge.” If you want to know whether Brother or Sister _____ ever became concerned and repentant over drinking, just listen during testimony time. They want to fight liquor. They are so repentant they want to destroy it, warning young people and others to avoid it. Some areas of sin I cannot speak as clearly against as I do the sin of easy believism. I hope I never get over the revenge against it. “In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.” God spelled it out so that we can measure the fruits of repentance.

Most of what passes for repentance in Christian circles is hollow and useless. Let’s look at sins that God says must be repented of in order to be saved. Early in my ministry I

heard an Englishman use this illustration in a message. Advocates of easy believism tried to deal with a fellow named Mr. Fox. He said he wanted to be saved but made no progress. When asked what he did for a living he said he was a purse snatcher. He went on to say that if he could average about 6 a week it cared for all his bills. He was advised that if he could just get saved he would need to cut back to 5 a week. God doesn't think that way. Then they were going to cut him to 4 and 3. That isn't repentance, but that is the way much counseling is done. They say to come, get saved, and worry about your sins later. That is not what the Bible says.

What are sins that show a person has never been in the kingdom? I Corinthians 6:9-11 gives a clear list: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, not covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

1. Fornicators – looseness in the sexual realm, immorality including pornography. People

who live in that are lost. They are not in the kingdom. If they repent, they can be delivered from being a fornicator.

2. Idolators – Anything that means more to you than God is idolatry. That is Dwight L. Moody's definition. Idolators are lost people.
3. Adulterers – Those that are into sexual sins where they are violating their marriage vows are lost. I know some of these people say they are saved, but God said that I am not to be deceived.
4. Effeminate – men who act like women. They were born men but don't behave like men. God says they are lost. They need to repent.
5. Abusers of themselves with mankind – that includes all areas of homosexuality and sexual abuse in its various forms.
6. Thieves – they steal from God, other people, the government or their employer. I'm not saying that a Christian never steals something, but believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and He will not remain silent.
7. Covetous – living for things, including money.
8. Drunkards – it may be on alcohol, drugs or many other addictive influences. It produces an altered state of body, mind and behavior.

9. **Revilers – these folks are constantly tearing others down.**
10. **Extortioners – these seek to obtain by wrong means things that should come by honest labor, investment or creativity.**

Don't be deceived. None of these shall inherit the kingdom of God. You must repent of that which you are guilty. That is what the Bible teaches.

Gal. 5:21b explains, "Of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." In verses 19-21 God gives us a somewhat expanded list:

Verse 19, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery (we have already seen this), fornication (covers what adultery didn't), uncleanness (all types of filthy sin), lasciviousness (means I have license to do as I want)." Verse 20 goes on, "Idolatry (we've talked about that), witchcraft (involves supernatural forces that are not of God. They might help you by witching a well, blowing away burns, reading a verse to stop bleeding, or using the horoscope.) hatred (is in direct contrast to the love God puts in the heart of believers), variance (some people are just argumentative, a nice word for variance), emulations (the attempt to duplicate or surpass others. It comes from a heart of pride and

rejection of humility), wrath (operating with anger instead of God's peace, always fighting something or someone), seditious (involve undermining others, never satisfied to see things run smoothly), heresies (result in taking an area of the truth to an extreme and neglecting God's balancing truths), envyings (dissatisfied with what they are or have and wanting what others have or are), murders – (that can be done with the tongue as well as with a sword), drunkenness" (repetitious from I Cor. 6)." Continuing in verse 21, we see revellings (a life of continual partying). Then the scripture says, "and such like". All these things we have in these verses are marks of lost people.

Now we go to Ephesians 5:6 where we have a similar list of sins that evidence lostness. We are warned not to allow vain words to be used to deceive us. These have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. "For this ye know, that no whoremonger (men that prey upon women, particularly whores), unclean person (repetitious from Gal. 5), covetous man who is an idolator – (repetitious from I Cor. 6). Never be deceived about what the Word of God states here. God tells us they are not His children, but children of disobedience.

II Timothy 3:8, “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” Reprobate means God rejects them regarding their faith. They may well say, “I have faith”, but God says that they are lost. Verse 5, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” It is clear that the list of sins in vss. 2-4 are marks of the lost and we are to turn away from them.

