

## Repentance: An Often-Missing Word in the Pursuit of Revival

*Psalm 51; James 4:7-10*

Revival... *“the extraordinary movement of the Spirit of God in the hearts of \_\_\_\_\_, producing extraordinary results.”*

Revival is the Reviver at work in the life of His own, the church. **So far, we have considered the need and the importance of humility.** The attitude that draws the attention of God; humility draws that gaze of the Almighty. Proud hearts do not respond well to God. And God does not respond well to proud hearts.

**Last time, we looked at Psalm 32 and saw the need for honesty...the need for a transparency before God.** In other words, the need for confession of sin to God. When it comes to revival, silence is not golden. There's a blessing that accompanies confession of sin and a heaviness from the hand of God that accompanies the hiding of sin.

**For today, we consider the next ingredient of revival...namely repentance...an often-missing word in the pursuit of revival** Please turn in your Bible to **Psalm 51. (Read)**

The reality is that we don't like to admit we've done wrong. We have a hard time 'owning up' to our shortcomings; ...to our sin. This morning we're privileged to read a page in a person's diary dealing with their sin and their coming clean before God. **The rise, the fall and the restoration of David is one of the greatest stories in Bible history (of world literature).**

WHERE DOES IT ALL BEGIN? Did you note the few words written under the title **Psalm 51**, even before the first verse? Now, if you were to have your life laid bare before everyone you knew or everyone who would ever know you, what kind of information would you write about yourself?

As we look at **Psalm 51**, we're going to see a beautiful pattern of the character of true confession. And at the heart of true confession is \_\_\_\_\_.

What kind of confession is acceptable to God? How do we know if a person is truly repentant and penitent? What should a penitent sinner say? How should the person feel and think? We turn to this Psalm for answers.

**Two important thoughts as we begin:**

- **Only true \_\_\_\_\_ leads to true God given \_\_\_\_\_!**
- **The sins which we \_\_\_\_\_, God will \_\_\_\_\_. But the sins which we \_\_\_\_\_, God will \_\_\_\_\_.**

We have studied this **Psalm** in detail but allow me to make **two observations** having to do with repentance.

**I. Repentance begins with a change of \_\_\_\_\_**

Do you see it in the Psalm? David clearly acknowledges that he has sinned ultimately against God. *This is unnatural.*

In his book **Repentance: The First Word of the Gospel**, Richard Owen Roberts writes the following: *"Perhaps the most popular subject of all time is the subject of sin. It is not only frequently spoken of but regularly practiced by an overwhelming majority of the world's people. Many sin without any fear of the consequences, not even knowing that the God who made them has the right to regulate their conduct and to punish all their infractions of His law."* (Roberts, *Repentance: The First Word of the Gospel*, p. 15) He goes on to write: *"The biblical doctrine of repentance hinges on the fact that all sin is a grievous affront against God."* (Roberts, *Repentance: The First Word of the Gospel*, p. 16)

Repentance begins with a change of thinking. We see it in **Psalm 51**. Let's see it in the NT; please turn in your Bible to **James 4:7-10**

God is telling us that if we are ever to turn from our sin, we must begin by **seeing** our sin from God's perspective, so much that we are repulsed by what we once indulged in. **We seem to have lost the ability to mourn over that which offends God.** Things that break the heart of God have become our entertainment—things we laugh at and pay money to see.

When we have not had this change of thinking and have no godly sorrow over our sin, it is immediately evident. We...

- *are angry when others confront us about the issues in our life.*
- *are unwilling to take necessary steps of repentance.*
- *run away from righteousness (instead of running toward it).*
- *are slow to obey.*
- *see our sin as "not all that bad" or just a "little problem."*
- *constantly justify behavior by pointing at the worse behavior of others.*
- *make shallow, temporary commitments to change.*

**APPLICATION:** *Real repentance begins by remaining in the presence of God and His Word long enough that we begin to see our sin as God sees it and say about our sin what God says about it.*

*Repentance does begin with a change of thinking but there's more...*

**II. Repentance begins with a change of thinking that leads to a change of \_\_\_\_\_**

**The fruit of repentance is changed behavior.**

Repentance cannot be considered genuine unless there is outward evidence - a change of behavior.

Please not the same thing in **James 4:7-10 (specifically vv. 8b-9)**. Take these words to heart. God is giving us an imperative. In order for our relationship with Him to grow we must repent from our evil ways.

Notice it is two-fold. God wants us to cleanse our:

**A. \_\_\_\_\_**

**Hands** – He is talking about an external cleansing: our habits; our actions, deeds, language. The command to wash hands means to purify our actions and change our external behavior. The picture, then, involves the submission of our exterior lives to God's cleansing. The way we live matters to God.

As we submit or draw near to God, we will become aware of habits and actions in our lives that are not pleasing to him. *Washing our hands pictures the removal of these things from the way we live.* We must distance ourselves from the sins that God points out.

**B. \_\_\_\_\_**

**Hearts (Mind)** – The command to purify hearts calls for purity of thoughts and motives — changes on the inside. The people could not remain double-minded, trying to love both God and the world. If we allow the world to entice us away from God, we too have become "*double-minded.*" James has already used this term in **1:8**. There it refers to someone who can't decide if God is reliable. Here it refers to someone who is trying to maintain a friendship with both God and the world. Purity of heart, then, implies single-mindedness.

Take this home with you: *repentance results in* \_\_\_\_\_  
*what you once* \_\_\_\_\_ *and* \_\_\_\_\_ *what you*  
*once* \_\_\_\_\_.

The purpose of repentance is not to make us feel better about ourselves but to restore us to a right relationship with God, so that our lives may again bring glory to Him and be used for His purposes.

### **CONCLUSION**

*1. The fact that God reveals sin in your life and commands you to repent is evidence of His* \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
*and* \_\_\_\_\_.

*2. The best time for you to respond to God is at the moment of* \_\_\_\_\_.

The longer you delay, the harder we resist His Spirit and the more difficult it becomes to humble yourself and repent.

*3. God never asks anything from you that He does not provide the grace to* \_\_\_\_\_ *it.*

That which He commands He provides. When it comes to repentance, no matter how long or strong the bondage of sin, God can deliver you by His grace.

Brethren, are you a repenter? Are you living a life of continual repentance, as you should? How can you know?

- **A repenter renews his mind with truth from Scripture**

\_\_\_\_\_

He is aware that the battle against temptation is first waged in the mind and that the process of repentance begins there as well.

- **A repenter responds to God** \_\_\_\_\_

Once under conviction, he agrees with God about his sin, turns away from it and turns toward the Lord.

- **A repenter obeys God** \_\_\_\_\_

He forsakes the temporary pleasure of sin for the abiding joy of God's blessing. He does not cast a longing look back at sin.

- **A repenter follows God** \_\_\_\_\_

He does not base his commitment to God on what others are doing. He doesn't look to the right or the left when following the Lord. Single-mindedness in obedience.

- **A repenter accepts God's discipline** \_\_\_\_\_

Realizing that sin has consequences, he accepts the Lord's discipline as an act of love and as a reminder when he next faces temptation.

**Making it personal: What sin has God put his finger on in your life? What immediate steps do you need to take to follow Him in obedience? What joys and freedoms will result from your honest confession?**