

Bible Study Transcripts from July 15, 2009

Topic: **Repentance**

Speaker: **Harold Wilson**

Bible Reference: **John 8:3-11** with others throughout the study

Opening Prayer: Jesus, we thank you that you have given us your word to study. We thank you for a chat room where we can get together and talk about Jesus. We need your help tonight; we want more than just what our humanity can think up. We need the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts. We want You to communicate with us personally and for this not to just be a group of people chatting. Thank you, Amen

Harold: Let's get started. I am trying to do this a little different than my normal style so I really don't know where I am going to end up so we will just start.

I want to talk tonight about the idea of "repentance." It seems to me that this is very important in the Bible. When I look at so many movements, people that claim they are in the church, there seems to be no repentance in their life. I think sometimes we need to go back to the fundamentals - the basics - and make sure our foundation is built on the basics.

To repent: I find it interesting - it's so thorough in the Bible - in Matthew 3:2 John the Baptist begins by preaching "we need to repent." When Jesus comes, in Matt 4:17 He begins a message that we need to repent. In Acts 2:38 on the day of Pentecost, after the apostles have received the Holy Spirit, Peter preaches "we need to repent." The apostle Paul, in Acts 17:30, speaking to the people of Athens says, "they need to repent." In the book of revelation, chapters 2 and 3, one of the main messages to the churches is to repent. After the churches are removed and during the tribulation period Rev 9:21 says "they repented not." That message is repeated a number of times. It is the attitude of the people after the church is removed.

So, my point is, that "repentance" is an important part of our Christian life. It's interesting when I started looking up definitions for 'repent' Greek definitions taken from Strong's Concordance or Vine's Dictionary, would say "reversal", "to think differently", "change of mind", and I also know that this word in other Greek writings is translated "About Face" - a military term.

If you go to modern dictionaries they will say "it is feeling bad" about something. They will say it in a number of different ways, but the emphasis is always on feelings. The modern dictionary's definition of 'repentance' is really a definition of "conviction."

In our world today and in the church today there is a lot of emphasis on "feelings" but there's not a lot of emphasis on "doing."

ThereIsHope: But is it not an action?

Harold: Repentance is an action, but conviction is not.

Harold: I do not agree with the modern dictionary's definitions - it may be good English, but it is not what the Bible is saying.

Harold: Hope, did that answer your question -- do you have more to say on this?

ThereIsHope: No I am good I concur.

Harold: We could define repentance as "to turn away from what we know is wrong AND to turn to God." There are two good examples in the Bible.

First, in **John 8:3-11** *"Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" I She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."*

If this woman obeys Jesus this is an act of repentance. If this woman obeys Jesus this is an act of repentance. It's a choice that she is making. It's unfortunate that many people emphasize the first part of Jesus' answer (neither do I condemn you) but then totally overlook "go and sin no more."

The next example is **1Thessalonians 1:9-10** *"For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."*

Paul is referring back to the change in their life when they became Christians. They turned (there's that word) to God from idols. When a person comes to Jesus, seeking forgiveness they may say "Lord, if you will help me, I'll turn away from this, or I will quit." We cannot free ourselves or turn away from sin in our own power -- but we can make the choice to turn away and then God will help us - that is where our faith comes in.

Harold: Hope, go ahead with your scripture, please.

ThereIsHope: *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

Harold: Yes, it's a great verse and it tells us that God will do certain things if we do repent. It's unfortunate that the people God was speaking to didn't listen.

Harold: Okay -- three things about repentance:

- 1) Repentance does not save anybody. We can turn away from what is wrong, or quit doing things that are wrong, and that doesn't save us, but it's the turning from sin TO GOD, it's the turning TO GOD where the salvation comes in, but some people have tried to just clean up their lives and think that they are alright because they quit doing bad stuff. James said "I will show you my faith by my works." True repentance is revealing our faith in God.

- 2) As we have already mentioned, repentance is an ACT. There his a time in our life when we turned away from what we knew to be wrong and turned TO God. We said, in essence, "God if you will help me, I will quit this." That was our 'act' of repentance.
- 3) There is an attitude of repentance. That is – ‘as I am growing in Christ, I am reading my Bible, and the Lord reveals something to me that I need to change.’ I've already decided that I am going to conform (or turn) to God's will for my life.

Harold: Another example: One night at church, I jokingly said something that offended a woman there. There was nothing malicious in my attitude; I was not attacking this person; she was just offended by it. I could have said "She needs to grow up and get over it -- quit making a big deal out of this stuff." Even though my 'intent' was not wrong, I had hurt her, therefore, I needed to apologize. It's an attitude that says "When the Lord reveals to me, something that I need to do, I am going to do it!"

Harold: Thoughts, questions or comments?

ThereIsHope: Only that with today's dictionaries' definition of repentance it does talk about conviction or feeling bad about something which is what you brought up in point #3.

Harold: That is true, and often we have conviction, but conviction is not enough. And, we can repent without feelings -- I can choose to do what I know is right - even if I don't have any feelings. Or, I can choose to turn away from what I know to be wrong - even though I don't feel bad about it.

ThereIsHope: I see.

Shep: In reference to the statement about that ‘we may not feel bad about it’ - If we are living and a Christian, won't the Holy Spirit convict us if we are doing something wrong?

Harold: Yes, The Holy Spirit will convict us.

Harold: I have put the emphasis on turning away from sin, because I think it's not being emphasized in the church world, but, Christian repentance IS turning FROM SIN to God. **Harold:** And we cannot turn from sin without God - it is His Grace and it is our sense of hopelessness that we NEED God to deliver us. We come to Him in faith, expecting to receive.

Jesus said, "*Accept you repent, you will all likewise perish.*" The good news is, nobody needs to perish -- we can repent, we can turn to God.

That's the end for tonight -- we will see you next Wednesday night at 9 pm EST for the next Bible Study.