

A CHANGE OF
MIND

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY SAYS
ABOUT REPENTANCE



JOSEPH A CORTES

VOLUME 1

A Change of Mind

What the Bible Really Says about Repentance Volume 1

Contents

Chapter 1	
Do I Have to Repent to Get to Heaven	1
Chapter 2	
More On A Change of Mind	21
Chapter 3	
More on A Change of Mind, Part 2	33
Chapter 4	
It's All About Jesus	45
Chapter 5	
Reformation to Present	56
Chapter 6	
If Any	77
Chapter 7	
Sin Has Been Removed Forever	94

Chapter 1

Do I Have to Repent to Get to Heaven?

I have an old dictionary with many definitions about the word *repent*. Defined theologically, it says, “*to feel such sorrow for sin....*” But that definition, however, raises a question: Not considering the apostles, where do we find Jesus asking anyone to feel sorrow for their sins?

I want you to think about this. We have been so indoctrinated by what the church world teaches - the same definitions and explanations for hundreds of years - that we just take it for granted that they knew what they were talking about. After all, they are behind a pulpit. This book here says, in theology, “*to feel such sorrow for sin as leads to amendment of one’s ways.*” That makes it sound like we must do something, but the question is - do you? And if you do, what exactly? Is it some works we must do?

No. Obviously you know the answer to that if you have been with this ministry for a while. This definition is not only found in this particular old dictionary. Look in other dictionaries, especially those focused on theology.

So, let us begin looking at what Jesus did say about repentance. First, go to John 3:16. Here, John writes,

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Does that say repent? No, it says, “***whosoever believeth.***” There the word is *pisteuo*: to have trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, especially about what He was about ready to do and what He already did. When we look back, we are to have trust and confidence in those things.

Jesus is not calling for repentance there, is he? Go to John 6:40. It reads,

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth [pisteo again] on him, may have everlasting life.”

That verse does not read ‘that everyone which seeth the son, and repent may have everlasting life.’ No, it says ***“and believeth [or trusts] in him may have everlasting life.”*** So where does this repenting stuff come from?

First, you must know, salvation is not what we do for God. Salvation is not dependent on how remorseful we are. And, if we are really remorseful, it does not mean we have a greater salvation than some other person. Salvation is what God did for us, and it is nothing of ourselves. Our works do not enter into the contract. Ephesians 2:8 tells us,

“For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

The word *works* in that verse is *ergon*, and means ‘*the employment of something,*’ in our case, the Word of God. This verse is telling us that grace does not happen by any employment of somebody's word about what we must do, including ‘*You must repent,*’ lest any man should boast about what they did because they were remorseful.

Let me read from a section of this book. I do not agree with some of the things in this book, but I will read some of what I do agree with. It begins,

“Imagine you are about to buy a home. As you are about to sign the contract, you cross out the price and you insert a lower price. Will the seller of the home honor that contract? No, of course not.”

You have violated the terms of the contract. In the same way, a pastor who crosses out the terms of the contract and adds different terms to His contract, that contract is void. It will not stand.

What is free and available to all by grace through faith is hijacked by the addition of human efforts. In no way can a person's good works and deeds be added to the contract. God will not honor such a contract, and if you die under the terms of your own works-based contract, which essentially makes you the 'savior' and not Christ, you will stand before Him at the Great White Throne Judgment.

One of the reasons why [many other preachers and their] plan of salvation is not biblical [including what they ask you to pray when you come to the altar] is due to the misuse of the word 'repent.' The New Testament was written predominantly in the Greek language. The definition of the word 'repent' in the Greek language is different from how it is defined in the English language. [just as I read the most common definitions from a theological sense] When Christ told people to repent He was telling them to 'change their minds' [which would eventually change their hearts] about what they were currently believing in (works of the law) [for salvation] to get them into heaven and to instead trust in Him alone to get them

into heaven. The Greek word for repent is 'metanoia' which means 'a change of mind' and has nothing at all to do with turning from sins. To consciously turn from your sins involves a great amount of self-effort and resolve."

Often Christians are told we must repent and turn from our sins or we will go to hell, and if we repent and turn from our sins, then we will go to heaven, but Jesus never said that, nor his apostles - not a single one of them. That is why there are so many professing Christians, instead of change of mind and change of heart Christians. This author goes on to say,

"It takes effort to put down that bottle of alcohol. It takes effort to quit smoking cigarettes. [Note: I am not saying you will go to hell if you smoke cigarettes; do not put words in my mouth.] It takes effort to quit a drug habit. It takes great effort to not get angry at someone who has wronged you, or to stop lusting, lying, cheating, or to keep the Ten Commandments, etc. That ... is 'works-based salvation' and goes against what Christ teaches, despite how wholesome and good it sounds [and what we hear in most churches]. The English word repent, according to just about any English [or theological] dictionary, means to 'turn from sin...' or to 'feel regret' or to 'feel sorrow' [remorse, in other words]. So, why do so many pastors use the English definition of repent rather than using the Greek meaning? Specifically, why [do so many pastors] define repent as turning from sins when it, in fact, means to change your mind?"

