



Revival and Reformation Lesson 6 3Q 2013

Confessions and Repentance: The Conditions of Revival

SABBATH

Read memory text: “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13, NKJV)

What does this mean?

Does it make a difference how we understand this verse if we look through natural or imposed law?

What does this mean if we read it through the lens of imposed law?

- That those who cover their bad deeds will get caught and punished, but those who acknowledge and confess their sins will receive legal pardon

What does it mean through the lens of natural law?

- Those who cover their disease will not partake of remedy and the disease only worsens ultimately killing them. But those who acknowledge their diseased hearts/minds/characters, confessing before God their true condition and need, will find merciful healing and transformation of character.

How do you hear the verse?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “During the weeks...” thoughts?

What do you think it means to be in “one accord”?

Does it mean they all agreed on the 10 horns? Or they all agreed on who they should eat and associate with? What foods to eat? Whether to circumcise or not? What were they in one accord regarding?

Could it have been they agreed upon:

- Their need for Jesus?
- That Jesus was the true revelation of God?
- That Jesus is God in human form?
- They were united in their longing for His presence?
- Could it also be they agreed on their inability to fix their own situation and they were all in the same boat, even if they didn’t see all things the same way?
- God’s kingdom is the kingdom of Love and God’s law is the law of love?



- Did they agree on God's methods, truth, love and freedom?

What about today? When we talk about unity in Christ, what should be the central focus of that unity?

- The way we baptize?
- How we hold communion?
- What day we worship upon?
- What foods we eat?
- The 2300 day prophecy?
- Our atonement model?
- The mark of the beast?
- OR
- God's character and methods? Truth, love, freedom!
- God being Designer not Dictator and His law being natural not imposed?
- Jesus reveals God?
- Our acknowledgment of our sinful condition and our need for Christ?

Why is their so little unity in Christianity, according to the Christian encyclopedia, 34,000 different Christian groups – why?

How is it that Satan is so successful in causing division and disunity when Jesus brought a message of love and unity?

Could it be by getting people to operate on imposed rules rather than the law of love?

In other words it is more important to keep the rules, be right, than to love others more than self?

What do Christians “fight” over? The doctrines – but what is the central purpose of all doctrine? To reveal the truth about God.

The problem arises when we divorce the doctrines from God's character of love and make them stand alone testing “truths”. We get our proof texts to prove the state of the dead, the Sabbath, the little horn of Daniel, the 2300 days and all of it dissected, separated and disconnected from the larger reality of God's character and methods of love and the controversy over His law and rulership.

It is only by putting these things back into this context, anchoring them to God's love that we can find unity.

Consider, does it matter if someone worships on the “right” day, if they crucify Jesus? But what of the Roman who trusted Jesus – never sacrificed at the Temple, never was circumcised, never obeyed the doctrinal rules, but Jesus said, no greater faith did he find in Israel.



The message is about God – Satan diverts us as he gets us to fight over side issues. We must love God and each other and be gracious, allowing God to lead people to whichever organization he wants them in.

One of the problems is that too many Christians believe salvation is found in organizations, institutions, rather than in Christ. Thus we insist when we evangelize that people join our institution. Our ministry wants people united with Christ, and leave it to the Holy Spirit to lead them to whichever field He has for them to work.

Read second paragraph, “Peter makes two...” thoughts?

What do you understand the idea of repentance being a gift to mean?

What do you understand repentance to be?

Is it not a change in heart motive such that we no longer desire the sin, but are repulsed and sickened by it? Are we able to change the motives of the heart? So, genuine repentance is an evidence of the Holy Spirit working on the heart to change the desires and motives. It is part of the renewing, healing, reviving process that God is seeking to accomplish in each of us.

