

INSINCERE REPENTANCE

TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 1:41-46

INTRODUCTION:

1. Referring to the experiences of the Israelites in the wilderness, the apostle Paul said, "Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition" (I Cor. 10:11).
2. In the conduct of the Israelites we have a typical exhibition of human nature -- in its foolishness, its fickleness, its unreasonableness, and its stubbornness.
3. It is a vivid picture of insincere repentance.
4. I want to speak this morning on this important subject. The Bible speaks of true repentance and of false repentance.
5. Many years ago, H.A. Ironside said, "Shallow preaching that does not grapple with the terrible fact of man's sinfulness and guilt, calling on 'all men everywhere to repent,' results in shallow conversions" (*Unless Ye Repent*).
6. Because of their unbelief, the children of Israel were not allowed into the Promised Land (Deut. 1:26-32).
7. Forbidden to enter Canaan, they changed their mind, and said, "We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us" (1:41).
8. When sinners say, "We have sinned against the LORD," it sounds like words of repentance, but oftentimes these are merely the words of insincere repentance!
9. Exodus 9:27 says, "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."
10. But Pharaoh was insincere. Exodus 9:34 says, "And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants."
11. Three times we see in Scripture King Saul saying, "I have sinned," and then going right back to his wicked ways.
12. " And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned" (I Samuel 15:24).
13. And again in I Samuel 15:30, Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned."
14. Then later, in I Samuel 26:21, Saul said to David, "I have sinned...I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."
15. The most notorious example is Judas Iscariot. The Bible says, "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the

- chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matthew 27:3, 4).
16. Then Matthew 27:5 says, "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

I. MEN OFTEN CHANGE SUPERFICIALLY

1. Psalm 51:6 says, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts."
2. Regarding Deuteronomy 1:41, one commentator said, "Disobedience may cloak itself in the guise of obedience" (J. Orr, *The Pulpit Commentary*). It is all superficial.
3. Some people are good talkers, but that's about it (cf. Matthew 21:28-32).
4. In the case of the Israelites, they said, "We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight" (Deut. 1:41).
5. But the LORD knew they were insincere. One preacher put it this way -- "Unchanged character may coexist with a changed form of manifestation" (J. Orr, *The Pulpit Commentary*).
6. The LORD knew their hearts, and He told them, "Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you..." (1:42).
7. But they "would not hear" and they "rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill" (1:43).
8. In other words, they disobeyed God, and went without the His help.
9. They went without the LORD's approval, in defiance of His will.
10. They went without the LORD's blessing, in face of His expressed displeasure
11. They went in the energy of the flesh.
12. Therefore they were "destroyed" (1:44).
13. Then they wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to them (1:45).
14. They were still guilty of the sin of unbelief (cf. 1:32). They did not believe God's warning, as before they refused to believe his promise (1:42).
15. Isn't this a vivid picture of depraved human nature? When the LORD told them to go, they would not go.
16. But when the LORD told them not to go, then they went!
17. When the LORD assured them He would give them complete victory, they refused to go.
18. And then when the LORD forbade them to go and warned them of certain defeat, they went!

19. They were not following God's will, but their own self-will.
20. Their disobedience and contrariness kept leading to defeat. Their wills were unsundered and unsubmitive.
21. They stubbornly refused to listen to God's warning (1:43).
22. They insisted on doing it their own way. This demonstrates that their repentance was insincere.

II. INSINCERE REPENTANCE LEADS TO PRESUMPTUOUS SIN.

1. The LORD warned them but they "would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill" (1:43).
2. Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "presumptuously" as, "arrogantly; insolently, willfully; in bold defiance of known duty."
3. The Israelites knew their duty -- it was to obey God. The Bible says, "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him" (Deut. 13:4).
4. But they presumptuously, arrogantly, insolently, and willfully defied the LORD, and rushed into battle (1:43, 44).
5. Therefore they were defeated in battle -- not by the Amorites, but by the LORD (1:43-45). The Amorites were merely the LORD'S instruments of judgment.
6. The Bible teaches that when men rebel against God (1:26, 43), God becomes their enemy.
7. Isaiah 63:10 says, "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."
8. Perhaps there are some here today who are wondering why you are having so many problems. Nothing seems to go right. Could it be that God has become your enemy?
9. The Bible teaches that worldliness is rebelliousness. First John 2:15 says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."
10. James 4:4 says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
11. Deuteronomy 1:43 says they "went presumptuously up into the hill." Presumption manifests itself in various ways.

23. Second Peter 2:10 says they that walk after the flesh are presumptuous and self-willed. The Israelites were self-willed. They were not following God's will.
24. Let me add this -- it is presumptuous for a person to refuse to be saved, except it be according to his terms or according to his schedule, etc.
25. The Bible says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

III. INSINCERE REPENTANCE LEADS TO DISASTER

1. Verse 44 is a good illustration of such a disaster. And so it is with all who are insincere in their repentance.
2. These rebellious Israelites were told they would not enter into the promised land because of their unbelief. They felt sorry for themselves but theirs was not genuine repentance.
3. Oftentimes sinners are sorry they got caught, sorry they were arrested, sorry their sin destroyed their marriage, etc. -- but they will not repent.
4. Second Corinthians 7:10 says there is a "godly sorrow" which worketh repentance to salvation, but there is also an insincere repentance which leads to death. "The sorrow of the world worketh death."
5. Consider Peter and Judas. Both men sinned, and both men repented.
6. In Peter's case, we see genuine repentance, but in the remorse of Judas Iscariot we see "the sorrow of the world (which) worketh death."
7. Remorse is not the same as repentance (Deut. 1:45). When the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, genuine repentance will include sorrow for sin. But regret is not repentance.
8. Regret for the consequences of sin is not genuine repentance.
9. Regret for the exposure of sin is not genuine repentance.
10. Regret for the penalties of sin is not genuine repentance.
11. Repentance means a change of mind which leads to a change of direction. And this change includes a change of mind about sin.
12. Sometimes repentance comes too late. The defeated Israelites "returned and wept before the LORD," but the LORD would not hearken to their voice (1:45).
13. Like Esau, they found no place of repentance, though they sought it carefully with tears (Hebrews 12:17).
14. The LORD would not listen. This happens when repentance comes too late (cf. Proverbs 1:23-33).

15. Like the foolish virgins who came too late, after the door was shut. They cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us."
16. But he answered and said, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matthew 25:12).
17. Our Lord said in Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
18. The reason many people do not enter in at the strait gate is because they are carrying too much sinful baggage! They do not want to give it up.
19. Repentance means to give it up.
20. Then when they finally decide to enter in it is too late! Luke 13:25 says, "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."

CONCLUSION:

1. H.A. Ironside wrote these words, "I recall hearing William Booth, the first general of the Salvation Army say, when explaining his 'Darkest England' scheme, that its real objective was, not just the amelioration of social conditions, but first and foremost the bringing of men to repentance that their souls might be saved.
2. "I can recall the flash in his eye, and the noble bearing of his commanding figure as he exclaimed, "Take a man from the filth and squalor of the slums, exchange his rags for decent clothing, move him from the stifling stench of the city tenement to a neat little cottage in the pure air of the country, put him on his feet economically where he can make a decent living for himself and his family, and then let him die in his sins, unsaved, and be lost forever at last -- really it is not worth while, and I, for one, would not attempt it."
3. The poet put it this way:
`Tis not enough to say,
I'm sorry and repent.
And then go on from day to day
Just living as we went.
Repentance is to leave
The sins we loved before,
And show that we did earnest grieve
By doing them no more.