

Revival: “If My People, Who are Called by My Name....”

Part 4: How to Change...For Real!

(preached 9/20/20)

LAST WEEK:

- Just as our police and military restrain far more evil than we give them credit for, so does the Lord our God!
- The USA is the safest, freest, and most prosperous country in the world...why?
- ANSWER: I believe He’s chosen us to stand against the Rev 13 Beast during the Tribulation...so how does our country need to be strong?
- Military yes. Economy yes. Freedom yes....
- Yet the most important strength will be Christ!
- The Beast convinces people to take the mark in the spirit first—He’s a replacement/counterfeit savior.
- Thus the USA could be on top of its game with both economy and military...but if we’ve fallen away from Jesus we will join the Beast.
- The Antichrist will not appear until the Restrainer, Who is most likely the Holy Spirit, lets go of the reins allowing the 4 Horseman of the Apocalypse to ride.
- That means that things will get worse before they get better: more chaos, violence, wickedness, and lawlessness which may include natural disasters, plagues, etc.
- Instead of “waiting for things to get better” or pleading with God to have the Rapture happen before the end of this sentence, the Church needs to focus on 2 Chronicles 7:14.
- Let’s repent and approach the Throne of Grace asking for the 3rd Great Awakening in America!
- An end times revival that will turn us back to Jesus and His Word!!!

Today we’re going to learn HOW to change...for real. Repent and change are the same thing and repentance is the supernatural key that will make the Church shine like Christ and empower us to lead the rest of the country to Jesus.

Repentance is a partnership and not sole proprietorship.

Our end is a decision to acknowledge any wicked way and turn from it.

God’s end fills us with supernatural, super powerful, abundant grace to overcome ANY sin no matter how addicting, alluring, ingrained, or how long we’ve been living/doing/speaking it.

HIGHER POWER. AA is smart because they have their clients call upon a “higher power.” Even though I wish they would just acknowledge Jesus as said power, they’re on the right track to communicate that **no one can change without the help of a Being Who is more powerful than nature, nurture, or choice.**

The first truth to successful change is that Christ is all powerful and that nature, nurture, and choice are under His feet.

Nature: you were born that way.

Nurture: you were raised that way through both indoctrination and example.

Choice: you chose it.

Ephesians 1:19-23 (ESV)

¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,

²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

COCKTAIL. You were born with an addiction, anger and fear were nurtured in you by your parents who taught you wrong and set a bad example, and you've made bad choices in the past and live with the consequences...***we all have a cocktail of nature, nurture, and choice that contributes to the sins we commit.***

- If we view ourselves through the lens of nature, it becomes our god that we bow down to.
- If we view ourselves through the glasses of nurture, it becomes our prophet that both predicts and determines our future.
- If we see ourselves through the choices we've made, it becomes our shepherd who leads to its own pastures and waters.

HOLY SPIRIT. But the Holy Spirit lives inside you and He is more powerful than anything. We must view ourselves through HIS eyes and apply it to today's message: He has a vision for our future—the finished product. He sees us as our spirit it right now—shaped in the likeness of Jesus and complete. Our spirit—our real self—is not a WIP...it's finished. It's complete and the Lord's work there is done.

HAMMOCK HOUSE. Now He desires to partner with us to work on the rest of us: our will, heart, and mind. He already sees what we WILL be—complete in those areas too. Right now my dad has commissioned the building of a hammock house near our pond/cabin. He tried to describe it to me and even drew me a diagram on a napkin...but I couldn't see it, LOL. In the workshop of his mind, however, he sees the completed project. It's as if he's standing near it and then in it...the way he describes it when he talks.

IT'S FINISHED! In the physical we're still cutting the lumber and getting the material arounds, but in dad's mind it's done. God views us the same way. He doesn't see nature, nurture, or choice as stopping His work in ANY way...He knows His building project—you and me—will be finished the way He wants! When you and I raise up nature, nurture, or choice to be gods and prophets, however, we're telling Father God that this is far as His project as going because nature is more powerful than Him.

NEHEMIAH. Where He commissioned Nehemiah to build the wall, all sorts of enemies came out of the woodworks and tried to stop the project. Politicians attempted to manipulate King Cyrus and others with lies, both verbally and in document, in the attempt to stop the project and defund it. The fake news media who existed at the time got the common people riled up who took up weapons and attacked Nehemiah and his men.

DON'T BE ENEMY. Stop being an enemy to God's will and saying that the way you were born, raised, or the choices you've made have stopped the project that is YOU. Partner with the most powerful Being in creation Who can and will work with me and you to overcome anything inside of us that's not part of His design.

PSALM 8. Let's read the popular Psalm 8 to see that massive overcoming repentance power God gave to us:

Psalm 8:1-6 (ESV)

¹ O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

² Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶ **You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,**

NATURE. God didn't give nature dominion over us, but He granted us dominion over nature. We're powerful—not powerless—against the things we were born with.