In my preparations for class I came across this quotation in a book entitled *Faith and Works* page 38:

Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin and feel our need of pardon. **None but the contrite are forgiven;** but it is the grace of God that makes the heart penitent. He is acquainted with all our weaknesses and infirmities, and He will help us. {FW 38.2}

Some who come to God by repentance and confession, and even believe that their sins are forgiven, still fail of claiming, as they should, the promises of God. They do not see that Jesus is an ever-present Saviour; and they are not ready to commit the keeping of their souls to Him, relying upon Him to perfect the work of grace begun in their hearts. **While they think they are committing themselves to God, there is a great deal of self-dependence. There are conscientious souls that trust partly to God and partly to themselves.** They do not look to God, to be kept by His power, **but depend upon watchfulness against temptation and the performance of certain duties for acceptance with Him. There are no victories in this kind of faith. Such persons toil to no purpose; their souls are in continual bondage, and they find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus.** {FW 38.3}

Thoughts?

First, what does “none but the contrite are forgiven” mean? That God is unforgiving – or that only the contrite experience the forgiveness God freely offers?



What about the idea that some are depending on self and the performance of certain duties to be accepted with God? What might that look like?

What would cause one to believe such a thing?

I had a patient in my office this week who said he no longer believes in God, despite believing his entire life until recently. I asked him to tell me what happened that he quit believing in God. He recounted two experiences. The first was listening to Contemporary Christian music and having people at his conservative Christian college tell him he was going to go to hell for listening to this music. The second, he struggled with depression and was told repeatedly by church leaders if he prayed he would be delivered. He prayed for hours and hours, months and months and only got worse, so concluded God doesn't exist.

Were the people who told my patient such things described in the quotation I read? Believing they have to do certain duties to be accepted by God? Failing to trust Him and putting the work on self?

Read last paragraph, "Repentance and confession..." thoughts?

What does it mean the goodness of God leads us to repentance? How do we come to know that God is good?

If the goodness of God leads to repentance, then what would one of Satan's strategies be to obstruct people from coming to God in repentance?

Would it be to get us to conceive of God as something other than good, perhaps "just", where just means the inflictor or proper punishment?

Read bottom green section, "Why is it so difficult..." thoughts?

Is it not fear? Sin severs the circle of love and trust and incites fear and the desire to protect self. Thus, we are afraid of rejection, punishment, retaliation, embarrassment, humiliation, not being loved or liked or accepted etc. etc. so we attempt to hide and cover our defects.

Why would you be afraid to share in this group you have been struggling with gambling, alcohol, narcotics, pornography, or some other issue? What stops you from sharing this here? Is it not fear of how you will be treated? Rather than loved, supported, encouraged, instead shunned, criticized and belittled?

Consider, if you were struggling with a physical illness, might you ask for help? And how does the church treat those struggling with physical illness? With compassion, grace, love and support. Why are we so callous to those suffering with spiritual sickness, i.e. sin? Because the church has been infected with the imposed law lie, and thus do not see sin as a disease, a deviation from God's natural law that we need to be healed from, but instead as willful violations of rules, that require punishment. Which leads to the idea, "You aren't sick, You're bad!"



Remember our memory verse for this week, those who seek to cover their sin don't prosper. Does the distortion of imposed law lead us, through religious teachings, to attempt to hide and cover our sin? What about when we make theories in which we can hide behind Jesus? Is it not another deception, another sophisticated way in which Satan's view of God has infected the church – we hide behind the robe of righteousness, we have Jesus stand between us and the Father, we are covered by the blood, we have our records erased by the blood etc. etc. etc. All mechanisms designed to hide our sins, rather than heal us from our sins.

All of this stems from accepting the lie that God's law is imposed. When we return to the truth that God's law is the design protocol upon which life is built, and we are out of harmony, then, we like David, pray, "Search me and see the wicked way IN ME and create in me a clean heart oh God!"

No sick person goes to the doctor and then asks the doctor to examine their healthy brother in their place, or asks the nurse to erase the medical record so the doctor wont know what is wrong.

But most criminals who appear before the judge hire lawyers whose job is to obstruct the truth, to hide the evidence of their guilt and to erase the record of their crimes.

Who, having committed a crime wants to go before the judge? Who, when sick, wants to go to a compassionate doctor?

We must come back to the truth about God and His law of love and present Him as our Heavenly Physician and stop this ugly Judge presentation, then genuine repentance and revival can occur. As long as we insist on taking the penal view of God to the world we obstruct the unity and reformation God wants for His people.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Repentance is a God-initiated..." thoughts?

