

Welcome friends to another broadcast of “Morsels for Zion’s Poor”

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth concerning several issues which they needed to address and correct. Not the least of these issues involved a member of their assembly who was living in an openly adulterous relationship. This was a particularly egregious relationship since the young man who is mentioned was fornicating with his stepmother. There are several lessons to be learned from this situation. One is that even those who are professing believers in CHRIST can be overtaken in the foulest of sins in the flesh. Two is that these sins are even more egregious because they are carried out by those who claim to have more light than those who are the children of wrath. Three is that these open sins cannot be tolerated in the midst of those who call themselves brethren. To turn a blind eye towards such debauchery is to tacitly approve of it and to allow it to continue unchecked is to become guilty of the same, since the church is one body.

In reading Paul’s second epistle to the Corinthians we discover that these matters were dealt with, by the Corinthian church, and the young man was brought to repentance according to the mercy of GOD and he was restored to fellowship among those with whom he shared a common profession of faith. One of the evidences of a work of the SPIRIT in any person or church is that they exhibit an attitude of repentance when confronted with their error(s). Most of the time when we hear the word “repentance” mentioned (if we hear it at all) in the preaching of the modern day, it is used to describe an activity which men decide to undertake as a matter of their free will. Yet when we find true repentance described in the scripture, it is always the result of a work of GOD in the heart and has fruits that can be identified. The work of GOD produces results which cannot be mistaken.

We see this evidence of repentance in Peter as he wept bitterly when the cock crowed. We see it in King David after Samuel declared, “*Thou art the man*”. His resultant prayer is found in Psalm 51. And who can overlook the very poignant confession of Job, “*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*”

Repentance in its simplest form is a change of direction. This change of direction however is not one which is simply “decided upon” but is one which is brought about by a sovereign work of GOD’s SPIRIT in the sons of GOD. One of the consequences of sin, is “sorrow” as we read the LORD’s declaration to Adam, “*cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life*”. Sin produces sorrow in a natural sense and there is even a form of repentance which is the result of that natural sorrow. This is illustrated by the drunkard who in his stupor beats his wife and abuses his children, then when he sobers up he is heartbroken over his actions and swears that he will never do it again. This is true “sorrow” but it is not the “*godly sorrow*” of which Paul speaks to the Corinthians. Rather this is that repentance which needs to be repented of. This is the “*sorrow of the world*” which “*worketh death.*” This is illustrated quite clearly in the sorrow which overwhelmed Judas as he hanged himself. This natural sorrow only leads to death, it cannot minister life.

True repentance however, is an evidence that LIFE is present in those whom the LORD is pleased to give this gift. Sorrow always accompanies this “repentance”, but it is not a sorrow which results in death, but rather is the manifestation of spiritual life. This is that “*sorrow after a godly sort*”, of which Paul speaks, which produces a change of mind, which then causes a change of direction.

Those fruits of “*godly sorrow*” which produce repentance are set forth by Paul as he describes the reaction of the church at Corinth. When a man is moved with godly sorrow, he is not easily distracted but desires to find a remedy for the situation he is in. When godly sorrow is present a man desires to be clear from that which has caused his reproach and brought shame to his LORD. He can then see the awful nature of his crimes and the ONE against whom those crimes are committed. Even as David said, “*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.*”

In the flesh, indignation is most often hypocritical but there is a true indignation which is the fruit of the SPIRIT wherein a man is made to hate and despise his errors. That man who is acquainted with his sin and the absolute HOLY character of GOD, must tremble when he is reminded of the corruption that yet remains in himself and the wicked deeds which are produced thereby. There can be no more troubling thought to a child of GOD than the prospect of being cast out of the LORD’s favor.

It is the desire of those in whom “godly sorrow” has had its perfect work to love and serve GOD. As David prayed, “*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*” “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*” Do you know what godly sorrow is?

“*Thy free grace alone,*” #11 **If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at forthe poor@windstream.net**