A Genuinely Repentant Heart

Objective: Teach the nature of a genuinely repentant heart.

Reading: Ezekiel 18:30-32.

Memory: Ezekiel 18:31, “R_y_o_a_t_o_y_h_c_, a_g_a_n_h_a_a_n_s_.”

Introduction:

1. Sometimes folks get concerned for their salvation because they are doing something bad. They hope they won’t die until they can conveniently stop that bad behavior. Then, after living in sin for a year or more, their life situation changes so they are no longer “caught” up in that particular sin. Now, they think they are good with God because they have stopped that particular behavior.

2. God is not looking for us to simply stop some particular bad behavior. He is looking for a heart that is eager to dispense with all erroneous behavior and be like Him. One who’s very heart is set on doing right.

3. Are you such a person? Do you have a genuinely repentant heart?

We need understand the nature of a repentant heart. (HOW?)

We can repent from one thing at a timed to be sure, but a “repentant heart” is a way of being. A repentant heart is not a one-time event, but a new way of life. It is not the result of a simple statement one makes or a one-time feeling of regret or sorrow, or even a one-time change of direction. It is the very nature of one’s heart, so it is a constant, continuing spiritual quality. Let’s consider some ways in which a genuinely repentant heart manifests itself.

A genuinely repentant heart indicates…

I. A Continual Renewal Of The Mind.

A. Not just a one-time change of thinking.
   1. Though this is important too. If there is a specific wrong thought, it needs to be corrected.
   2. Includes evil thoughts, lustful thoughts, malicious thoughts, wrong doctrinal thoughts.
   3. The “heart” one has is not an occasional thing, but an always thing.
   4. Do you engage spiritual warfare from time to time, or always? resist Satan sometimes, or always?

B. A repentant mind-set is needed.
   1. One that is constantly searching for truth and considering.
   2. Because 20 yrs ago, you learned a more correct doctrine than you had at the time does not mean you have arrived and should stop learning and growing.
   3. Philippians 3:12-15, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”
   
   Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things…”
   4. Like Paul, we need to be forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. This is critical to our spiritual maturing.

C. Always looking for and open to truth.
   1. To gain greater spiritual understanding.
   2. As Apostles needed to repent of pre-conceived ideas in order to comprehend true nature of Messiah. Needed to open their minds to grasp concept of Jesus being crucified.
   3. Needed to realize nature of their role as “light to the Gentiles”.
   5. Romans 12:2, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Is your mind open to a new way of thinking, repentant thinking.

Not just the thought patterns are involved. A genuinely repentant heart indicates…

II. A Continual Renewal Of The Heart.

A. Constant correction of how we feel about things.
   1. You can change the way you feel. Usually with a renewed way of thinking.
2. Might be racially prejudiced – until I realize we all are descendants of Noah.
3. I was angry with motorcycle rider – until I realized he had a wooped leg.
4. To be sorry once is not enough. To be sorry momentarily is not what it is about. If irritable response is wrong once, it probably always is, without me making excuses why okay this time.
5. Not a heart that feels momentary grief over tragedies like abortion occasionally, but a heart that grieves over all evil in life.
6. Matthew 5:4, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” = blessing to those who are continually disturbed by evil in the world, over evil influences, by the fact that God is not honored by our nation and people in the world in general.

B. Not just regarding some offenses, but all offenses.
   1. 1 Peter 3:21, baptism is a promise – for the rest of our lives. A continuing appeal.
   2. “…and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.”
   3. “Lord” help me. I give me to you. I promise to try to keep a good conscience. = clean heart.
   4. There are things I didn’t realize 5 years ago when I committed my life to you. But I promised to try.
   5. Like when I said, “I do” to my wife. Didn’t know what future held, but made promise to act out of love toward her all my life = constant changes and upgrades of behavior.

C. A new life relationship with God.
   1. Not my will but Your will be done. You are my lord. My master. I live for you.
   2. I want to be dead to self, alive to Christ. Put off the old man. A new birth!
   3. I’m not so much concerned with memorizing doctrine as I am concerned with knowing Christ! That is where my heart is now!
   4. I want a Father-child relationship; Matthew 18:2-3, “He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”
   5. Not a child-like action. A change to childlikeness. Give me a new heart – the heart of a child.

With a constantly renewing mind and a constant re-examination of my inner motivations, a genuinely repentant heart also indicates…

III. A Continual Renewal Of Life Focus.
A. My life is God’s life.
   1. So my focus needs to be His focus. Each morning I wake up with the thought of “How can I most effectively thank God and bring Him glory today?”
   2. How would God have me live out this moment if He were right here directing my every thought and motive? He is. And I re-commit to this ideal each moment of my life. (That’s a repentant heart!)

B. We have a tendency to drift off focus.
   1. Flesh is still with us and at war with the Spirit.
   2. Ideally I live by the Spirit and the Flesh has no “say”; In practical reality, the flesh has a tendency to sneak up on me and I need to constantly say “no” to it.
   3. Paul had to “buffet” his body daily – so do I. Is anyone completely free of this need for constant discipline and re-commitment? For constant re-focusing of our life?
   4. This is essence of a “repentant heart”, and a repentant heart is key to new life. Understand that…

C. Repentance is essentially a resurrection.
   1. When I genuinely repent; I am granted newness of life.
   2. When I drift into the realm of darkness and I genuinely repent, I am transferred into the kingdom of Light again. I want to know life. I need to be constantly repentant.

So What?
Examine your heart. What is the nature of your “heart”. Is it occasionally forced to repent of something, or is it constantly looking for the right path? Do you really have a “repentant heart”?
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Topical

Reading: Ezekiel 18:30-32. Memory: Ezekiel 18:31

“R_y_o_a_t_o_y_h_c_, a_g_a_n_h_a_a_n_s_.”

We need understand the nature of a repentant heart.
Some ways in which a genuinely repentant heart manifests itself.

I. A Continual Renewal Of The Mind.
A. Not just a one-time change of thinking.

B. A repentant mind-set is needed. Philippians 3:12-15

C. Always looking for and open to truth. Romans 12:2

II. A Continual Renewal Of The Heart.
A. Constant correction of how we feel about things. Matthew 5:4

B. Not just regarding some offenses, but all offenses. 1 Peter 3:21

C. A new life relationship with God. Matthew 18:2-3

III. A Continual Renewal Of Life Focus.
A. My life is God’s life.

B. We have a tendency to drift off focus.

C. Repentance is essentially a resurrection.

So What?
Examine your heart. Do you really have a “repentant heart”?

Action: (Specify an action or change you will make in your life as a result of this message.)

__________________________________________

Date: (When you will check to verify that you have done it.)

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