Repentance is sorrow for the sin, but also a change in heart motive so that the sin becomes repulsive. And it does include the willful choice to disengage and turn away from deviations from God's design.

Read last paragraph, "When the apostle Paul..." thoughts?

Why was Paul so freely able to talk about his past in this way? Could it be that he had experienced an actual change of motive, no longer motivated by a desire to protect and save self, but genuinely interested in glorifying God and saving others?

Do you think this would result in a change of brain circuitry?

What is the difference between acknowledging one's self as the chief of sinners, and feeling too sinful to be saved?



When we wallow in sinfulness, loathing ourselves as too defective to be loved, too worthless to be saved, too awful for forgiveness, and thus constantly feel insecure and fearful, who have we put at the center of our lives? Have we died to self in such a state, or is this a way of putting self in the center of all?

Two types of narcissists – narcissism is self-centeredness, self-love. The Kernberg narcissist is the proud, self-inflated, egotist who walks in and believes everyone should stop in awe because he or she has arrived. The isle at the store should part to allow him/her to check out etc.

Kohut narcissist, is the opposite, the one who feels too low for anyone to like, so when walking in the mall and passes a couple of teen girls who giggle as they walk by thinks, “they are laughing at me.” Self is put at the center of everything, but not in an inflated way, in a demeaned way. But, self is still at the center. These people often become meek, church workers, always volunteering, always helping, not for love but for fear of others not liking them if they ever say no.

We must put Christ in the center, and surrender self to Him.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Genuine repentance...” thoughts?

What is the purpose of confessing specific sins rather than just general confession?

Is it that God will not forgive, unless He hears the specific sin committed confessed? Or is it something else?

Could it have anything to do with our heart, character, brain? Could the confession of specific sin, have some part to play in our actual recovery? If we refuse to acknowledge our defects, or specific shortcomings, do we obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit by our refusal to be truthful?

So is the confession of specific sin a “legal” requirement, or required by our own condition? The truth must be brought to bear in our minds. Our condition requires it, not God’s heavenly court reporter.

Read third paragraph, “The purpose...” thoughts?

I think this is well said, our confession enables us to receive His forgiveness, His love, His presence.

Are there ideas in this paragraph that apply to other areas, like the judgment?

What is the only variable in the “judgment”? Is it God’s attitude or is it the condition of our hearts?

Read bottom green section, “However much we long...” thoughts?



How do we respond to those who have done us wrong and NEVER ask for forgiveness?

Why did Jesus pray, “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”?

If we refuse to forgive others, what does that say about our hearts? Are we open to the grace of God working in us? Are we loving, kind and merciful or are we selfish and vengeful?

Does forgiving those who have done us wrong mean we approve of what they have done?

Does forgiving those who have done us wrong mean they get away with it?

When we forgive those who have done us wrong who gets changed by our forgiveness?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “There are specific examples...” thoughts?

What do you understand the first sentence to mean? There were people who sought repentance but were not forgiven by God?

Did they seek repentance? One could argue they didn’t, they sought to avoid the pain, suffering and consequences their sin brought, but not a new heart.

Did they experience forgiveness? No, but does this mean they were not forgiven by God?

What does this idea that they were not forgiven by God imply? It implies an imposed law construct.

Is the problem we have in our sinful state God’s unwillingness to forgive, or God’s inability to forgive because some legal requirement hasn’t been met, and something needs to be done so God will forgive, whether it be our repentance, confession, or the blood payment of Christ – OR is the problem our sinful condition itself?

In other words, what obstructs our salvation – God’s attitude of unforgiveness, or our attitude of selfishness and distrust of God?

So, if forgiveness means God’s heart, God’s personal pardon – then doesn’t that happen for everyone?

But, if forgiveness means the entire process of reconciliation then, only those who open their hearts to God in trust experience forgiveness. So if the authors meant the entire process of reconciliation, then they are right, but it would be nice for them to clarify that God forgave, but the sinners didn’t receive it, thus they did not experience forgiveness, i.e. were not in a forgiven state, even though God forgave.

What evidence for this view?



Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will *freely pardon*.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are *my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*” ISA 55:7,8

Those who put Christ on the Cross – did they seek forgiveness? Did Christ forgive them, so they were forgiven by God, but were still in an unforgiven state because they didn’t receive the forgiveness freely offered.

Read last paragraph, “True repentance...” thoughts?

This is well said, and what leads to true repentance? A knowledge of God! Understanding His methods, principles, character and law of love we want to repent and turn away from deviations from God’s design for life. But when we believe in imposed law, then we don’t want to admit we are wrong we want to find an excuse so we can have a legal loophole, or cover our sins.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Confession lances the boil...” thoughts?

Do you notice that the lesson rightly points out that forgiveness is freely extended or offered from Christ? Which means, because Christ is God, all are freely forgiven from God’s side of the equation – because the problem in sin is not legal, it is the actual condition of the person who is out of harmony with the way God built life to operate.

Thus, even though God holds no grudges, God is forgiving to all, only those who repent, who open the heart in trust, experience the forgiveness God extends freely and are reconciled, or restored to God’s original methods of love and at-one-ment with God. Thus only those who accept God’s forgiveness are forgiven in experience.

Read second paragraph, “Is guilt good or bad?...” thoughts?

What is the purpose of guilt?

What is the cause of false guilt?

False guilt in some way is a result of believing a lie. “It was my fault” for something that wasn’t. “I should have known” something that was unknown, etc.

And others will often try to manipulate you with false guilt. Here are some examples:

1. Make you believe they will suffer greatly if you do not respond positively to their request(s).



- If you break up with me I'll kill myself, implying it will be your fault
 - Solution – the truth – only person to keep you safe from you is you, your behavior is not love, and surrender is violation of Law of Liberty
- Oh, if you can't take me to the store that's okay. I've been suffering with this pain so long a few more days won't matter. Implying it is your fault they are in pain.
 - Solution – the truth – you're right I'll be over later.
- 2. Respond to your irrational self by reinforcing your irrational thinking, giving you a sense of blame, for past, present, or future actions.
 - I thought you said you were a loving parent but every time I want to do something fun you say no.
 - Solution – the truth – because I love you the answer is no!
- 3. Feign or fake hardship, illness, discomfort, unhappiness, incompetence, or other negative behavior to arouse your sense of guilt and have you take over their tasks or duties
 - Oh I just can't clean like I used to. My back hurts so much when I vacuum.
 - Solution – the truth – If your back hurts maybe you should vacuum in smaller increments
- 4. Build a case with moral absolutes to convince you of the "right way" to do things, avoiding that negative feeling of guilt for themselves.
 - God teaches that wives are to be submissive to their husbands – don't you want to follow God's Word?
 - Solution – the truth – God teaches equality and wives are to submit to Christlike treatment from their husbands
- 5. Build up scenarios that portrays you at fault for inaction, thus guaranteeing your sense of guilt and your willingness to do anything to alleviate it.
 - Where were you? If you would have been here this mess would have never happened.
 - Solution – the truth – What happened in my absence by someone else is not my responsibility
- 6. Accuse you of misdeeds, words, or actions to arouse your sense of guilt and make you believe you are the one with a problem in an interpersonal relationship difficulty. (This effectively takes the pressure off of them.)
 - You're always in a bad mood. Every time I say something you find fault. There's no talking to you – you take everything the wrong way.
 - Solution – the truth – I'm not always in a bad mood, I don't always find fault, I don't take everything wrong – these allegations are exaggerated expressions of frustration

FRIDAY

Read first sentence, "Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation." Thoughts?

What does this mean? Is it confusing? Why is it not acceptable to God?



If it said, “Bathing is not acceptable to God without soap and water” would that be confusing? Why would bathing not be acceptable without soap and water? Because it really wouldn’t be bathing, we wouldn’t be clean, and God wants us clean.

So, is confession really confession without repentance and reformation?

God doesn’t want simple confession. He wants us healed, restored, cleansed, renewed, saved. Thus He it is not “okay” or “acceptable” to Him if we try and substitute a false remedy that gives us false security but doesn’t transform and heal.

Read question 1, “What crucial...” thoughts? Was Jesus just “willing” to forgive, or did Jesus actually forgive?

Read and discuss questions 2-4.