Similar warnings are in the contexts of I Cor. 5 & 6, Galatians 5 and Ephesians 5. The 18 marks in verses 2-4 are evidences of a faith which God rejects and we should likewise. They show the results of the lack of God-given repentance.

Rev. 21:8. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,”

II Tim. 2:25,26, “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” American churches are filling up

with unrepentant sinners who have a faith that doesn't bring a changed life.

Some people's view of Jesus is that He might be able to assist a little with their sin problems. The Bible says He came to save His people FROM their sins. He will help you repent; the Holy Ghost will make you sorry enough that you can repent. Such were some of you but now you are washed. Something great happens when God saves a sinner. A great Savior does a great job. Repentance will lead you to faith in that great Savior. You may say that with man it is impossible, but the echo comes back from heaven, "But with God, all things are possible." We need to teach, preach and present repentance to lost sinners, because only then will they see their desperate need for a great Savior. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He is near unto all those who call upon Him in truth.

Chapter 4

II Cor. 7:9-11 We have been dealing with what the Bible teaches about repentance. Jesus taught that except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. His preaching began with, “Repent!” and followed with, “Believe the Gospel.” This was the pattern of the apostles right on through to Paul, who preached repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance is a necessity for anyone to ever be saved.

II Cor. 7:9 “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: (In other words, sorrow was not the goal. Sorrow was not the desired end; sorrow was not what the Apostle Paul was after. He wanted something far different; repentance is something beyond sorrow. That was the issue in Paul’s mind. I think sometimes we only try to make people sorry. Sorrow is not enough. Many people never even get sorry over their sins, but Paul said he wanted them to be more than sorry, “I want you to sorrow to repentance”.) For ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.”

Verses 10 and 11 continue, “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 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.” Paul’s goal was not that they would have damage, but that they would receive help. He wasn’t just concerned about how they felt about him but that they would receive the long-range help they needed.

Sometimes we find a parent so afraid of their child that they refuse to correct him, - afraid that if they try to make a child sorry, the child won't like them. For some reason the parent would rather be liked than help the child.

Keep in mind that the parent who is trying to make a child sorry is trying to raise a child that will make a fit adult. They have to become sorry enough to lay aside the foolishness of childhood, lay aside the rebellion of their heart, and do what is right. A parent must be willing to have the child upset for the long-range good of that child.

A doctor should leave town if his greatest concern is keeping his patients happy for the moment, rather than being concerned about long-range health. Suppose you had a case of cancer, but you didn't want to hear it was cancer. The doctor tells you, "You just have a side ache", and gives you some pain-killing medication.

There are many preachers and churches who will tell you things are not as bad as you thought. But the Bible says that people have to be made sorry over their sin so they will repent.

This passage spells out that there are two types of sorrow. At the end of verse 10 we are told that the sorrow of the world worketh death. In verse 9 we

are told that there was a godly sorrow. Verse 10 tells us that godly sorrow produces repentance. Just being sorry over sin is never enough. A person might be sorry he has been caught. Or he might be sorry for what it is going to cost him, or because of what people are going to think. He may be sorry that things will never get back to where they were. Lost people in the world experience that kind of sorrow all the time. It just dries them up inside often leading to bitterness. Some people get sorry over things and die of heart attacks, strokes, or suicide.

There are two kinds of sorrow. The one works death and the other leads to salvation through repentance. I think many people become sorry for their sins because of what it is going to cost them. Some people want out of their sins because they are afraid their sins will drag them into hell, rather than wanting out of sin because sin is sin. If they could find some way to sin and get away with it they would do it! Some even try it. A godly sorrow makes you sorry for the sin because it is SIN. People don't go to hell because of all their various sins. They go to hell because they don't have Jesus. All those sins simply show that they don't have Him. They are the evidences of it. When someone has Jesus they have a new heart and mind and they think differently. They have

different goals, they have a new life and they live differently. Sins don't drag people to hell. We were all born headed there. Psalms tells us we came from our mother's womb telling lies.

God teaches us to become sorry for our sin because it is sin. We have to see the exceeding sinfulness of our sin, rather than what it is going to cost us. A person ought to feel sick over lying because they told a lie rather than somebody might find out the truth.