If you do not like the definition of repent, then change God's word, because that is exactly what it says in God's word. But, what are we changing our minds about? We are changing our minds about what Christ said in John 3:16 and 6:20 about how we will get to heaven. The old methods did not work any longer once Christ came. When John the Baptist was preaching repentance, he was still living under the law.

"...the word 'metanoia' should have been brought into the English language either as it is currently spelled and pronounced or by using a transliteration, such as the Greek word for baptize is 'baptizo' and was transliterated into English by removing the 'o' and adding an 'e' in its place. Ultimately, Satan is to blame for the misuse of the word repent. While the translators of the Bible in the year 1611 failed to accurately define the word repent, the Bible is still the infallible and inspired Word of God; however, to know the correct meanings of certain words, one must refer to a concordance that translates certain [Greek] words into their accurate English equivalents."

That is easier said than done because many different people, like Wescott and Hort in the 1880's, decided to make up their own definitions for Greek words. Therefore, to find the correct definitions, we must dig a little deeper than that.

"Although Satan is to blame ultimately for the misuse and continued propagation of this word, and although the translators of the Bible bear some share of the blame, as well, the real

problem today is the lack of discipline on each pastor's part."

I have been saying for years that lazy pastors do not want to study to show themselves approved, not in the people's eyes, but in God's eyes. They are representing Him, and hopefully rightly dividing the word of God; if they are not, God help them.

"Pastors today have failed to do the necessary work of rightly dividing God's Word. To 'rightly divide' the Bible, a pastor must know the original intent and meaning of certain Greek words, and every difficult verse in scripture must be interpreted in light of an easier one. For example, many cults and many mainstream Christian churches today claim that Acts 2:38 says we must repent of our sins and get water baptized in order to be saved...."

If you have been a Christian for more than a month you have probably heard somewhere, by someone, either in a church or from a Christian, that Acts 2:38 says that we must repent of our sins and get water baptized in order to be saved.

"...but when this verse is rightly divided using other, more clear verses, such as John 3:16 or John 6:40, and when the Greek word for repent is used correctly, we know that Peter was telling the audience that had just crucified Christ that in order for them to be born again they had to 'change their minds' about exactly who they just crucified, that He was, in fact, the Messiah, and that if they trusted in Him alone they would be baptized 'in the Name' of Jesus Christ,

which meant that they would be 'brought into His family' and has nothing at all to do with being immersed into water. What many people, as well as many cults [and denominations too], fail to understand is that the Bible speaks of 10 different baptisms. Specifically, the Bible speaks of the baptism of John the Baptist, the baptism of death, the diverse baptisms of the Old Testament, the baptisms of believers, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of Jesus Christ, the baptism of fire, the baptism of Moses... and the baptism in the Name."

This is profoundly serious but go to Mark 7:1. Just to lighten the mood a little bit, let's look at one of the baptisms. Start with the very first verse,

"Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not."

The Greek word for 'wash' is the same word used for baptizing in the church world today, **baptizo**; it is the same word for immersing in water. This verse shows another baptism, the baptism of pots and pans.

"And when they come from the market, except they baptizo, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables."

Once a person wrote me a letter about four or more pages long upset and telling me why water baptism is necessary. And as I read page by page, their argument did not hold water (no pun intended) at all. It reminded me of people who just memorize verses then put them together to make their own doctrine saying it is because the scripture said so. They are really just taking the verses out of context without knowing the meaning of the words. Therefore, the next time someone tells you that you must be baptized or else you are a sinner, ask him or her which baptism. There are many of them, should you be baptized in pots and pans? Then read them Mark 7:4. It is important that you really understand *how* the words were used in the everyday language of the Greek. That was just a side bar, so let us continue with this author,

“It is easy to misinterpret Acts 2:38 as being a ‘water baptism’ verse just as easily as it is to wrongly define repent using the English definition rather than the Greek definition; however, the unique thing about the Greek language is that virtually every word in the language is different and therefore each word is defined a little differently from every other word, however similar they might appear to be ... in virtually every case that Christ used the word repent, He was telling lost people to [metanoia] ‘to change their minds’ from their works to His grace. Grace is the absolute opposite of works. The two are as different as night and day according to Romans 11:6, which says, ‘And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.’”

It does not matter how much of a work you try to slip in, even just a sliver of a work, especially if it comes to salvation. Then it is no more grace, and you are living under damnation because you are still living under the law, not under Christ.

“While this is definitely a brain teaser of a verse, it is quite clear that if salvation is by grace, then it cannot be by works [or of works], otherwise the definitions of both grace and works would be false. You cannot have grace if you attempt to be saved by your works; otherwise, grace would not be grace. If you attempt to be saved by your works, you will stand before Christ at that Great White Throne Judgment and all of your works will never be enough to get you into Heaven. Why? Because nothing you could ever do in your lifetime would ever make you ‘as righteous as’ Christ. You see, we must all be ‘as righteous as’ God in order to enter into heaven. [That is why He imputes it in us, He knows what we need.] It is a place where there is no sin. The only thing that can ‘wash away’ our sins is the blood of Christ. [Actually, that washing away removes it, not covers it.] If you will think back with me to when God used Moses to issue the plagues against Pharaoh, everyone who applied the blood of a lamb upon their door posts were spared from having a ‘death angel’ kill the firstborn of their children. When the death angel saw the ‘blood’ he passed over their home; however, when the death angel saw a house that had no blood upon the door post, he killed the first-born child in that home. In a similar way, today,

when Christ sees His blood covering the sins of a believer, there is not judgment.”

