

Great Stories of the Bible— 08/21/22

Revival

TEXT – 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

INTRO – Robert Murray M'Cheyne once preached a famous sermon on “Why is God a Stranger in the Land?” in which he points out how few conversions are in our midst, how much deadness there is among professing Christians, and how great is the boldness of sinners in their rejection of God. In the Corinthian congregation there had been sin tolerated, to the grief of the Spirit, and the apostle Paul had brought the word of God to them in a carefully weighted letter. In our text he describes the great change which had taken place when the Spirit blessed the Word read aloud to the congregation. There took place what we have come to call a revival or a great awakening. There was an outbreak of the most profound and life-changing godly sorrow as the people realized for themselves the state in which they were in. Notice how he describes these seven characteristics of godly sorrow: earnestness, eagerness to clear yourselves, indignation, alarm, longing, concern, readiness to see justice done. These are the ingredients of normative biblical repentance. This is the godly sorrow that leads to salvation.

Seven marks of godly sorrow?

I. WHAT EARNESTNESS!

It is taking God seriously, and taking seriously your own behavior and the consequences of what you do on the lives of other people.

John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

Men see their sin as never before – the plague of plagues, a monstrous, unnatural, miserable force, an off-cutting, a degeneracy and a corruption. Sin and death are seen as ugly anomalies in God's world. Sin is a cancer, which, if it could spread itself unchecked, would eat up everything, and dethrone God himself.

Sin wants to do to you and me what those two hijacked planes did to the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York, absolutely destroy us.

If we had a sight of America's sin for one day – oh what a terrible sight it would be! We would be struck with horror. But if I could see the living God for one moment and then look straight into my life I would be crying out with Isaiah, **Isaiah 6:5** *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

- Earnestness comes from selecting one object which you especially pursue. “This one thing I do.”
- Earnestness means that that one object has taken over your heart and mind. God is more important to you than anything else.
- Earnestness means you use every legitimate means to serve that object.
- Earnestness means that you subordinate everything to second place to accomplish that end.
- Earnestness means that you use all your energy untiringly to achieve that end.

Every day we desire to produce the fruit of godly sorrow.

A mature Christian is someone who is willing to honestly face up to what he is, and name before God what is offensive in his life. It is then that we begin to get purpose and control and direction back into our lives. It is not vague feelings of religion that we bring to the Saviour but specific sins.

We know a fount where sin is washed away.

No Christian will be really effective in anything he does, however intelligent he is, unless he has three qualities, strong faith, true godliness and deep earnestness. Earnestness is Abraham's immediate obedience when God called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees. Earnestness is Noah going on building that ark for decades when there was no hint that there was going to be a flood. Earnestness is Stephen preaching to the Sanhedrin as they gnashed their teeth with murderous rage at him. Earnestness is C.T. Studd saying, “If Jesus Christ be the Son of God and died for me then nothing I can do can be too great for him” Earnestness is William Carey saying, “Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.”

II. WHAT EAGERNESS.

The church militant is on earth, and the church triumphant is in heaven. They would not spare their sin a moment longer, and they cleared all that out of the life of the church. A staggering change took place.

In 1745 David Brainerd, then in his late twenties, was preaching to small bands of Delaware Indians near Trenton, New Jersey. They had no knowledge of the Bible, and the interpreter who translated Brainerd's sermons was occasionally drunk. The weather was oppressive, summer heat

and winter cold, while Brainerd was seriously ill with tuberculosis from which he was to die two years later.

What eagerness the Delaware Indians showed to clear themselves, just as Paul noticed in the Corinthian church. Once the Indians professed faith in Christ they abandoned their pagan superstitions and gave up their idolatry. Drunkenness, which was a sin which easily beset them, became virtually unknown in their villages. Those who had debts and always had excuses for not paying, discharged their debts. Marriage was given a place of honour. The Lord's Day was carefully kept, family prayers were set up in the homes. There was little bitterness or petty arguments amongst them. A spirit of love was poured out upon them. Brainerd wrote, "Never did I see such an appearance of Christian love among any people in all my life."

III. WHAT INDIGNATION.

The tax-collector in the temple was indignant with himself and all he had done, wasting his life away without God, giving feeble excuses for all his wrong-doing. He couldn't look up to heaven. His eyes were on the dust, and he beat his chest with such vigor: "God be merciful to me a sinner," Peter's message at Pentecost created a humble response:

The people were appalled. They had killed the "Author of life" (Acts 3:15). **Acts 2:37** *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? What indignation.*

They were indignant with nothing but sin, and indignant with themselves only because they had behaved so badly. Only when the Spirit comes and convicts them of the sin of not believing in Jesus will the great change be wrought. Then what indignation about their former blindness and the wasted years of rebellion. That unbelief kills your love to God. That unbelief feeds your pride

IV. WHAT FEAR.

The Greek word is what we get our word 'phobia' from. Paul is now saying that the fear of God also came upon them.

Proverbs 8:13 *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

Proverbs 14:27 *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

Proverbs 16:6 *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*

"Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on Earth." John Wesley

Acts 9:31 *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

V. WHAT LONGING.

The Lord is no longer outside the church, standing at the door and knocking, but the welcomed Guest and Head of his congregation.

This congregation had learned to live without God. It had its services, its worship, its breaking of bread, its evangelism, its church meetings with the grieved Spirit absent from them all, and nobody noticed.

It was like having cataracts removed and seeing color and light again.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

VI. WHAT CONCERN.

They had been neither hot nor cold.

William Booth said that he liked his religion like his tea – hot. They had been lukewarm in serving God, but the coming of the Word and Spirit on that day transformed all that. There was a new concern. They were concerned to be real Christians, and concerned to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God, and concerned to put on all the armour of God, and concerned to go on being filled with the Holy Spirit. They were determined not to go on serving Jesus Christ with their words while their lives didn't match up.

We have to start with ourselves, with a concern to deal with our own sins. Spurgeon exhorts his fellow pastors when he says: "Brothers, I beseech you, keep to the old gospel, and let your souls be filled with it, and then you may be set on fire with it! When the wick is saturated, let the flame be applied. 'Fire from heaven' is still the need of the age.

The Corinthian congregation was proud and ignorant. They defied God's word and tolerated the intolerable. When this word of God came to them they brought themselves, just as they were, to God. They brought their weakness to God.

VII. WHAT RESTORATION.

The word literally means 'vengeance' but Paul is not commending them for setting up a vigilante group exacting revenge on sinners in the congregation. He is commending them for the way they took their revenge on their own sin! Paul felt that when he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Zacchaeus – Made restoration

Proverbs 3:27 *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*

- **Seek forgiveness from those offended**
- **Pay back all debts**
- **Make things right with God and man**

CONCL –What a transformation, from this compromising proud congregation to a holy obedient people. That is what the Spirit and the Word wrought. It moved the apostle greatly and it has moved the whole church ever since. This is what can happen in a church.