We have so much sorrow these days that is of the world. Telling people they need to get out of some sins or they will go to hell is misleading. There are many 2

not in those sins that are still going to hell. We aren't told that the rich man in hell was a liar or that he was a thief or an adulterer. But we do know that he didn't have Jesus. There are many folks that don't have certain sins, but they can go to hell without those sins. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.' (I John5:12) It doesn't matter what else he may have.

When God makes you sorry for sin you will uncover things no one knew anything about. A man in Ireland told of men getting saved who had worked in the ship yards. These were times of

revival during WWII. The men began bringing back the tools they had been stealing over the years. The ship yards hired some carpenters to make bins for the many tools being returned. They hadn't known who stole what; they just knew they had to replace tools from time to time. Finally, they called all the men together and requested that they bring no more tools back, but instead put conscience money into a non-profit charitable fund. God made them sorry and they had to make it right. That is godly sorrow, and that leads to repentance, and leads to Biblical salvation.

There are not many Biblically saved people today. Many are claiming to be saved without experiencing godly sorrow. They never were repentant and are living as they had been. They may have made a few wrongs right where people had known they were wronged, but they had no desire to uncover anything. Jesus didn't say anything to Zacchaeus about his business affairs but Zacchaeus said, "If I have taken too much from anyone I will restore it in multiples. I must make it right." When he finished saying this, Jesus told him that salvation had come to his house that very day. That is repentance. It causes one to make things right.

A person dealing with lost souls needs to know the kind of sorrow they have. We have many people who have claimed to make a profession of faith, but in their hearts they are secret enemies against the laws of God. They have no desire for fellowship with God or His people. They have no love for the Word of God and the teachings of God.

Repentance may take a while, though conversion is instantaneous. An illustration can be seen in the record about the sower and the seed. Some seed fell on hard ground. Some of it fell over among the stones. Some fell among the thorns and some fell on good earth. A farmer knows he ought to obey the Bible and break³ up the fallow ground. God has to break our stony hearts and give us a heart of flesh if He is ever going to get a right crop. Repentance breaks up all that stubborn willfulness within us, all that hard self-centeredness. Then there are some with rocky soil. God has to get rocks out of our lives. They may be fairly well fastened in. They have to be pulled out, jerked out, pried out or blasted out.

God will deal with those rocks in your life. That is called godly sorrow that leads to repentance unto salvation.

You don't get your life cleaned up, but you are willing to have God start hauling rocks out. Trouble is, we have people lying on their rocks and telling God that He must not touch them, - they want to keep them! God calls such rocks sins. And then there is the briar patch. The cares of this world, the riches of this world have to be pulled out! Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Godly sorrow will make you look at the briar patch in your life and do more than just what you have to do. You will say, "That bunch of worthless thorns have to come out!" That is godly sorrow.

The last kind was good land, but how did it become good land? It was that principle of repentance. Moody always sent someone around for a month to prepare folks to repent so that he could preach the gospel and see people saved. Charles Finney sent Daniel Nash into a town to pray down the power of God before he would come and preach. James Stewart said that 4 weeks was hardly long enough to hold an evangelistic meeting. It took nearly that long to get people right so that they were ready to evangelize. We're trying to do it in 4 minutes??? I have heard of some who try to evangelize people from one car to the next before a light turns green. The Bible says that godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation. We're trying to pick

corn before we have the seed in the ground, - before we have even run the plow through. Then we can't understand why, at the end of the year, our corn bins are empty.

People can change their lives and look good for a while. II Cor. 11:13, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." God didn't change them and make them apostles: they did it all on their own. Self-improvement programs. They cleaned up on the outside, learned a new language, learned a few new habits, adjusted a little, but the Bible teaches that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. He doesn't have to transform himself. God, by an act of creation, transforms that person. God does a thorough job. That is why in I John 5 we find for those that have been saved, that have been changed, the commands of God are not grievous. But for those who have never been changed, Jude 4 would be a little closer to them. They have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. They want to talk about God's grace but they live like the devil. The commands of God are grievous to them. They have transformed themselves, but they have never been able to come up to the level that God demands.

