
The song the guys just sang said over and over: “Your loving kindness leads me to repentance.” REPENTANCE IS THE KEY TO THIS MESSAGE and it goes hand in hand with what we talked about Sunday. See the screens...

Romans 8:13

¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

You can't live until you die...until you repent...



There must be a funeral...and that funeral is where you and I decide to take up our crosses and die to ourselves so that Jesus lives through us. He literally ReNEWes our hearts. He makes ALL THINGS NEW...



It's been said that “Repentance is the off ramp where God takes us so that we might be made new.” The question is...are we willing to take the off ramp. You see, repentance is uncomfortable, right? It's not easy...especially in our culture where there is little, or next to nothing that's even remotely called a “sin” anymore. Repent? That's judgmental. Who wants to repent? That's uncomfortable...and we want people to be comfortable at all costs, right?

Unfortunately, many today, avoid repentance or try to ignore it, like ignoring the check engine light on your car dash. But, eventually, unchecked...it'll leave you broken down. I'm really afraid most folks try to live the Christian life with sin in their lives and truly are seldom broken over sin anymore.

I've been reading an old, old book by John Owens, a Puritan Pastor of the 1600's called: "The Mortification of Sin." I want you to see this quote:

"When men are troubled with the guilt of a sin that has prevailed over them, they promise themselves and God that they will sin thus no more, but they seek to accomplish their own victory. They watch over themselves and pray for a short season until the pain of conviction waxes cold and the sense of sin wears off. Mortification then also goes out the door, and sin returns to its former dominion." John Owens, *The Mortification of Sin*

Isn't that often true in our lives? Once the conviction wears off and we've said a little, "I'm sorry" prayer, we go right back to it? So, what's the answer? Simple...we have to utilize the Holy Spirit who is living in us and LIVE BY THE SPIRIT!

Listen, the Holy Spirit is the check engine light in our lives. We can choose to listen to Him or ignore Him. How about you tonight? Are you listening to the Holy Spirit? Are you in tune with Him? You see, we have no hope of overcoming sin without His help. He's our Helper and our Comforter and our Teacher. Jesus said as much...in John 16...Jesus said at the Last Supper...

John 16:7-8

⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

Oh church...I have to remind myself of this fact over and over again...the FACT: The conviction of sin TODAY is done by the Holy Spirit. You see, if I could convict you, I would...but, only the HS can do it. Listen, my job, as a shepherd of this church, is to bring you the Word of truth and to pray that the Holy Spirit will convict and bring repentance where it's needed. I'm convinced, the only preaching that lays hold of the soul is the preaching that's bathed in prayer and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise...a man or woman, boy or girl who claims to know Christ will literally walk around in sin and think nothing of it, until he or she is convicted of it. And that's what King David was doing...

You know the story that leads up to David writing this Psalm. He had committed adultery with Bathsheba and then murder, by having her husband killed in battle...and yet David was still going to the Tabernacle "worshipping," scholars tell us for perhaps as long as a year.

Psalm 51:1-4

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Jump down to verse 9...

Psalm 51:9-12

⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Deep down, David was in pain...he had lost the joy of his salvation and that's because he was living in sin. He needed the gift of repentance for his life. But how? Enter a man named Nathan...

The prophet... He had enough courage to come to David and tell him: "You are the man... You are living in sin and you need to repent." With Nathan's help, David finally developed a right view of God and a right view of himself. It was such great kindness that Nathan came to David...

Think about that line in the song the guys sang:

"Your loving kindness leads me to repentance."

You know what's sad in our day? It's so sad that in the name of grace we're being robbed ourselves of it. What do I mean? Let me explain... There's this teaching and preaching that's go around today that says that Jesus needs me and wants me so badly that He'll somehow overlook sin. No He won't! He can't because that would go against His character of Holiness. Listen...what grace is there in a Savior who needs me so badly, yearns for me so desperately, that He'll overlook the sin in my life just to have me near Him? That's not the real Jesus, because you see, listen, if that were true, I'd be the who showed grace to Him by coming to Him! No! God forbid He's the one who showed grace by coming to me!!

Listen, Jesus is no sissy and He's not needy... Instead, He's the one who can give you and me a clean heart...but, we must be broken first... Listen, I'm so thankful that He's so patient with me...YES...long suffering with me but, as we saw Sunday, may I never get over the fact that it was my sin that killed him!

Church, repentance is not a tool that the Lord uses to make us feel bad...it's to bring us to a place of joy... It's with a renewed heart from the forgiveness of sin and the deliverance from sin that we are able to worship rightly. You see, many Christians today haven't been worshipping Jesus rightly in so long, that they've forgotten what joy and freedom from sin feels like. So, they have this cheap grace...of Jesus kind of winking at our sin that's robbing Christians of the joy and power in their lives. No... Repentance is not to make us feel bad...it's to bring us to a place where we're broken (like David) under the weight of our sin, and where we can understand the magnitude of what Jesus did when He paid for our sin...so we transfer to Him that weight!

