

THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE

1996 By Mark Beard

Text: I Sam. 15:11, 26-28

Acts 13:22 "After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

John Locke said, "Repentance is a heart sorrow for our misdeeds, and a sincere resolution and an endeavor to the utmost of our power, to conform all our actions to the law of God. It does not consist in one single act of sorrow, but in doing works meet for repentance; in a sincere obedience to the law of Christ for the remainder of our lives."

John Milton said of repentance that it is "the golden key that opens the palace of eternity."

Some consider repentance a small or insignificant act now days. They consider it negative and unnecessary. Many preachers do not even preach it anymore. Some people refuse to repent unless they are caught in sin and then they are half-hearted at best. But, with God, repentance is the difference between a curse and a blessing, spiritual life and death. It brings either acceptance or rejection from God.

The story of David and Saul is a prime example of repentance and non-repentance. It shows the necessity of repentance.

I. REPENTANCE BRINGS A BLESSING.

(David's restoration based on Ps. 51)

A. He was a "man after God's own heart."

B. He humbled himself and was submissive.

Psalms 51:1-2 reads, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” NIV

C. He acknowledged his wrong and was sorry.

Psalms 51:3-4, “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.” NIV

Paul said in II Corinthians 7:9-10, “Yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.

D. God accepted him.

In contrast, look at Saul (first king of Israel).

II. REFUSING TO REPENT BRINGS A CURSE.

(Saul's rejection as king by God)

A. "He was turned back" from following god (15:11).

1. He changed from obedient to disobedient.
2. God did not reject him because he sinned but because he was disobedient in his heart.

Isaiah 1:18-20 says, "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

There is atonement for sin but not for a disobedient heart.

B. He was rebellious and stubborn (v. 23, For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft...)

1. This is the way of Satan. He might as well have been serving the devil.
2. If we are not for God we are against Him.
3. He wanted to ignore his wrong and he refused to be sorry (v. 24).

Saul said to Samuel, "Forgive me or pardon my sin (excuse) and go with me to worship." He was going to offer the animals God said to kill as sacrifices, He was not repentant, only wanting to look good in public by appearing to worship a God he would not obey."

He said in v. 30, "I have sinned yet honor me now" before the elders and people.

Blaise Pascal said, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

II Corinthians 7:10, “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” NIV

D. God rejected him. (brought about a steady decline)

1. His mind changed for the worse. (Rom.1)
2. He sought the comfort of God but not His will.

CONCLUSION

“Repentance is not basically a religious word. It comes from a culture where people were essentially nomadic and lived in a world with no maps or street signs. It's easy to get lost walking through the desert. You become aware that the countryside is strange. You finally say to yourself, I'm going in the wrong direction. That's the first act of repentance.

The second act of repentance is to go in an alternate direction. It implies that you not only do this but you admit it to your companions. We all do this whether or not we realize it.”

-- Gordon MacDonald, "Repentance," Preaching Today, Tape No. 121.