This is where I again disagree. His blood is not covering us. When Christ removes the sins of the believer, there is no judgment. Romans 8 tells us there is no condemnation because if we are in Christ Jesus our sins are removed; they have vanished because of Christ.

“There is no condemnation... for the one who has ‘applied the blood’ of Christ to themselves. While figuratively speaking, we do not actually dip His blood onto a cloth and cover ourselves with it. Instead, His blood washes our sins away the instant that we trust Him as our savior. He shed His blood upon the cross over 2,000 years ago. Moses was saved by believing what Christ ‘would do’ for him in the future. Today, we are saved by believing what Christ ‘already did’ for us on the cross 2,000 years ago. And according to scriptures, His dead body was buried in a grave, and three days later He arose from that grave.”

He did more than that. He sprinkled His blood on the heavenly mercy seat, declaring that there is no judgment for the ones that are righteous by His blood. God does not see sin; it cannot be found anywhere.

“He laid His life down for our sins and He took it back up again. He did this for you and for me so that, upon believing in Him as our savior, as our only hope of heaven, He saves us in that instant....

Now, when a pastor uses the English version of repent rather than Christ's version of repent which is based upon the meaning of the Greek translation, a form of 'works' enters into the equation that subsequently nullifies the free gift of salvation. God will not accept our 'works' when it comes to salvation. God only accepts the sacrifice of His Son as the payment for our sins and as the 'ticket' for entering into Heaven. While we are born sinners, Christ was without sin. We cannot help our condition anymore than a cheetah can remove his spots. Our works, no matter how honest and genuine they are, are considered as 'filthy rags' in God's eyes according to Isaiah 64:6, which says, 'But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, has taken us away.'

If you think that works will help you, or if you think that 'anything of self' will aid you in getting into heaven, or if any combination of faith in Christ plus your good deeds will count in God's eyes, I want you to look very closely at this particular verse: 'And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' (Acts 13:39). The 'him' this verse is referring to is none other than Jesus Christ. In both of the aforementioned verses, we are told outright by the Holy Spirit who wrote the Bible using the ink and scrolls of

people that, under no circumstances whatsoever, can our good deeds and righteous works be used as a bargaining chip.”

But what about being a disciple? Discipleship has nothing to do with salvation. A disciple means that you are a learner, and now that you are saved, you will learn God’s ways and God will give you opportunities to have faith in Him, in all sorts of ways. Giving is one way, by which you will accrue rewards in Heaven. That is why God says lay up your treasures in Heaven, not down here where moth and rust will get to it and corrupt it all. We cannot take what we accumulate down here up there.

God knows we need to be needed, so He will use us as His disciples to carry out what He wants. That has nothing to do with salvation, but it has to do with what He sees that we need, that is, a need to be needed. God gives us opportunities and if we are obedient, we accrue inexhaustible rewards throughout eternity.

That is part of discipleship, but many preachers confuse that and include discipleship with salvation. Salvation comes by Christ and Christ alone when we trust and have faith in what He did for us. We must have faith that His blood was priceless, His blood was sinless, and His blood made it all the way up to that heavenly mercy seat to remove all sin, if we have faith in Him. Discipleship is different.

Now back to this author,

“What is so deceptive in most all of today’s ministries is the... wrong usage of three of the most straight-forward verses in the Bible concerning salvation: John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9. [I already read John 3:16 to you.] Ephesians 2:8-9 states, ‘For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of

yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.'

...every pastor who uses these verses and then, at the end of their message, says you must repent of your sins, i.e, quit sinning, in order to be saved, is actually changing God's contract by 'adding works' to the clear plan of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone that each of these verses allude to or state emphatically as the only means by which we are saved. [That is something you would say prior to Christ, but not after.] They will state with strong conviction that no amount of human works can enter into salvation, then quote Ephesians 2:8-9 and John 3:16 to strengthen their arguments, yet, they turn right back around and make it 'mandatory' that you must exert the self-efforts necessary to turn [away] from your sins (works) in order to go to Heaven. Essentially, they are telling you to drive west when, in fact, you have asked them how to go east. They present salvation as a free gift and, when it comes time to 'sign the contract' they add unbiblical demands to it.

[Then there are some preachers who] asked members of [their] audience to stand up and to make their decision public as he led them in his version of the salvation prayer, implying that if they did not stand up in his service that Christ would be ashamed of them before His Father, yet, as oblivious as he and

his followers are, this 'act' of standing up and making a public decision is yet making another 'good work' that cancels out God's grace in terms of salvation because it is yet one more instance of 'something of self' that both Acts 13:39 and Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly state as being wrong.