Let me ask you this: Or are you okay TONIGHT with anything that the Bible calls sin? If you are, then you are trying to live for God in sin and that's impossible. We need to be like David in verse 7...

Psalm 51:7

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

We should yearn to be clean and if we aren't...then, we're choosing not to repent, and this will lead to a weakened soul. It can eventually lead to a darkened soul. It's been said, that sin darkens the soul in that it is a cloud, a very thick cloud, that spreads itself over the face of the soul, and interrupts all the beams of God's love and favor. It takes away all sense of the privilege of our adoption into the family of God and steals the sweetness of life.

Listen...in this life...we'll never be completely sinless...but that shouldn't be an excuse for our slothfulness and sin and not even trying to walk in his steps...



Yes, it's a constant battle, and yes...we'll fail from time to time...but don't allow Satan to convince you that you are defeated in an area in your life just because you struggle with it. Bring it to Jesus.

Can I ask you a pointed question? It's a hard question: Do you want Jesus more or a sin more? What is that sin in your life? Identify it...put it in the box.



Consider what it's doing to you. Consider how it's sapping you of your strength and hindering your life...consider the kind of company you're keeping, where you're going...think about what you're doing that is constantly putting you into a position where you can fall to that sin again. Stop it! Repent! Turn around!

Listen, you and I must set ourselves against anything that brings us to the place of choosing sin over Jesus. See sin as your mortal enemy and see yourself in a battle...down in the fox-hole with shells and bombs going off...that is THE sin, trying to destroy you and you have to see it as the enemy... Quit playing around with that which is trying to destroy you. Yes, it was brutal for David to be confronted by Nathan and yes, it's brutal when the Holy Spirit convicts us...but...don't forget...

"Your loving kindness leads me to repentance."

You see, when we repent of our sin...it's then that we're truly looking to Jesus (who took our sin and paid for it) and it's when we look to Him that we cry out: "I have sinned against you and you only have I sinned!" That's when the joy of our salvation will be restored. And here's the thing...in our battle with sin...Jesus comes to us to the top of our foxhole and pulls us out and shields us taking our bullets. But, before He can do that...we must wave the white flag of surrender and repent...

Now, here's an example of that...

As Pastor Kevin said, my name is Mason Church. My family and I have been attending Mt. Pleasant for about 6 years now and it's truly been a blessing to all of us. It's kind of funny that I'm up here tonight because public speaking is one thing I actively avoid. Back in October, Pastor Kevin and I were at lunch and I was telling him what the Lord had been doing in my life and he was like you know what, I really feel led that someone needs to share at our January 8th Wednesday night service. I think my heart stopped beating for a second and I was like, oh no. Please not me. I was just hoping he would have a moment of amnesia and then we could move on. But no, he continued and the more we talked, the more he thought it should be me. Even more interesting than that, as soon as the words left his mouth. The Holy Spirit affirmed what he was saying, and I knew that I needed to share.

It's truly to a testament to the Lord that I am standing in front of you tonight, sharing what only Jesus could have done in my life. If someone would have told me a year ago that I would be up here sharing part of my testimony, I would have quickly dismissed even the thought. It's not that I was an unbeliever or that I wouldn't be in church on a Wednesday night, it's that I knew I wasn't where I needed to be. I was looking to what I could accomplish and control to bring me the validation, contentment, and security that we all desire. I don't believe desiring those things is a bad thing, but I believe how you chose to fulfill those desires and what you put in those places is where I, along with many others get really messed up.

Anytime we elevate something in our lives above Jesus we are in for disappointment at the very least. At that point we have created an idol, something that God forbids us to do from the very beginning.

Exodus 20:3-5

³“You shall have no other gods before^[a] me. ⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me.

I will be the first to admit that I had created an idol. And my idol was me. I was on the pedestal of my own life. I was reliant on myself, my ability to perform in my job and this image I had built up of who I thought I needed to be, what my status needed to be and how much money I needed to make. Very rarely did I ask the Lord what He wanted for me, unless I needed something in return. My idol was myself and all the things that I wanted.

I called myself a Christian, but I truly had no regard for what the Lord wanted to do in my life. I wanted money, success, the perfect relationship, and the recognition of others. Working in a family

business, there is always something to be done. So work was a natural escape. I poured myself into my job 24/7 because I wanted to be successful, but also because at times, it was the only place I found any satisfaction. From the outside, I had put up really nice-looking walls. Everything looked good from the outside. I knew the truth, the truth had been presented to me so many times, but I had chosen my own way.

Pastor Kevin spoke on Psalm 51 tonight, which is David's cry of repentance to the Lord after initiating a sexual relationship with Bathsheba (Uriah's wife), conceiving a child with her, plotting a scheme to make Uriah believe the child was his, and then having Uriah killed when his original plan didn't work out.

Just in case you think that you are too messed up for God to work in your life, just look at David. And just in case you find solace in the fact that you're not as bad as David, haven't killed anyone or had any sexual escapades of your own. You should probably reevaluate that also, just as I had to. Ultimately, the Bible is replete with examples of broken vessels that God rebuilt and used in ways otherwise impossible.

