

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

The scripture clearly says *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”*. So one might consider that a sinner would be easy to find, yet experience and the word of GOD teaches us that such is not the case. So exactly what is a sinner? I believe the LORD has given us an illustration of this in the words which HE gave to the prophet Jeremiah when Jerusalem was besieged by the Chaldeans. In summary the prophet made it clear that the LORD’s purpose was to completely destroy Jerusalem and all of its inhabitants and that the only hope of being spared from this destruction was to cast themselves on the mercy of the Chaldeans who were the instruments of this destruction empowered by the LORD to accomplish HIS purpose.

This instruction was totally contrary to natural common sense. It made absolutely no sense to the natural thinking of men to abandon the relative safety of the walls of the venerable city of Jerusalem which had stood the test of time, to cast oneself upon the mercy of those who were bent upon the destruction of both the city and its inhabitants.

In the same way in which the prophet’s instruction was considered an insane idea, the scripture says that the *“preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”* It is impossible that the natural man should ever embrace the truth of the gospel because it seems a most unlikely and religiously unappealing means of escape from destruction to him. The only way for a man to see the glory of the gospel and the power of GOD in it, is for the HOLY GHOST to give him ears to hear it and eyes to behold its wisdom.

Yet there is another preparation which goes hand in hand with that awakening and that is being given the gift to be able to truly assess one’s own worthiness of destruction and his utter inability to do one thing in his own power to avoid it. Such men are described in the scriptures as “sinners”. *“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.”* One man recounted his “faithfulness and morality”, while the other could only sue for mercy.

True repentance is that which causes a man not only to hate his wickedness but his own “righteousness” as well. True repentance is the evidence of a man being a “sinner”, the likes of which the LORD “came to save”. True repentance is that which causes a man to renounce the very things in which he once trusted even as Paul said, *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”* Only sinners are called to this repentance, the righteous are left in their righteousness where they are quite content.

The gift and work of true repentance causes a “sinner” to despise not just his wicked deeds more importantly, to hate any thought that might arise within his bosom of any self righteousness he might possess. The righteous, religious man can find some good in himself, even if it is only by comparison to those he feels are morally inferior to himself as the Pharisee looked at the publican and even thanked GOD that he was not like him. Religious men discover many ways in which they can feel themselves superior to others whether it be in degrees of faith, levels of doctrinal understanding, or the performance of good deeds.

So what is a sinner? A sinner is:

1. A man in whom the LORD is pleased to work in acquainting him with his own depravity.
2. A man who utterly despairs of finding one thing within himself or his actions that would please GOD in any way.
3. A man who renounces all hope in religion of any type.
4. A man who can find no comfort or help in any but CHRIST alone.
5. A man who rejoices in the proclamation of free grace and knows that such affords him the only hope of being an object of GOD’s mercy.

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