When you look at John 3:16, the very words of Christ to Nicodemus who asked Him how to be born again, notice where Christ said 'whosoever believeth in Him...' and ask yourself why would Christ leave out 'and repent of your sins' or 'make it public' or any other combination of good works you can imagine. Did Christ lie to Nicodemus? Is Christ lying to us, today, through this verse? Of course not. When Christ said to someone that he or she had to 'believe' [pisteo, trust and have faith] in Him, He was also referring to the fact that He was the one who would pay for the sins of the world through His death on the cross, that He would be buried for three days, and that He would rise from the dead. The Greek word for 'believe' is 'pisteo' which means 'to trust.' When we 'trust' that Christ paid for our sins by His death, burial and resurrection from the dead, He saves us. How? Because He knows all of our thoughts. He knows every single thing you are thinking at this very moment... He knows every star and planet in the universe by name. He knows every process of every molecule and atom in His creation. He knows

every single thing about 'every single thing.' God knows the 'instant' that you trust in His Son, Jesus Christ, to save you, and when you do, He saves you. He 'knows' whether or not you have trusted Jesus as your savior. [Not your pastor, not John Doe, not your neighbor - He does.]

Notice how I use 'God' and 'Christ' interchangeably. The reason... is because Jesus said that He and the Father are 'one' and that if you have seen Him you have also seen the Father. That throws a lot of people off. What I tell people to do is to think of God as they would think of an egg. An egg has three basic parts, essentially. An egg has 1) a shell, 2) a white, and 3) a yoke. Although it has three basic parts, it is still 'one egg.' Similarly, we have 1) God the Father, 2) God the Son, and 3) God the Holy Spirit. While they are three unique personalities, God is still 'one God.' When Jesus Christ took on human flesh, He was literally 'God in a body.' Christ 'is' God. That is why He was able to say to the disciple(s) that if they had seen Him (Christ) that they had also seen the 'Father.' They are not three different 'gods.' God is 'one God' who chooses to express Himself through three distinct 'persons' who perform different duties. For instance, the Holy Spirit convicts people of their need for salvation, and Christ makes intercession for us to the Father. Therefore, I use both God and Christ interchangeably when I speak of

salvation because both are the same. Christ was, and is, literally God in a human body, according to the bible. The egg example is a good way to remember the fact that God is 'one' God and not three individual 'gods' comprising of some joint force.

'I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins' (John 8:24). Again, and again, Christ makes the condition for a person's salvation dependent upon belief (trust) alone in Himself.

If [preachers] understood this simplicity of salvation that is found in Christ alone, and then taught Christ's way of salvation instead of man's way [the repent of your sins way] we would see an explosion of salvation the likes of which the world has never seen! But will satanic blindness of scripture or perhaps pride keep a pastor from being saved and then admitting to the world that he was wrong about salvation all along? Maybe. Or would the world embrace such a pastor and then believe on Christ alone? I tell you the truth, if any unbelieving pastor gets born again the way Jesus said to do, the pastor would be favored by God in so many wonderful ways that it would defy description; however, Satan is not about to allow that to happen. Although his power is limited, Satan will cause a pastor to be so concerned with his

image and standing in society that even if an unbelieving pastor got born again, he may never admit this... for fear that he would lose his credibility, his salary, his position, and [anything that goes along with it]."

Matthew 7 talks about pastors and preachers who preach a different gospel - a different doctrine - and claim Jesus said that we must repent of our sins. Christ never said that; if he did, show me where.

However, Christ did say that we must trust in him, and He said it repeatedly. Even after His death and resurrection, we trust in the saving power of His precious blood. It is what He did for us that saves us. We will have remorse once we recognize what we were like without Christ, but that has nothing to do with salvation, and it cannot save us. Remorsefulness cannot save us, and regretting sin cannot save us because we keep on sinning, so we will have a remorseful miserable life if we keep thinking that way.

I sin, but I know that Christ if I keep trusting in Him, removes my sin. He knows my needs; He knows how I need to be changed, and He knows how to form what He wants me to be. He will mold me into the person He wants me to be. He is the potter, and I am the clay sitting on the wheel to be molded. I may tell God that I do not like it, but He knows me, and He knows what He is doing. I just must continue to trust in Him.

But what will these other pastors say when the time comes for them to give accountability? Matthew 7:21-23 tells us:

"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many

wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

That is you who employed what you thought was the word, but in essence it was really iniquity. Then this author continues,

"But it doesn't have to be this way! Look what Jesus says to us, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). Christ is very, very clear about his trust-alone requirement. Christ cannot lie. He will never hide truth from you, and He will never deceive you [or me]. Christ says, 'no works.' ... Even though I sin daily, and so do you, when we trust Christ alone as our savior, we are seen positionally as sons and daughters of Christ... but we are only His children if we trust Jesus as our savior. When saved, we are seen by Him as sinless even though we still sin. The Holy Spirit helps us overcome sins in our lives, but we will never be fully sin-free in this life because we inhabit sinful bodies that were born with sinful natures. Although believers have God's new nature in them, we still possess that old, sinful nature that we received at birth. Because we are what we are- sinners- we cannot 'change' what we are by any amount of good works we can do. That's precisely why we need a 'savior.' We cannot, cannot, cannot save ourselves. We are helpless. Christ knew this, and He died for us and rose again from the grave to secure a place for you and for me in heaven if we trust Him. Christ

credited me with His righteousness and I, just like all believers, am seen by God as His own. Once Christ credits your account with His righteousness, He no longer sees you as a dead sinner bound for the lake of fire."