I say that to make a couple points about my own life and maybe someone else's life here. I will tell you that God tore down the walls and the images I had made, and he broke me. My will was broken when God revealed Himself to me, I knew that my life had to change. Back in February, I was sitting in my bed one night, nothing unusual really. I remember things being really difficult for me then because for some reason, I still thought I could do it all on my own. That I could check all the boxes and somehow it would give me some peace. It wasn't audible, but I heard the Lord say into my spirit: "Mason, you need me." At that point, I knew exactly what I needed to do. It was like the words just started flowing from my heart to the Lord. I surrendered my life in its entirety to Him, because you see, with Jesus, there is no such thing as "me centric" Christianity. It's an all or nothing type of thing. You give Jesus everything or you give him nothing. And I had been giving Him nothing. Did all my problems instantly go away? No. Did all my questions suddenly have answers? No. But I knew that now, the one who had all the answers was going to be at the forefront of my life. That the rest didn't matter all that much.

The Bible plainly says that no man can serve two masters.

Matthew 6:24

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

I don't think money is the only thing we can place above God. It can be anything that keeps us from completely surrendering to Him. That verse was never real to me before, but trust me, it is now.

Believe it or not, I had been seeking the Lord for a couple months before He revealed Himself to me. He had been dealing with me for a while, but I wasn't broken by my sinfulness and I wasn't ready to surrender and repent. I knew that only God could help me, but I had no clue what I needed or even what it looked like to be at the point of repentance. The broader point is that yes, we can seek after God, but ultimately it is God who rescues us. He chooses to have mercy on us, and he chose to have mercy on me. Even in my self-righteous, arrogant sense of self sufficiency. God showed me that without him I was truly destitute. Without Him, I had nothing and had no hope

of having anything. You may be thinking, geez, that's harsh or man, I will have to give up everything I care about to follow Jesus.

My response to that is an overwhelming, SO WHAT! Jesus is worth it. I had to give up things that I really thought I cared about, but when Jesus is the prize you don't think about what you lose, you think about what you have gained by knowing Him. By knowing that He loves you fully and without caveats or exceptions. The love that the world gives often comes with hefty price tags of moral, spiritual, sexual, and ethical compromise. But not with Jesus. His love is truly free, and He only asks that you love Him back and in turn obey Him. Because remember, you can't truly love Jesus without also obeying Him.

If you take the value of whatever it is in your life that is holding you back from Jesus and compound it infinitely, it will never equal the value of Jesus Christ.

You are passing up a relationship of infinite value for an item of ephemeral pleasure.

I will end with two very poignant scriptural examples that showed me a lot about who I was and who God wanted to be for me as my Heavenly Father. I will start with James 2 and read a couple verses.

James 2:14-26

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good^[a] is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

The Bible says very clearly here that faith without works is dead. This really spoke to me because if my faith wasn't dead, it was surely close. I was only outwardly a Christian, but inwardly, I was far from where I needed to be. The Holy Spirit has used this verse to convict me, even after turning my life over to the Lord. Our works do not justify us, but they give evidence of our justification. I think the most obvious question here is not what we do when people are looking, but what do we do when people aren't around? When it's just God and us. That's a question that I had to answer myself and often I didn't like the answer.

The final passage of scripture I will use is from 1 Corinthians, it contains one of my favorite verses in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 6:11. So here it is,

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous^[b] will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,^[c] ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

This seems pretty harsh, right? Well no because this is God's standard for us. Is it completely unattainable? Yes, and God knows that, but when we are His, He doesn't see us. He sees Jesus. That doesn't mean we don't try; it means there's grace when we blow it as we inevitably will. One of the reasons I think this passage is so extremely applicable is because every single one of us has been described as someone who will never enter the kingdom of God. Our sin separates us from God, who is completely Holy. But that's not the end.... Paul says, but such were some of you. Notice the word WERE. WERE sexually immoral. WERE idolaters. WERE practicing homosexuality. WERE drunkards. And the list continues. When Jesus steps in, all the things you "ARE" and all the things I "AM" are subject to the light of Christ. Jesus inserts himself into our mess and he says you don't have to bear that anymore, because I am greater.

This is was hard to swallow, because on my own, that meant I was no where close to inheriting God's kingdom. That means that NONE of us are. But with Jesus, everything in my life changed, including my eternity. God redeemed David, and later Jesus died so that God's ultimate plan of redemption would be realized. Jesus satisfied God's demand for punishment of sin so that we didn't have to. So, if you are broken down because of sin, be encouraged because that could be a sign God is working. There's no one that is beyond redemption, that is a reach to far for Jesus. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

So just think about 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11. If any of these are you, just remember that it doesn't have to be that way - Jesus washes, sanctifies, and justifies us though his death on the cross and by the Holy Spirit. God doesn't categorize our sin, and neither should we. It is all equally offensive and irredeemable without the blood of Jesus. God's free grace and mercy is incomprehensible in the light of how completely undeserving we are. But that's how it's supposed to be. The glory in our salvation belongs to Jesus and it always will.
