

Receive the Gift of Repentance

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

If a person receives the Word of God without being instructed by the Holy Spirit, he will probably take on a tremendous burden, trying to make himself acceptable before God. Consider these verses:

“[God] commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30*b*).

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

Now, these sayings are absolutely true. No one will go to heaven without repentance. It is true that God demands repentance, lest we perish. Furthermore, people who are saved cannot be Spirit-filled until they have repented. Repentance, however, is not something we do; rather, it is what we receive when God has redeemed us and changes us.

According to Jeremiah 31:18,19, Israel in her suffering cried out to God and revealed an understanding of the Finished Work position on re-

pentance: "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed."

Like salvation, repentance is not of works lest any man should boast; it is a gift of God to the believer. It means that we receive the gift of grace and the power of the Holy Spirit through the living Word to change us. Repentance is based on receiving and responding, not on trying and failing to measure up. God approaches change by revealing His changeless love toward the recipient. A person so motivated by God's Spirit will reveal a godly sorrow that works repentance.

When a person changes his mind about self and sin, he can then receive God's evaluation, provision, inhabitation, and impartation. This booklet will show that this is what indeed marks a change. Then comes a process and a reflection of continual change from faith to faith, from grace to grace, and from love to love.

Chapter One

CONVICTION: EVIDENCE OF A HEART AFTER GOD

“Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

“And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” (2 Samuel 12:13).

Sin must be dealt with in the light of the Cross, the light of forgiveness, and the light of repentance. When this is properly understood and God’s order is followed, there comes a brand-new creature, a real transformation. But until that happens, a person lives either in denial or in self-justification, hiding behind fig

leaves (Genesis 3:7).

David failed to deal with his sin of adultery with Bathsheba for a year. But during that year, he was convicted. He couldn't sleep and his bones waxed old. His sin was ever before him, producing negative physical effects. Still, he knew he belonged to God, though he was under tremendous conviction by the Holy Spirit. After one terrible year, David, a man after God's own heart, finally got right. David's repentance did not render void all the consequences of that terrible year of failure, but because of his deep understanding of God, David knew what to do. He drew near to God.

Acknowledging Our Failure

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

"Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

"For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine

iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah" (Psalm 32:1-5).

Psalm 32 shows that David was not lukewarm about his relationship with God. Lukewarm or Laodicean Christians can sin and say that they have never been so blessed by the Lord in their life (see Revelation 3:14-17). You could go to some of them who are living in immorality and confront them. They are not right and they know it. Yet, they can say to you, "I have never been so happy and peaceful with God in my life."

Never in all my years of preaching have I seen such a day when someone can absolutely and dogmatically live in known sin. They reveal a false peace. They have developed a Laodicean connection to an unconscious mind that has never been cleansed. These people have not acknowledged their sins and have never been honest about them. Therefore, they cannot have a clean heart. They are not upheld by the Holy Spirit. They do not have joy, and they do not win souls and lead them to Christ to be turned and converted.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multi-

tude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

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

“Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

“Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:1-10).

The Need for Absolutes

When parents bring up children without giving them absolutes to live by, ungodly con-

cepts become established in their unconscious minds. It doesn't matter how decent a parent you are. You contribute to the damage of the unconscious mind when you fail to establish absolute truth in your children.

The realm of the unconscious is the department of the mind that receives undefined information—the point of entry for every impulse, impression, and projection. That information is filtered into the subconscious where thoughts take on form. The process brings these thoughts into the conscious mind, which makes decisions based on the information it has received. If one lie is included in the mix of information, a person may contend that he is absolutely right and come up with all kinds of evidence to prove his point, though he is wrong.

So, the conscious mind may be extremely honest and sincere, and it may function practically and acceptably, following after God. But until there is a disconnection with sin and the unconscious mind is thoroughly cleansed and purged by the filling of the Holy Spirit, there remains a deep-seated problem that began with a lie.

God's cleansing process produces conversion, beginning on the deepest level. However,

until that process is allowed to happen, the unconscious mind is perverted. True, godly repentance is the only solution.

Chapter Two

UNCONSCIOUS IMAGERY AND THE ISLAND OF INNOCENCE

“Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth” (Ezekiel 8:12).