How true that is. In Revelation 20:11, we read,

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

As I have said before, the Greek word for 'works' is *ergon*, meaning they were judged according to what came out of their mouths that produced whatever people believed to be the truth. God help us, for centuries we have believed in something not found in scriptures and not something Jesus or the disciples said. The next time someone tells you to repent of your sins or you will go to hell, tell them you will go to Heaven because you have had a change of mind, *metanoia*. It is not because we repent, but because of a change of mind about who can get me there, how, and why, and it is none of our own doing.

I came from a Catholic background that pounds remorse and guilt into you. They think for some reason that if you suffer enough and if you are remorseful enough for your sins, you will make it in. No, you will not. There is one criteria, and one criteria alone, and that criteria is Christ.

Christ alone is the criteria. That is why He said, "***Do this in remembrance of me.***" We are to keep our minds on Christ, and what He has done for us. If your mind is in a constant state

of 'already been changed' then it will not focus on the opposite, which is everything else we hear that says we must do this to be a Christian, or we must do that to be in Heaven. That is damnable heresy doctrine.

Keep your mind on Christ because that is our instruction and is the whole purpose of this message, so block out all this other nonsense. Unfortunately, too many churches around the world preach that you must repent from your sins. If you are in a church like that, know that you will be accountable for sitting under a leadership that puts all this criteria on your actions and takes the focus off of Christ and what He did for you.

Christ said, ***"Do this in remembrance of me, as oft as you eat and drink."*** He does not want us to take our minds off of Him; it is Christ alone. We sin daily but thank God He removes them if we have a change of mind and focus our minds on Him daily. He will take care of the things that we need worked on in our life, and I will testify to the fact that He will work you over. The Potter is no lightweight, believe me. He is the potter of all potters, and he does not make bad vessels. He makes finished products, and He knows what needs to be done.

So, let us remember every day to keep our minds on Christ, and remember what He has done for us. A change of mind will have a change of heart because He saved us and not because of anything that we did. Tell Him, "Thank you Jesus for saving me" and take the elements now as we go to the Table of the Lord.

Chapter 2

More on A Change of Mind

In the last chapter, I began teaching about the word 'repent.' That teaching probably aggravated some people, and others saw the truth when I said Jesus and the apostles never instructed us to repent of our sins. What is taught today, including repentance of sins, is nothing more than 'Christian Science Fiction,' not based on anything in God's word, just ideas man creates to fit the story.

Even though the Scriptures never teach repentance of sins, they do give us good news, and my goal is for you to understand the change of mind that Jesus asked for, instead of the repentance of sins. In this chapter I will show you three words that will probably have very different meanings for some of you; they did for me. This really is good news because no matter how many of you think that Jesus paid the price, or how many places actually teach this across the world, works are still added or you have to do certain things before you even think about repenting in the first place.

That is legalized doctrine straight from the pit of hell that somehow stuck, just like the other 'Christian Science Fiction' doctrines about prophecy that has brainwashed and misrepresented what the true Good News is. Scriptures never teach 'repentance' of sins. They do teach that Jesus said we need 'a change of mind' regarding Christ as our savior. Our individual personal sins are not an issue because they were all paid for by Jesus Christ Himself on that cross, and His blood is on that heavenly mercy seat reminding the universe of what He did for us.

Here are three Greek words: *metanoia*, *metanoeo*, and *metamelomai*.

The Greek word in the New Testament for what people call *repentance* is the noun *metanoia*. What it means is 'a change of

mind, period! Nothing can be added to it. The next word is a verb, *metanoeo*. It means 'a change of mind towards something.' *Metanoia* is found 24 times in the Greek New Testament, and *metanoeo* is found 35 times. *Metanoeo* is a compound verb in the Greek and is composed of two Greek words, the first is *meta*, meaning 'change,' and the second is *noeo*, meaning 'mind.' So, the correct meaning of that word when used is 'to change one's mind about something.'

As you can see, both those words have absolutely nothing to do with feeling sorry for sins, or our emotions, but that is not preached. There is another word in the Greek New Testament, however, which carries an emotional definition, and that is the verb *metamelomai*, which means 'to feel sorry, to regret, to feel sorrow.' *Metamelomai* is found six times in the New Testament and the distinction between the two verbs, *metanoeo* and *metamelomai* is obvious in the Greek. *Metamelomai* expresses merely an emotional change, with *metanoeo* expressing a change of choice. That is a big difference and is frequently confused by so many preachers.

Now that we see the difference between these words, we will read some scriptures as examples. Keep in mind that *metamelomai* signifies nothing but regret resulting in feeling sorry for whatever while *metanoeo* deals with a change of mental attitude and has nothing to do with emotions.

Also remember, *metanoia* is found in scripture 24 times in the New Testament, where *metamelomai* - the word that deals with emotions, sorrow, and regret - is only found six times. However, that is what Christians like to hang on to because we have been beat over the head that you must be down, feel sorry, regret, and remorse. Of course, we will experience some of those feelings. We are all humans, and we hate to displease our master. But they have nothing to do with salvation.

