

Marks of Genuine Repentance (Part II)

Various Passages

1. Introduction.

- a. Last time we saw how the theme of repentance is pervasive in the New Testament.
- b. We saw four areas people often rely on as the evidence of true repentance. I sought to show why a person should not rely on these things as the evidence of salvation, nor true repentance.
- c. This morning I want to look at some marks of genuine repentance.

2. Two Categories of Repentance.

- a. A repentance unto the forgiveness of sin.
 - i. This is that initial repentance at the moment of conversion.
 - ii. At it's most basic level, repentance means to change one's mind. As a person has a change of mind, they will then turn from one thing and then move toward another.
 - iii. Central to repentance, though, is that it is something which first deals with the mind. It is where all true repentance must begin.
 - iv. As a result, repentance requires having right information. This isn't a vague process, but coming into a true knowledge of very specific truth.
 1. We must have a right understanding of God, ourselves, and then what we must do in light of these things.
 2. Repentance, then, is turning from sin, Satan, and self, to Christ and Him crucified.
 - a. We must understand the true Gospel, or repentance and salvation is impossible.
 - b. Romans 10:13-15.
- b. A repentance unto sanctification.

- i. The first category is coming to Christ. This second category is becoming like Christ.
- ii. This is an ongoing process (and state of being) for the rest of a professing Christian's life.
 1. All Christians must be in the perpetual state of changing their mind as they keep examining their life through the lens of biblical truth.
 - a. We must keep filtering every aspect of life through Scripture.
 - b. This is not necessarily the idea of learning new things from Scripture, but actively examining your life in light of what you already know.
 - c. The more mature a Christian is, and the more they keep soaking themselves in biblical truth, the better they'll become at this process.
 2. We are to turn from self, sin, and disobedience, to Christ, holiness, and obedience.
 3. This is an intensely proactive process. The Christian life can never be a passive one.
 - a. The more this second category of repentance is true for you, the more assurance you should have the first category of repentance is true for you.
 - b. C.f., Heb. 12:14.
 - c. There's no biblical category for a saved, but stagnant, Christian.
 - d. If you've inwardly turned from sin, Satan, and self, then you will be involved in the external process of turning from disobedience to obedience. This is a matter of biblical fact.

3. Two Marks of Genuine Repentance.

- a. An awareness of sin.
 - i. Since repentance is an ongoing process, then all true Christians live in the consistent state of being aware of how much they have sinned, do sin, and will sin.
 - ii. 1John 1:8-10.
 - 1. Notice that vss. 8 and 10 begin with “If we say...”
 - 2. They sandwich v. 9, which begins with, “But if we confess...”
 - 3. There’s a strong contrast going on between the person who “says,” and the person who “confesses.”
 - a. Vss. 8 and 10 result from what a person concludes from the depths of their own inward, natural state—which is sinful.
 - b. V. 10 results from understanding what God says about a person.
 - i. “To confess” literally means “to say the same word.”
 - ii. In this case, it’s saying the same word as God—which is that all people are sinful.
 - c. C.f., Romans 3:10-18, 23.
 - d. To realize you’re a sinner is to begin to change your mind (i.e., repent).
 - 4. What we must understand about this passage is that most think of it in terms of the first category of repentance (i.e., initial conversion).
 - a. However, v.7 makes it clear that this is speaking of the ongoing process of the Christian life.
 - b. Notice the language of “walk...” (it’s in the present tense).
 - c. As a result, John is talking about an ongoing reality.

- d. Quite simply, the mark of one who is truly converted is that they'll walk in a manner in which they're consistently aware of their own sin. They then seek to turn from that sin, so that they might become more like Christ.
 - iii. Thomas Watson's progression of what a truly repentant person does regarding sin:
 - 1. Sight of sin.
 - 2. Sorrow of Sin.
 - 3. Confession of Sin.
 - 4. Shame for sin.
 - 5. Hatred for sin.
 - 6. Turning form Sin.
 - iv. So there needs to be an awareness of sin, and then subsequent turning from sin. However, this is not enough.
- b. There must be a turning to the true Christ.
 - i. There are many people who are tremendously aware that they're wicked sinners. They know they need to flee from sin, and make right with God. The problem is they have no idea as to what they're then supposed to turn. The reason for this is they don't know the true God.
 - 1. In fact, this is why the world is filled with so many different religions and forms of spirituality.
 - 2. They're seeking to turn from sin, but have no idea as to what they must then turn.
 - 3. C.f., Acts 17:16-34.
 - ii. Sadly, I see this same thing happening with many professing Christians.
 - 1. They understand sin.
 - 2. They understand the true Christ.

3. They understand a need to turn from sin, and turn to the true Christ.
 4. However, for many, there's the absence of any kind of consistent (or perpetual) turning as a matter of daily practice. Their life cannot be said to be a *life* of turning. In other words, their life is not defined as a life in the consistent state of repentance.
- iii. Ephesians 4: 21-32 (Paul's two-step process of continual repentance).
1. Many Christian's find themselves frustrated at their lack of growth. Many have grown lukewarm and have even begun to slide backwards.
 - a. This never happens overnight.
 - b. This is almost always the result of making a series of small, seeming inconsequential, decisions.
 - i. This often happens when Christians begin to make that insidious assumption that there are areas of life that are neutral.
 - ii. However, Christians must submit every single aspect of their life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
 - c. It's at this point that every Christian must begin the process of self-examination, in the light of Scripture, to discover from where they have fallen. They must then change their mind, resulting in the "putting off" of sin, and "putting on" of Christ.
 - i. This is a very active and intentional process.
 - ii. We must do this as long as it's still called "today" (c.f., Heb. 4:7).
 2. Walk through the passage, showing "put off/put on" concept.
 - a. You must put off the sin, then put on holiness.

- b. It's not enough to put off the sin. You must then fill the void with holiness.
- c. It's also impossible to put on holiness, if you haven't first put off the sin.

4. Conclusion.

- a. This is repentance—turning from one reality to another.
- b. We must put off sin, Satan, and self, and put on Christ and His holiness.
- c. This is a daily process.