NURTURE. God didn't make nurture king over us, He made us king over nurture. Thus even though we were raised a certain way and had things nurtured in us for years and perhaps decades, we've been made mighty by God to turn away from wicked upbringing and habits to righteousness.

CHOICE. Personal choice is powerful but not all powerful: only the Lord our God holds that title. The Lord can inspire us to make righteous choices and even salvage previous bad ones we've made. Our faith should be in Him and our partnership with Him vs. sovereign choice.

GOD PARTNERS WITH US TO OVERCOME!

Romans 5:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PART 2. *Fear inspires change, but love inspires change that lasts.*

UNBELIEVER. Fear of the Lord gets our attention and is absolutely necessary for the unbeliever to realize that their sin will lead them to eternal damnation.

BELIEVER. For the believer, fear of God becomes necessary only when our fear of people is higher. Yet it's His love that inspires true repentance.

MOWING. Years ago I was mowing between a narrow row of trees when suddenly the front tires of my tractor climbed up a tree and flipped me backwards! I used to pop wheelies on my bicycle and it was cool, but doing so with a Kubota tractor & active mower...not so much! As the front end shot upward, a four letter word came out of my mouth at top volume and, when the tractor righted itself my first concern was to look around to see if anyone heard me. When no one was in sight, I breathed a sigh of relief.

FEAR OF MAN HIGHER. WHAT IF JESUS WERE THERE? Why? I was afraid—afraid!—that if people heard a Christian and Pastor curse they would judge me negatively. You know Who did hear? The Lord. My fear of man was higher than my fear of God. You might respond that since He's already forgiven me He would judge me like a person would...so if cursed and suddenly saw Jesus physically standing behind you, what would your reaction be? Nonchalant? No big deal? I think any of us would be appalled, embarrassed, and ashamed...I know I would despite the fact that He forgave me. If any of us were caught up to the throne room of Heaven right now and we cussed in front of the Lord sitting on His throne, the 4 living creatures, the 12 elders, and the host of angels...I can't imagine!

REPENTANCE TOUGH WHEN FEAR OF MAN GREATER. When our fear of man's reaction, judgment, and disappointment is greater than our fear of the Lord, repentance will be climb up a steep hill. The Lord IS right here living inside of us. He is real—just as real as if Jesus were physically standing next to us. He can hear and see everything we're doing and saying and it **does** matter to Him.

GOD DOES SEE SIN. We recently read Revelation chapters 2 & 3 in online Bible Study. For 5 of the 7 churches, the Lord points out their sins and calls upon them to repent. These aren't unbelievers He's talking to, but Saved Christians who've been cleansed by the Blood of Christ. He sees and hears our wrongdoings and it matters to Him.

PARENT CORRECT CHILD. If you're a parent and your child cusses in front of you, you correct and perhaps even discipline that child. Why? Because 1) you rightfully recognize that cussing is a sin and 2) you desire for your children to have righteous character.

FATHER GOD REBUKES. God is our Father. He's adopted us into His family and we are His sons and daughters. When we sin He rebukes and perhaps even disciplines us for the sake of our Christlike character. We are forgiven of all sin, yet we still need to repent to our Heavenly Dad because our desire and will is supposed to match His: a sanctified Jesus like holy character.

PART 3. That leads us to part 3 in this sermon: ***conviction of sin and repentance is done from the basis of us being God's sons and daughters.***

Don't try and repent from the position of a servant or friend of God—it can only be accomplished as a son or daughter.

SERVANT IN DEBT. A servant was someone sold into slavery to pay off debt—they literally worked for room and board. They weren't family members and could be beaten or tossed into debtor's prison if they didn't PERFORM and BEHAVE. Therefore if a servant fell short in their duties or behavior, the terror of the consequences is what motivated them to "repent."

SON/DAUGHTER. A Saved Christian is not a servant and is more than a friend to Father—we are His kids. If a son living in the same house as a servant is treated far differently.

- He's not there because he owes anything—he's a family member, born into the same.
- His father isn't his master, he's his dad who loves him.
- Based on his love, the father provides everything to his son and leaves him an inheritance.
- If the son misbehaves or falls short in his duties, his dad rebukes and disciplines him for the purpose of Godly character AND to equip him to take over the family business and property.
- The son is never in danger of being cast out or disowned—he dwells in his father's house forever.

Therefore true change will only take place when we approach it from the truth that we are born again into the family of God:

Romans 8:12-17 (ESV)

¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

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.

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

NOT DEBTORS/FLESH. In verses 12-17 we see that we are sons & daughters, and not debtors. A debtor is compared to someone who is a slave to the desires of their flesh...which means they're indebted to those desires and their flesh is their master. A son is led by God's Spirit and is not a slave! A daughter doesn't owe anyone anything! Verse 17 closes by talking about the inheritance God our Father has left us, which is the entire Kingdom of God!