Those emotions are not in scripture, even though it is preached as scripture, and I am on a campaign to correct that. This may aggravate a lot of people, especially the Pharisees of

today's world, because it goes against tradition, but we must get this right. It is the starting point and why there are three failures and only one success in the Parable of the Sower. It is because the starting point is not taught correctly.

Metanoia is the primary word of the three. I have my own definition that refers to the thinking of people who thought one thing, or made one decision, and then, based on further evidence or input, changed their minds. So, the basic definition of *metanoia* is 'a change of mind' and that definition is used not only in the New Testament, but also outside the New Testament. It is 'a change of mind that leads to a different course of action.' In scripture, that course of action must be determined by the context that deals with forgiveness of sin or receiving eternal life as a gift from God. The course of action is a change of trust because one now sees Jesus as the only means of our salvation. As an example, John used the word *metanoia* in Matthew 3:1,

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye [actually, metanoeo, 'change your mind'] for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Ask yourself: what were John's listeners supposed to change their minds about?

Another example is found in the Gospel of Mark 1:14,

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand [Jesus Christ was in their midst]: repent ye, believe the gospel."

Repent in that verse is again *metanoeo*: change your mind about Jesus. However, if John the Baptist is saying 'Repent, because the Kingdom of God is at hand,' those listeners would

race right back to the Law and try to fulfill every part of it because of their repentant hearts.

That is not what John was telling them. He was saying, ***“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: metanoeo [change your mind] and believe [pisteo, have trust, confidence, or faith about Christ for salvation] the gospel.”*** Romans 1:16 says, ***“for it is the power of God for salvation to every one that believeth,”*** really everyone who has faith, who trusts, and has confidence in Jesus Christ.

In Luke 15:7, Jesus makes an interesting comment concerning the person who changed his mind about Christ and began trusting Him as Savior. He said, ***“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth [or metanoeo, the sinner who changes their mind about Christ and trusts Him as Savior], more than over ninety and nine just persons, which needed no repentance.”***

The word ***‘just’*** in that verse is *dikaios* and could be used in reference to believers or non-believers. It is someone who has rules given by God or society that they follow and who believes they are a good person because of the structure of the rules established and followed according to the world’s viewpoint. That is not important to God. In God’s word, all the rule followers who are not trusting in Jesus Christ as their savior, for whatever reason, fall short. So, to read this verse again, Jesus said, ***“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that metanoeo [that changes their mind about Christ], more than over ninety-nine who think they have it right about whatever philosophy or doctrine they follow, which need no repentance.”***

How many people think that because they have their own belief system, and still do good, help the needy, give to charity, help the little old lady across the street, do not drink too much, do not smoke too much, they will get into heaven, if there is a God to start with? Moreover, if there is no God, at least they are contributing members of society and have not caused

society additional problems. Jesus is not impressed by them either, nor are any angels in heaven or anyone that can look down upon on this planet and say whatever they want to say. They are not impressed about performance, but they are about that one sinner who trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior. A few verses later in Luke 15 verse 10 tells us,

“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth [No, over one who *metanoeo*, who changed his mind about Christ, trusting in Him for salvation.]”

Matthew 27:1 has another example of this when Jesus was brought before Pilate,

“When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took council against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound, him they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. 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 innocent blood. And they said, ‘What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.”

Now, in verse 3, we read ***“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself....”*** If Judas repented himself, he would then be saved according to the way that word is preached, but that is not what happened, because that is not what it means. However, the third word, *metamelomai*, which means ‘to feel sorry’, is what happened in this verse. Judas felt sorry for his sin, but that does not mean he put his trust back in Jesus Christ. We know that he went to hell, or wherever he is at right now, because the Lord Jesus Christ said so Himself.

Next, go to John 17:12, where we read Jesus’ prayer:

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

What is noteworthy is that Judas felt sorry for his sin. There is no question about that. He felt *metamelomai* for betraying the Son of God, yet he was not saved; *metamelomai* does not save anyone. He was not saved because of his emotions. Emotions will not save a single soul ever, even if someone gets emotional when repenting.

When we know what God expects through His word, rightly divided, we can have an even better experience, because we have a better understanding of what the Good News really means. Emotions do not save, even if you fall in the floor, faint, go into a crazy dance, or do back flips: it does not save a single soul. Repentance requires a change of mind.

As an example, in Matthew 26:75, the Apostle Peter denied Christ three times, and he also felt sorry and wept. It reads,

“And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.”

Both men - Judas and Peter - felt sorry for their sins, yet one was saved and the other was not. Each, no matter how you look at it, committed a terrible sin. Each had denied Jesus Christ. One was saved the other was not. Emotion could not save Judas. Yes, Peter wept bitterly, yet his tears did not save him, but rather his faith in Christ saved him. There is only one way to salvation, and it eliminates and excludes human works and emotions, and that is to believe or trust, *pisteo*, on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is what Acts chapter 16:31 tells us. In verse 23, Paul and Silas are in prison. Then in verse 26, the prison doors were opened, and every band were loosed. Verse 27 continues,

“And the keeper of the prison awakening out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword and would have killed himself [because he thought the prisoners had escaped] ... Then he called for a light, and sprang in ... trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Paul and Silas did not say to repent or confess their sins! They did not say to do what I did for at least 13 years of my life - that is, confess to a priest. I was so out of ideas about the sins I did commit that I made up sins. I would be kneeling there in front of the priest, behind that mesh screen wall, telling him all kind of sins so he would think that I was a sinner. Moreover, of course he told me how many “Our Fathers” and how many “Hail Mary’s” to say. Do you see how backwards that is? You know the story; I have told it before.