Repentance is one of those old paths that God laid down and expects us to walk in. Repentance is what gets us ready for revelation. John the Baptist preached repentance so that we would be ready for Jesus to come. Jesus starts becoming real as we repent of our sins. For most professing Christians, Jesus is no more real than George Washington. He is just a figure of history, read about in a book where they studied and learned some of the details. But my wife is more real to me than George Washington. When I was saved I got married to Jesus, in a spiritual sense. I'm interested in something that is real, not just history. We talk about receiving Him, but for most people it is a mental process or an emotional moment they go through. Or it may be some sort of a psychological switch or manipulation, or it is some kind of a decision that they made. It may have been some sort of gift or blessing they were after, but it has never become the entering into of a vital relationship with a Person. The watchword of our Communion this last week was, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." That is marriage, that intimate relationship.

We read in the book of Psalms that weeping may endure through the night but joy comes in the morning. My goal is not just to make you sorry, - always weeping. No! I want to bring you to the

joy. You may need to weep over your sins and repent over your sins, but I want to see you safely to the other side where you're saved FROM your sins. The joy will come to you from the One who is the bright and Morning Star. The Day Star will appear in your heart. Sunshine will flood within. Now you can rejoice in your Savior! He will save you FROM your sins, as well as from yourself and other things.

Let's look at Luke 6:47-49: "Whosoever cometh to me and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep and laid the foundation upon a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

The one built a house a little cheaper, quicker and easier than the other one. The other one was willing to take a lot of time and do some digging until he got down to a rock where he fastened his house. The second one may have figured there was a rock there, and he was close and he was

satisfied. But he never fastened to that rock. In the Old Testament the rock is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is called that in the book of Corinthians – that Rock which was Christ. Jesus uses that picture. He said there are some people willing to get rid of everything that stands between them and Me. They will dig down to Me; they don't expect Me to dig up to them. That is repenting of their sins and getting rid of all the things between them and Jesus. They will dig down and fasten on, and they will survive the storm. They will have something that will last.

There are others that are satisfied to know they are near. They won't deal with what stands between them and Jesus. When the storm comes, they will wash out. They avoided repenting. They believed they could be saved easier without repenting. You can build a house faster without putting in a foundation, without fastening to a rock and build it cheaper. Maybe you can even make it look nicer, but you will waste all your time and effort. Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye will all likewise perish." There will be a storm that will test the nature and the quality of that relationship, and close is not good enough.

Salvation is a spiritual marriage. Some people are close to getting married but that is not good

enough. It never would have satisfied me. I wanted the whole thing. I wanted it right. You know, marriage is a real event. Someone could talk until they think they are married, but that doesn't make it so. You are either saved or you're not. All the talk in the world won't change the fact of whether or not there has been a real transaction occur. Marriage is for life, and so is salvation. "Whosoever believeth (not just believed once)" The thought is that you started believing and you're going to keep on believing. I plan to always keep believing. The Bible says that we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them which believe unto the saving of their souls.

Marriage involves forsaking all others. We used to put it in the ceremonies. Do you think my wife would have tolerated my wanting to date other girls after we were married? She didn't even want me to write letters to them after we were engaged. I don't blame her. But some people think they are somehow going to get married to Jesus while they keep on flirting around with the world. He knows what is in their heart, and He might not show up on the wedding day. I wouldn't blame Him, would you? It takes two to get married. You may think the Lord is obligated. He is the Lord and we are the servant. Forsaking all others meant

leaving home, and it may mean leaving some other things that are pretty good. When you get saved you leave some things that might have been all right in your eyes. But you're willing to leave what is good for something that is better. You'll turn from those things for Jesus. You'll just repent and turn from them. Now you will want to spend time with Him, His people and His Word. You won't have as much desire for some of those other things. Jesus is worthy to cleave to, to hold to and to stand with. What would we think of a young couple putting off getting married until they are old? Maybe they plan to get around to it sometime before they die. That is how many folks treat Jesus. They want to give Him the leftovers when they are ready to die.

