

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“Lord, I Apologize”

(Jerry Fite)

Repentance is definitely God’s command for all mankind. The inspired apostle Paul preached, “...*the times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent*” (Acts 17:30). Jesus has been raised, giving assurance to all men that He will judge the world in righteousness. God’s proclamation is spoken for all to hear. We cannot claim ignorance. Judgment is coming upon all of our unrighteous deeds. We must repent!

Repentance is the change we make in our lives, issuing from godly sorrow regarding our sin. Paul writes, “...*for godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance that bringeth no regret...*” (2 Corinthians 7:10). We see our sin before God, whose glory we have fallen short of (Romans 3:23), and whose law we have thrown aside (1 John 3:4). We have offended God by falling short of what He wants to see in us – His glory; and by refusing to abide under His law which He laid down for us to follow.

We learn from Paul that repentance is not sorrow, but sorrow brings forth repentance. Sorrow after a “godly sort” is a mindset that moves one to turn away from his or her sin (2 Corinthians 7:9). Repentance does not occur until the sorrow has worked to cause one to turn from sin (Jonah 3:10, Matthew 12:41). In turning, fruits of repentance occur, which is consistent with the change

of mind regarding one’s sin (*Matthew 3:8, Acts 3:19*).

Not all sorrow is godly sorrow, for Paul also points out that we can have “*worldly sorrow*” which brings forth “*death*” (2 Corinthians 7:10). One might not have godly sorrow regarding sin committed before God, but might only regret having been caught in one’s sin, and the humiliating consequences that follow. The thief who only regrets getting caught will probably not change his ways, but will probably continue his sinful ways, working harder to avoid being caught. The thief who comes to realize how great his offense is before His Creator, and is sorrowful for this fact, will be more likely to change his sinful ways, even though he may never have been caught.

Some, who claim to be Christians, reveal by their lives that they have not profited from true repentance. They keep on doing the same sins over and over.

One who has lived a life spewing out profanity and filthy language will definitely have to change the character of his or her speech in order to live as a Christian (*Ephesians 4:29, 5:3*). Old habits are hard to break, but sin must not control and characterize the Christian’s life (*Romans 6:12*). After all, one has repented, knowing that God did not create the mouth for filth, but for grace. Knowing what I am is not what I ought to be, the truly penitent will over time, and maybe with some

setbacks, eventually change for the better. However, if one only approaches his or her foul language habit with “Lord, I am sorry for this,” or “Lord, I apologize for that,” he or she may never truly repent and make godly changes.

One crass comedian comes to mind who has made a decent living saying, “Lord, I apologize.” He utters this, not after he has used filthy speech, for those fire bombs are launched throughout his routine; but he utters these three words when he has said something especially gross. He knows it; the audience knows it; and he seeks a reprieve by saying, “Lord, I apologize.” He did not repent, for he will use it again when his next routine demands it.

God demands repentance, not apologies. The Christian who tells others about his constant battle with sin by saying, “When I say this bad word, or think this bad thought... I just stop and say, ‘Forgive me Jesus,’” may be revealing something very troubling. “Forgive me, Jesus” may be only a profane phrase that is seeking a reprieve without repentance. The sorrow, leading to asking the Lord for forgiveness, may not be godly sorrow, but only worldly sorrow. It may be sorrow for doing the same sin over and over; sorrow for not improving in character since first becoming a Christian; but not a godly sorrow that produces true repentance with “no regret.” Repentance, not mere apologies, produces godly and lasting change.