Paul and Silas did not say “Repent, confess to me your sins.” In verse 31, it is recorded,

“And they said, Believe [pisteo, have trust and confidence] on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

That kind of trust requires action that changes our mind about who can save us.

Ministries and churches today want to hear our whole confession; they want us to feel sorry that Jesus went to the cross for us. Yes, I was born into sin and you were born into sin. Christ knew that from the beginning, but He does not want our sorrow; He wants our trust. I repeat He does not want our sorrow. He knew already what we were born into, and that is why He came in the first place - to rescue us from this

miserable life of sin. He does not want our sorrow, regrets, or remorse. He wants our trust!

John 3:16 has been so abused and misused, but it will have new meaning for you now. It states,

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth [No! Trust!] in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Read verse 36, the same chapter:

“He that believeth [trusts and has confidence] on the Son [Jesus Christ] hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Judas could have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ even after he sinned, but he chose not to. All he chose to do instead was *metamelomai*, to be sorrowful and have regret for his sin. Peter, on the other hand, started trusting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word *metamelomai* also occurs in 2 Corinthians 7:9, but this verse can be a little confusing. It reads,

“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.”

A different translation says this,

***“For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it [metamelomai]; though I did regret it [metamelomai] -- for I see that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—
I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance***

[metanoia, a change of mind]; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance [metanoia] without regret [metamelomai], leading to salvation, but the sorrow produces death.”

Here Paul was writing about the confession of sin and was talking to people who were already believers at the Church in Corinth. It was a troublesome church that Paul had all kinds of problems with, but they already believed in Christ and were saved. They already had a *metanoia* experience and the *metanoeo*. The repentance that Paul was talking about here in these verses is the confession of sin and their recovery from that sin, which takes them out of the fellowship but does not cost them their salvation. It is important to know the differences between the Greek words when reading these verses, so the words can be put in their proper context; otherwise, it is not what God’s word says.

To conclude, you must know sin is never an issue of repentance as seen in these scriptures:

Psalms 103:10 - “He [God] *has not dealt with us* [you and I] *according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*”

John 1:29 - “... *Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*”

Romans 5:12 - “Therefore just as through one man [Adam] *sin* [its nature] *entered into the world, and death* [spiritual] *through sin* [the nature of], *and so death* [spiritual] *spread to all men* [because we all have sinner’s blood], *because all have sinned* [the Greek says, ‘when Adam sinned’].”

1st Corinthians 15:3 - “For I [Paul] *delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*”

Galatians 1:3-4 - ***“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who [the Lord Jesus Christ] gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father....”***

Hebrews 8:12 - ***“For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”***

Hebrews 10:17 - ***“And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”***

1st Peter 2:24 - ***“and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin [the sin nature] and live to righteousness [the righteousness God imputes in us, not self-made righteousness]; for by His wounds you were healed.”***

Of course, this verse has been taken out of context as well. We are healed from our sinful nature, so God does not perceive it any longer because of what his Son did, even though we still sin.

1st Peter 3:18 - ***“For Christ also died for our sins once for all, [not] just for the unjust [which means for you and me], so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit....’***

1st John 2:2 - ***“And he is the propitiation [or satisfaction] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”***

1st John 3:5 - ***“... He [the Lord Jesus Christ] appeared in order to take away sins....”***

Revelation 1:4-5 - ***“John to the seven churches in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him [the Lord Jesus Christ] who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits***

who are before His throne; And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born of the dead [first to be resurrected], ***and the ruler of kings of the earth. To Him*** [the Lord Jesus Christ] ***who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.***"

All these scriptures are telling us that the sins of the entire world- past, present, future- were paid by Christ at the cross. Several of those scriptures tell us those sins are no longer remembered. They are removed, not just covered. Covering sins is the Old Testament way of doing things and only required animal's blood. Christ did more than that. Not only did He cover our sins, but when the cover is lifted, the sins are removed never to be found again. Christ paid for these sins with his voluntary substitutionary spiritual death.

Therefore, repentance has nothing to do with our sins, but rather our change of mind and attitude toward Jesus Christ. The issue in repentance, if you still want to use the word, is simply this: will you change your mind about Jesus Christ, and start trusting Him as Lord and Savior? That is the question that needs to be asked, and each person must decide for themselves. I cannot decide that for you, but I can tell you this, salvation is through faith alone - through trust and confidence in what Christ did alone nothing more and nothing less!

That is why Christ said, ***"Do this in remembrance of me"***. Christ does not want us to feel sorry for ourselves or for Him. Instead, start trusting; *metanoia* and *metanoeo*, not *metamelomai*. Have a change of mind, which will change our hearts concerning Christ. He wiped away all our sins. They are removed from the past, present, and forever. That is the Good News; that is true salvation. What comes after that is a journey of discipleship. Only man-made doctrines have confused what repentance is.