For application, the Word of God calls the unconscious mind “the chambers of imagery.” It is that secret place where every negative thing is kept until it is thoroughly cleansed and rooted out.

John the Baptist spoke of taking an ax to the root of the tree (Matthew 3:10), referring to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil with its forbidden fruit (see Genesis 2:9-17). The knowledge of good and evil speaks of the weaknesses and strengths of the natural man who does not consider God. This knowledge, acquired through training, culture, education, and experience, is

filtered through the moral light that is in every man, forming the conscience. The conscience is like a measuring rod where the norms and standards for right or wrong are established, and where objective decisions in the soul are made.

It is the conscience that will prompt a person to have a dialogue as the psalmist had, in Psalm 42: "Why art thou cast down, oh my soul?" He had a dialogue with guilt, with the effects of sin, and with the pain of hurting others. He had a dialogue with his past, and he couldn't sleep day or night. His dialogue was stuck in the chambers of imagery in his unconscious mind.

That dialogue had to be disconnected once and for all (Hebrews 10:10). But it could only be taken care of by the Cross and by the Word of God, which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. The Word of God and the Cross are necessary to cut through those deep connections in the soul. Severing those connections brings death, but out of that death comes God's newness of life (Romans 6:4), the newness of spirit (Romans 7:6), and a renewed mind (Ephesians 4:23).

Detached from the Old Man: The Mind of Christ

"He shall deliver the island of the innocent:

and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands" (Job 22:30).

An island is a detached piece of land. An island of the soul is an area detached from the world, from the flesh, from the devil. It is a region detached from anything that happened with the rest of the territory of our lives. Islands of innocence are formed in us when cleansing and purging come in through the Holy Spirit, by the power of the Word and the Cross. This new man operates with godly integrity, never trying to justify his sin. "Pure hands" typify pure thoughts and pure communication in his service and in his reflections as he meditates on the Word day and night.

When a Christian begins to reflect the nature of God, he no longer is having a dialogue with his sickness, with his fear of the future, or with what people have done or said to him. Instead, he lives on the island of innocence where he has a clean heart, a pure spirit, and a joy in his salvation. He can thereby teach transgressors God's ways and bring people to Him for conversion.

I know people who are living in sin, who will stand there and tell me, "I have never been so happy!" I don't believe that. When someone lives in sin week after week and tries to justify it

and never deals with it, he has not entered into the island of innocence. He has never entered into proper repentance, proper conversion, or proper communion with God. He has never totally disconnected from the hidden things in his chambers of imagery. He has never really repented by saying to God, "Cleanse me; purge me thoroughly. Make me white as snow."

Pulpits in church after church today fail to bring to people's lives the purity and godliness of old-fashioned God-fearing, sin-hating, Bible-loving joy that reveals the mercy and compassion that follow us. No one is perfect by nature, and at times every one of us has to rebound to experience that joy. But thank God, He has given us a provision through the gift of repentance.

I have made a decision to walk with God and with God's people. I am not going to be double-minded (James 1:8), and I am not going to have a divided heart (Hosea 10:2). I have made a decision through the mind of Christ that I will walk the straight and narrow way of grace and be blessed of God Almighty. I refuse to face God as a phony justifier of the sins in my chambers of imagery.

Every one of us needs to disconnect from the wrong things that reside in the unconscious

mind—and it can happen in an instant. It's just like unplugging a radio. Just like that, it is turned off, and we find we can live very well without this connection and its distractions. That is when, at last, He can use us.

Broken and Spilled Out

“And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

“He said, Bring them hither to me.

“And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

“And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

“And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children” (Matthew 14:17-21).

Here is the story of the five loaves and two fishes. Now, most people have five fingers, five toes, two legs, two ears, and two eyes. Five is God's number for grace, and two is God's number for separation. If we combine our five senses with two eyes, two ears, two legs, two feet, and

two arms, we have a human body. According to Romans 12:1, our bodies are what we bring to God as a “reasonable sacrifice.”

That is a picture of us presenting our bodies to Jesus Christ to be distributed for the nourishment of others. We do it as we are separated unto grace. And when we present our bodies to Him, then God can break them and feed them to those who need to be fed. Just as He takes grapes and crushes them to make juice, the believer’s life will be broken, and even crushed, in order to be shared with the multitudes in the world who are tired, hungry, and thirsty.