The Bible says to remember now our creator in the days of our youth. Another place we are told to rejoice with the wife of our youth. These things fit together. Repent and get on to salvation. Don't keep putting it off. Salvation is so real it will not be repented of. I have heard of marriages where one party, after as little as a week, doesn't want to be married. If one really repents of his sins and comes to Jesus, he'll have a salvation he will never want to turn from, never repent of.

Last Sunday I celebrated my 35th spiritual birthday. I just want to say I have never wanted out. It just gets sweeter as the years go by. I get to know Him better and love Him more. Yet, in a very real sense, I am looking through the veil right now, but there is coming a day when I will see Him face to face. Now it's through a glass darkly, but then we will know, even as we are known. We will get to know Him just like He knows us. Won't that be something?

Become sick of your sin, be willing to turn from it and there will be a Savior who will be real and personal to you for all eternity. His name is Jesus.

Chapter 5

Jesus taught that except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. We found that there are certain sins that a person must repent of if they are involved in them. People that live in these sins are lost, they are not inheriting the kingdom of God, and they have not been born again. The Bible says if that is the way they live, we are not to be deceived about it: the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. I know it takes Jesus to make us righteous, but it also takes Jesus to make us sorry for our sins. If a sinner wants to hold onto some of his sin, Jesus won't declare him righteous.

Mark 10:17 "And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'" This account is written in Matt. 19, Mark 10 and Luke 18. Three times God records it. If you examine the three accounts you will find that this man was a wealthy man, a young man and a successful man because he was a ruler. He had succeeded in politics and in finances while he was still young. This man somehow came to the conclusion that there was a great void in his life. He needed eternal life and he didn't have it. He became so concerned over it that he made a decision to do something about it. He took

appropriate steps; he came to the Lord Jesus, the one to whom we must come.

If there was ever anyone who traveled an aisle in the Scriptures, it would be this man. He didn't "walk the aisle", he ran. Further, he humbled himself and went to his knees in front of the Lord Jesus. He begged, he cried out, he asked for eternal life. The Scriptures record that he went away lost. That may sound strange to some, but it is what the Bible teaches. We have churches today that would have sent him away with a profession. Jesus sent him away lost. Jesus did not deal like many people are taught to deal with sinners. Jesus dealt with him right. He couldn't do wrong; He had to deal with him properly. It would be good for us to learn to deal with souls correctly.

This man had a problem; all he wanted was eternal life. He wasn't asking for Jesus Himself. He wanted something from Jesus, but he wasn't really wanting Him. He was after "it" instead of "Him". Many people are looking for a gift without the Giver. They want the benefits without the Blessor. Somehow they are trying to find the fire escape from hell and a ticket to heaven without having a Lord and a Savior. Verse 18 continues, "And Jesus said unto him, 'Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is God.'"

He began to deal with the issue of His deity. He dealt with man's responsibility to God, or that which covers the first four of the ten commandments. Verses 19 and 20 continue, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto Him, 'Master, all these have I observed from my youth.'" The young man had no problem here. But we may wonder why the Lord would bring the ten commandments up when dealing with a lost soul? Jesus knew that we must deal with sin before a person can be saved.

Many folks are avoiding the sin issue or are just touching it as they run by. Jesus started where we need to start – with sin. This young man thought he had no problem with these sins and had kept them from his youth up. Jesus is going to press the issue. Galatians tells us the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Many folks, in trying to get people to Christ, only get them to a decision. They may get them to a prayer; they may get them to some facts, - a profession. Some may even get to a baptismal tank and then to church membership. However, God has given us a tool that He will use to get people to Jesus! It is the law.

The Jewish mind knows that the law was on two tables of stone . . . the first having to do with man's relationship to God and the second with man's relationship to man. Jesus had already touched on man's relationship to God, and started through that of man's relationship to man. He had covered 9 of the 10 commandments. The young man must have wondered why Jesus only covered 9. He may have been thinking if Jesus asked him about the 10th one he could tell Him the same, - that he had kept all from his youth. The man had lived a clean life. He didn't have to worry about someone pulling a skeleton out of his closet. Still, he felt a need for eternal life. You can live clean and still not have eternal life!

Verse 21, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.'" The young man may have thought he was ready for the one thing lacking: thou shalt not covet. However, Jesus opened up the 10th commandment. Verse 22, "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." He went away sad, and lost because

Jesus pressed home the area of law that was closest to this man's heart.

