

SUBSTITUTES FOR REPENTANCE?

Luke 13:3-5

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Repentance is defined as:
 - 1. "To change one's mind or purpose." Always in the NT, involving a change for the better, (Vine's)
 - 2. It can also be defined as "A change of heart that results in a change of life."
- B. The importance and essentiality of repentance:
 - 1. Except you repent, you shall perish, (Luke 13:3).
 - 2. Repent and be baptized, (Acts 2:38).
 - 3. Repent and be converted, (Acts 3:19).
 - 4. Simon was told to repent and pray, (Acts 8:22).
- C. *Repentance may be the MOST DIFFICULT command to obey:*
 - 1. We must see *OUR OWN* sin.
 - 2. Then we must *FORSAKE* it.
- D. Because it is so difficult, many try to substitute something else for repentance:

I. SOME TRY TO SUBSTITUTE *REMORSE*.

- A. DEFINITION: "A sense of guilt brought on by past actions."
- B. Consider the example of Judas' repentance, **Matthew 27:1-10**.
 - 1. When he saw that Jesus was condemned, he cast the thirty pieces of silver before the chief priests and elders, v.3.
 - 2. Even in repentance, Judas did the wrong thing. If he had gone to his Savior instead of the priests, it is possible he might have been forgiven.
 - 3. See verse 3 in NKJ: "Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was REMORSEFUL and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders."
 - 4. Rather than true repentance, I think that Judas showed more remorse, feeling sorry for what he had done.
- C. Contrast that with the example of David's repentance, (2 Sam 12).
 - 1. When confronted by Nathan, he said, "I have sinned."
 - 2. In Psalm 51, he acknowledged his sin was against God, (Ps 51:4).
 - 3. It is clear that David felt real repentance, not merely remorse.
- * D. Remorse LEADS TO repentance, **2 Corinthians 7:9-10**.
 - 1. Paul wasn't glad that he made them sorrowful, but WAS glad that their sorrow led to repentance, v.9.
 - 2. The difference between godly sorrow and sorrow of the world, v.10 --
 - a. Godly sorrow leads one to repent.
 - b. Sorrow of the world (*remorse without repentance*) leads to spiritual, eternal death.
 - 3. Don't stop when you feel remorse. Let it cause you to truly repent.
- E. ILLUSTRATION: A thief may not be sorry he stole, but sorry that he got caught.
- F. You may feel remorse for sin, but unless it causes you to repent, it is *just a bad feeling*.

II. SOME TRY TO SUBSTITUTE WORDS.

- A. Pharoah tried to substitute these for repentance, **Exodus 9:27**.
 - 1. He is the first character in the Bible to say the words, "I have sinned."
 - 2. He said the right words, but he didn't mean it.
 - 3. How do I know? "And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more," **Exodus 9:34**
- B. Words without proper actions mean nothing:
 - 1. Imagine a boy telling his girlfriend, "I love you," and then ignoring her.
 - * 2. God has made it abundantly clear that He will not accept lipservice only, Matthew 15:8.
- C. If you say to one in need, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" **James 2:16**
- D. John wrote, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." **1 John 3:18**.
- E. You may say that you are sorry for doing wrong, but if you continue to do wrong, you have not really repented. (Even if you come to the front and confess.)

II½. JUSTIFICATION AND RATIONALIZATION WILL NOT WORK.

- A. It is so much easier to justify our own actions than those of another.
 - 1. It is easy to give ourselves the "benefit of the doubt."
 - 2. What is "sin" in others is different in our lives.
- B. It is easy to be like the Pharisees, **Matthew 23:3-4**.
 - 1. "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." **v.4**.
 - 2. We can't make rules for others when we are not willing to abide by the same ones.
- C. You can rationalize and justify all you want to, but God is going to be the judge.

III. SOME TRY TO SUBSTITUTE DEEDS.

- A. Some think that doing good can offset the bad.
 - 1. ILLUSTRATION: One may make money dishonestly and then put a large amount in the collection plate.
 - 2. Some picture God's judgment as a set of SCALES, where good is balanced against the bad, and see which side wins.
- B. The Pharisees were like this, **Matthew 23:23**.
 - 1. They were very strict in tithing, but neglected spiritual aspects of the law, as if it one could make up for the other.
 - 2. They also were guilty of bad deeds, (devoured widows' houses, v.14-22).

C. Zacchaeus both repented AND did good deeds, *Luke 19:1-8*.

1. Jesus went to his house, and Zacchaeus received him joyfully, *v.5, 6*.

2. Zacchaeus determined to restore fourfold if he had wronged anyone, *v.8*.

** D. Deeds are to SHOW repentance, not REPLACE it.

IV. SOME TRY TO SUBSTITUTE *QUITTING*.

A. Simply resolving to "*never do it again*" is *NOT ENOUGH*.

B. You can't be right with God unless you repent, even if you never do it again.

Examples:

1. You can't skip services and then come back as if nothing ever happened.

2. You can't drink for a while and then quit without repenting and expect to be right with God.

3. You can't commit fornication and then quit without repenting and expect to be right with God.

C. You **must quit** sinning, but it must *accompany* repentance.

V. SOME TRY TO SUBSTITUTE *TIME*.

A. Many seem to think that God will just forget wrongdoing.

B. This **DOES** happen in human relationships.

1. "Time heals all wounds."

2. Problems, sorrows and grief do not seem as bad with the passing of time.

C. If we can forget something, we feel God can do the same.

1. The Bible says that God **WILL** forget our sins and iniquities, *Hebrews 8:12*.

2. This forgiveness and forgetting is *based upon our repentance*.

D. Some practice "*restoration by progression*."

1. Some stay out for a while, then come back quietly.

2. After a period of time, they get back involved again very slowly.

3. Soon everything "gets back to normal," but he never repents.

4. But, God doesn't forget!

E. Is there a sin in your past of which you never repented?

1. Even if you have forgotten it, God has not.

2. Even if everyone else has forgotten about it, God has not.

3. ***DON'T STAKE YOUR SOUL'S ETERNAL DESTINY ON THE PASSAGE OF TIME.***

F. Regardless of what most think, time is not a substitute for repentance.

CONCLUSION:

A. Do you need to repent this morning?

B. You can't go to heaven unless you repent of sins in your life.

C. Only true repentance will please God.

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