Chapter Three

FIRE FALLS FROM HEAVEN

“Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench” (1 Kings 18:38).

“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

“And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:6-8).

“When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning” (Isaiah 4:4).

“I indeed baptize you with water unto re-

pentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy [Spirit], and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

Fire is an interesting topic in the Bible. Before Lucifer fell from heaven "as lightning" (Luke 10:18), he walked "in the midst of the stones of fire" (see Ezekiel 28:14). Fire is symbolic of the Trinity of God, which purges sin and brings in energy, warmth, and light. Fire also destroys things that should be destroyed (Isaiah 28:16) and gives power to what remains.

It was fire that came down from heaven to reveal that Elijah served the true God. In Isaiah 6, fire from the coals on the altar purged the lips and tongue of Isaiah. The presence of the Holy Spirit is called the "spirit of burning" and John the Baptist said that Jesus would "baptize us with fire."

Dimensions of Sacrifice

"Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it.

"And the priest shall put on his linen gar-

ment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar.

“And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place.

“And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings.

“The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out” (Leviticus 6:9-13).

In the context of Scripture, which always points to God’s perfect sacrifice, fire has such a powerful meaning. The priests had to construct a wooden altar according to God’s dimensions. Then, they put the animal sacrifice over the altar. They laid a meal offering—speaking of the broken life of Jesus Christ—on top of the animal. Next, wine had to be put on the altar because everything Christ did, He did through the Spirit. There also had to be blood, because everything Jesus did at Calvary pointed to the sacrificial shedding of His spotless blood.

When everything was on the altar according

to God's divine dimensions, the fire consumed it—a fire that would never go out. The ashes of the sacrifice were then carried away to a clean place. This is a picture of every sacrifice for our sins. The ashes are carried away to a clean place by the One who knew no sin and yet paid for our sin with His Blood. That clean place for us—as we present our bodies daily as a living sacrifice—is heaven. There, we will receive our glorified bodies, decorated with degrees of light that will never dim, shining forever.

The important thing to remember is that this fire is always started by God. When we want to make a life-change, the fire must come from Him. We can't ignite the fire. This fire is from the Stone of the Father who planned our redemption. This Chief Cornerstone sends the Holy Spirit to burn truth into our conscience and the chambers of imagery where the mysteries of the unconscious mind are.

Like a Fire in the Bones

“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jeremiah 20:9).

So many people want to give advice—people who want to help and to show their love. Often it is good advice. But until we allow God to send His fire and let His fire come inside of us through the Word, then nothing will change.

God's fire changes our lives, transforms our motives, and transforms our relationships. It gives us communion with God instead of a connection to Adam. It gives us fellowship with God instead of a dialogue with the historical Adam in the chambers of imagery. God's fire consumes the dross in our lives. We receive it and it purifies our lives. This is what repentance is all about.

David committed adultery and then had a man killed in an effort to cover up his sin. He really made a mess of things and lived in it for a year. Yet, the fire of God exposed his sin and convicted him. Then, according to mercy and lovingkindness, God changed him.

Remember, God pities us as a father pities his son (see Psalm 103:13). Lovingkindness represents God's brand-new covenant with His children. Once we are saved, we are saved forever, and God never leaves us. What's more: He never stops working on us until He perfects us.

This is the new agreement of the Finished

Work.

“Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

“I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness” (Micah 7:7-9).

CONCLUSION

“Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments” (Psalm 119:156).

Tender mercies mean that when we fail or fall, God never just leaves us. He waits for us to let Him help us up.

Lovingkindness reveals that God is *for* us. But having and experiencing tender mercies means that God is *in* us, fully understanding what is going on, and ready to bless the moment we tell Him, “Start the fire!”

It is as if God is saying to us, “I will always stay with you. When you are ready, I will pull you up and we will go on together. In the meantime, I will not forsake you—ever. Our fellowship will be strained, but just give Me the word and I will start the fire of repentance in you.”

This is a great, great gift from the Lord. I pray that all of us will learn to receive and believe it.