It doesn't mean that everyone must sell everything they have to be able to follow Jesus, but some might. Every lost person has an issue between them and God. God knows what the issue is. Years ago while I was pastoring in Ohio, God was moving and some young fellows became concerned about their souls. It fell my lot to deal with them. I asked them, one by one, "What means the most to you in your life?" This was a time for honesty. Not one of them said that it was Jesus. They were concerned about their souls but not about having Jesus! One answer was Little League baseball. Another said it was his parents – foster parents that loved him. Then I went back, asking each if he would give up what mattered most for Jesus. They had to face what mattered most to them.

Jesus told the rich young ruler that He would find out if he was willing to give up his wealth for Him. You may think you shouldn't ask those questions when dealing with souls. Jesus did. The man turned and went with his possessions, without Jesus. Lost. He would not repent of his covetousness so he stayed lost. Reading on in verse 23, "And Jesus looked round about, and

saith unto His disciples, ‘How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!’” Verse 24, “And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, ‘Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!’” If you are trusting your riches how are you going to get in? Verse 25 and following continue “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, ‘Who then can be saved?’” Brethren, we are living in a day when you might wonder who could be left lost? When Jesus dealt with the issue of eternal life, of salvation, of eternal destinies, the question that came to the mind of the disciples was this: who then can be saved?

In verse 27 Jesus responds, “With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God ALL things are possible.” No one gets saved unless God does the work.

I know there was a preacher in Indiana who claimed that if we used his method we could get 10 saved while we were waiting for the Holy Spirit to get 1 into the kingdom. All he was doing for many people was greasing the road to hell, because with men it’s impossible. Men can bring

people to a decision. Men can bring people to a fact, but it takes God to bring them to life. It takes repentance before there can be life. The rich young ruler wanted life and Jesus dealt with repentance because repentance comes first. Jesus dealt with the area where he needed to repent.

I want you to know that repentance is so important heaven takes note of it and residents of hell know if it has occurred. The entire triune Godhead is involved in bringing sinners to repentance. The book of Acts says that God commanded all men everywhere to repent. That is the command of the Father. Jesus said, "I am come to call sinners to repentance." The Father commanded it and the Son calls them. In the gospel of John we're told that when the Comforter is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. He does the convicting work. It is commanded by the Father, called for by the Son and convicted by the Holy Spirit. All three get involved to bring a sinner to repentance. Who are we to try to bypass the work of the triune God? You see, with man it is impossible for anyone to be saved, but with God it IS possible. We need His help to birth them into the kingdom.

That which is born of the flesh is nothing more than what it was born of, - flesh. But that which is born of the Spirit is what it has been born of, - Spirit. It is an act of God. This is what is right. God works to produce godly sorrow that there might be a right repentance unto salvation. The sorrow of the world only works death.

God will bring to the surface the sin that needs to be dealt with. We are running people down little man-made paths. They are new paths, not the old paths. There is a way that looks right unto a man, but Proverbs tells us the end thereof is the way of death. Jesus dealt honestly with this soul, and told His disciples that it takes God to get a person saved.

Verse 28 adds, "Then Peter began to say unto Him, 'Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee.'" The disciples had left all behind, and were beginning to grasp this. Verses 29 and 30 continue, "And Jesus answered and said, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal

life.” He is still talking about eternal life, - about being saved. A person has to be willing to leave all, but the Lord will make it up to him. They will experience persecution besides, because that is part of it. Salvation may solve all your old problems, but it will give you a new set. It may care for your former enemies, but it will give you new ones.

The rich young ruler couldn't see that far. He wouldn't repent, and went away lost. Jonah had to learn that lesson. He thought salvation was of man. God called him to Nineveh, the capitol of the Assyrian empire. It would be like someone being called to Moscow and being told that God is going to move mightily in Moscow. He would be able to bless that country while He judges America. That country could then run over ours. Like any good American we would run for Argentina. Most of us are better patriots than we are Christians.