In other words, Father wants to shape our character so that we'll be prepared to take over the family business—the Kingdom.

INHERITANCE THINKING: WE'RE NOT JUST SPIRITS! A mature son or daughter realizes there is a working future beyond dying and going to Heaven: remember the promise of Christ that we all come back here to earth and govern as priestly kings in a new immortal body that never gets tired. We're not meant to be spirits frolicking around in Heaven like a giant playpen! We're being shaped, molded, and prepared to have active role in God's Kingdom.

THIS “INHERITANCE THINKING” INSPIRES MODERN DAY REPENTANCE WHEREAS FLYING TO HEAVEN AS SPIRITS TO ETERNALLY FROLIC DOES NOT.

FIRST YEAR ON FARM. My first year on tree farm was interesting—I heard one of the employees say to another: “I know that Scott isn't Terry, but you need to treat him with more respect! He's going to take over for Terry one day and he'll remember how we treated him!”

EMPLOYEE THOUGHT OF FUTURE. You know what? That employee still has a job with us and the disrespectful one doesn't. He molded himself nearly 20 years ago so that he could still be around now—forward thinking. You and I must do the same. We have a great destiny ahead of us after the Second Coming and just as Jesus taught in several of His parables: our words and actions now are deciding our role then. To the one who partners with Father to become more holy and humble, Jesus says “well done!” and gives them ruler over much.

PART 4: JESUS IS SUB, DON'T SUB FOR JESUS! PENANCE. Next is to let Jesus be your substitute and don't try to pay for your own sins. Centuries ago that Catholic Church invented a sacrament called "penance" which is a synonym for the word repentance. The sacrament rightly states that God hates sin and that we should too and can only be absolved upon confession to a priest who would then absolve you of your sins. The problems started when they began to divide sin into categories or venial (small sins) and mortal (big sins like murder.) It became a regular practice to then "do penance" for mortal sins, which sometimes lasted a lifetime depending the how bad or many were the sins committed. Self-denial, self-flagellation/abuse, working under you dropped...acts like these became commonplace to "prove" a repentant heart to both God and man.

NOTHING HUMBLE ABOUT PENANCE. Some still do this nowadays and there's nothing humble, spiritual, or righteous about it. Acts of self-punishment and self-condemnation draw is further away from Jesus and true change. Why? Because we're substituting us for Jesus. We're taking Him down from the Cross and going up there ourselves. It's as if someone is about to drive a nail into Jesus hands or feet and we shout "wait! You don't have to do that Lord! I can and will pay for my own sins!"

Trying to pay for your own sins doesn't work and NO CHANGE will take place inside you if you try it. IT DOESN'T WORK.

Modern day acts of penance are almost the same as those of the dark ages.

- Some people say bad things about themselves: I just saw a post of FB which stated "I'm a piece of dirt" except they didn't use that word.
- Calling ourselves lazy, worthless, wicked, bad, or any other adjective is the same is old time Catholic penance.
- Being ashamed and disgusted with ourselves is penance.
- Physically abusing ourselves to punish ourselves for sin is the same.
- Allowing other to abuse us because we think we deserve that is the same—I've actually heard women say they stayed with verbally and physically abusive me because "they didn't deserve any better."
- Performing acts of labor or generosity to make up for sins committed is penance.

Don't do penance! It's not humble. It's not the Holy Spirit leading you to do it. It's not spiritual. It's not righteous. It's not Holy. It's the opposite!

It's a lame attempt to BE Jesus for yourself!

It won't lead to repentance and no change ever ever ever comes from it.

SUMMING UP:

- Repentance is a PARTNERSHIP with God, we cannot do it alone.
- God is more powerful than nature, nurture, and choice—He will help us overcome even if we were born with it, raised that way, or chose it.
- Repent from the firm foundation of being God's son or daughter, not as a servant.
- A servant owes and is working off debt. They aren't loved by their masters and if they sin or underperform their duties they're beaten or possibly thrown into debtor's prison.
- Their "repentance" is motivated by fear of these things!
- A son or daughter is already part of the family and will dwell in their home forever.
- They're loved by their father who not only provides for them but leaves them the family business and property.
- If a son or daughter sins or underperforms they're rebuked and disciplined by their father, but dad's motivation is love and not justice.
- Dad's discipline is to shape their character and prepare them to take over.
- You and I are sons and daughters forever!
- When Father corrects, rebukes, or disciplines He does so from love.
- He shapes our character to be more like Jesus and is preparing us to take over the family business: God's Kingdom!
- A son or daughter repents inspired by Father God's love.
- Don't sub in for Jesus! He took all your sin and shame—let it stay there!!!
- Penance doesn't work: it's not humble and it's not spiritual.
- We cannot pay for our own sins.

PRAYER.