So Jonah, instead of going north and east to Nineveh, headed due west to Spain, to Tarsus. He may have felt it was the will of God because there was a boat leaving in the direction he wanted to go. Not only was there a boat but there was a space for a passenger. He even had money to pay his passage. Being assured in his own heart and mind, he booked passage, paid his fare and ran

into a whale of a problem. Before he got out of that problem, he had to confess one thing:5 salvation is of the Lord. With God salvation is possible. All things are possible. We need to get back to dealing with souls on the basis that if God doesn't do for them, they will stay lost! If we can see God do for them, they will repent and they will believe.

Both repentance and faith are works . . . His works, not ours. He is the one that worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. We must be faithful to how let Him do the work. Exercising God-given repentance is no more a work than exercising God-given faith. Salvation is not of our works or we would be boasting about it. Salvation is of the Lord, and Jonah finally learned that lesson.

We are not as those that draw back unto perdition such as the rich young ruler.

Some only get close, but never receive Him as Lord and Savior. Demas walked with Paul and traveled as a missionary, but departed, having loved this present world. I John 2 says that if any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Judas was one of the twelve. He went out and preached, taught and performed miracles. The Bible says he went to his own place. Simon the

sorcerer believed, but his was a human faith, not divinely given. He gave no evidence of true repentance. When Peter came, he told him he needed to repent. (Acts. 8)

There are those in II Pet. 2 who were denying the Lord that bought them, but were claiming to be Bible teachers. God called them false teachers and false prophets and stated that their last end would be worse than their first. There were those in Jude that turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, who of old were ordained to this condemnation. Titus speaks of those who were reprobate unto every good work, or those in chapter 2 that blasphemed the Word of God by their inconsistent lives. If you have salvation that God gave you, having made you sorry and helping you repent, you won't turn back on it. (II Cor. 7:9,10) Any other kind only sows confusion and is useless.

After all his years of preaching, Dr. David Otis Fuller said that for every one heart that was changed we have ten "head Christians". J. Vernon McGee said he believed that 90% of those in evangelical churches today are lost. We have many people with a salvation they will turn from, if they haven't already. They are tares in the wheat. They are Judas's in the camp. They are

Demas's on the tour. They have never been born by God, no matter how good they presently look.

How do you recognize what is real and what is false? In lost people it works about the same as it does in saved. John the Baptist preached repentance. People came to be baptized and he called them a generation of vipers and asked who had warned them to flee from the wrath to come. He told them to bring forth fruits of repentance. Repentance has fruits. Paul was preaching at the end of his ministry, just before he went to Rome to die. In Acts 26 he said he was preaching that men ought to do works meet for repentance. There are definite works that go along with repentance. What are they?

Look at verse 11 of II Cor. 7. It will produce carefulness when a person gets enough godly sorrow over their sin. (This has been covered.) Before John Bunyan was saved and God was dealing with him over his foul mouth, he would dive face first into a mud puddle rather than let oaths escape from his lips. Secondly there will be a clearing of yourself. You'll want to make full restitution. Psalm 51 lets us know David cleared himself with God over his sin with Bathsheba. Mr. Spurgeon said that a man's clearing of himself needs to be as widely known as his sin could have

been known. Covering will never clear. Repentance gets it out in the open.

Thirdly, there is an indignation at having fallen into the sin. Fourthly, there will be a fear because they know the strength of the sin and the power of the flesh.

The fifth thing is there will be a vehement desire, a longing to be reconciled with their Father. It will be like the church at Ephesus would have been, had they repented and returned to their first love. The sixth thing is a zeal, - they will become "on fire", instant in season and out of season. The seventh thing is that there will be a revenge, -- they will want to retaliate. Look at II Cor. 10, verse 6:

"And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." You will want to strike out against disobedience. Someone who has repented of a given sin is stronger against that sin than a person who has never fallen into it. God puts a revenge into you to help fight against that sin. We will want revenge on what our sin did to others. It gets back to the awfulness of sin being sin, not of what it might cost us some day.

Godly sorrow works these things. If you say you have repented, are you careful, cleared, indignant, fearful, having vehement desire, zealous and

having revenge? Those are fruits of godly repentance. It is a whole lot more than shaking hands and saying a few words. We need godly repentance to have salvation that will not be repented of, one that will last. Dear reader, genuine repentance is a gift from God. Have you received it and acted upon it?