Someone told me the other day that they had nothing to have faith about. However, your life could be going as great as you could possibly think, on any particular day, and you will

always have something to have faith and trust in Christ for. Every day, without even consciously knowing, we sin. I cannot remember a day I have not sinned. What a wonderful opportunity to say, "I am trusting Jesus Christ because He says if I do then He has already removed my sins." I have my up and downs, but I will keep trusting in Jesus Christ. That is why He wants us to remember Him.

So, take the elements and say, "Thank you, Jesus, for what you provided; it truly is good news, and I will trust in you."

Chapter 3

More on A Change of Mind, Part 2

Open your Bibles to Romans 3:19.

This is the third message in this series. The first message was “Do I Have To Repent To Go To Heaven?” The second message was a continuation of that - “More on Change of Mind”, *metanoia*. I added a few more Greek words in that second message.

As I preached in those messages, Christ never said you had to repent of your sins. What He did say, if you have an understanding of the definitions in the original language, is you must have a change of mind about Him and the reasons why He came, died on the cross, rose from the grave, and sprinkled His blood on the heavenly mercy seat. He blotted out all of our sins. You are going to have to have faith and trust in what He did at Calvary and in His resurrection and in the sprinkling of His blood on that mercy seat. That is Christianity 101. That is basic fundamental truth that you cannot twist or change - or you shouldn't.

One of the definitions of repentance throughout the years is feeling sorrowful—which, as we previously studied, is not what the word really means, but it crept in about eight hundred years ago as the definition of repentance. Then the reformers came along, and they said, “Wait a minute.” Unfortunately, it took much time for that to change again. See, this word repentance has evolved into many different definitions that drift away from its true, original meaning. In modern church language - Christian language - we have come to accept it as only a one-definition word. However, it is time for people to get past that.

As I have said on many occasions, I do not have to prove myself. I lay out to you what I believe the truth is. So, in a sense,

I guess it is proving myself, but it really isn't proving me. It is proving God's Word. Either you accept it, or you don't.

But if you don't accept it, you better investigate your reasons why, and you better come with some substantial information that you'd be willing to die to support. Do you really believe that? Perhaps I exaggerated a little bit when I said you had to be willing to die in support, but you must develop an understanding so great that there is no way anybody is going to bend your views because you have done your own investigative studies and have come to your own understanding of truth. Some of you believe in something because that is just the way the church world has been saying it. Well, some have been saying many things that don't come from the Word of God for a very long time.

Now we looked at a change of mind and we looked at what should be the definition of repentance or repent (and I will come back to that), but now I want to look at something a little bit different. This is an additional thing that I haven't mentioned up to this point—and for good reason - because I wanted to feel out this congregation, feel out the people that are out there on our email list, and get some feedback.

The feedback that I am getting tells me that you are really stuck, and you don't even know why except that this is what the church world says. That is your best explanation. Well, the fact that it's been stated doesn't automatically make it right. So, let's keep investigating.

Romans 3:19 - ***“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”***

You can replace the word “guilty” with “*subject to the judgment of God*”.

There is a lot of confusion and misunderstanding in today's Christian world - the modern religious world—concerning

Biblical salvation. One of the problems, probably a major problem, is that people fail to come to the point of realizing that salvation is of God alone and has nothing to do with ourselves: it is not of man. There are too many preachers today who keep adding additional steps to salvation. Oh, there are requirements such as having to say a special prayer to be saved or walking down the aisle to be saved or feeling sorry for your sins to be saved. That is what I want to look at in this message.

You have to be sorrowful or sorry because of your sins

I put out the challenge again. Show me anywhere or anything in God's Word that requires sinners to feel sorry about their sins to be saved - and do not show me what man-made Christian doctrine says that has brainwashed you, only what the Scripture says. The problem is you cannot.

Once we understand the salvation message, yes, we are sorrowful because our sins made it necessary for God to send Christ to the cross for our salvation. I am not talking about that. That is just a realization point that we miserable sinners needed a savior and what a horrible price our savior had to pay to rescue us, but it is not a requirement that sinners needs to feel sorry about their sins to be saved.

I've said it many times - salvation is a free gift of God paid for with Jesus' precious blood. That is nothing new to the people who have listened to me for a while. Thankfully, Biblical salvation is not that complicated, even though it has become that. Biblical salvation, once the scriptures are shown to you and truth has been revealed, is not complicated. As I said before, men have complicated salvation. Salvation is simple. And there is warning in His Word...

Turn to II Corinthians 11:3. There is warning for us about those who have complicated the Gospel message.

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

There is a lot of confusion today in our churches about salvation; all kinds of you-need-to-do-this lists because of damnable doctrines have corrupted the simplicity of salvation that comes by Jesus Christ. I have said it before in the Table of the Lord messages. One of those damnable doctrines is Lordship Salvation. It is not the only one, but it is rooted in self-righteousness which requires a person to forsake their sins to be saved. It is a damnable doctrine - a requirement you won't find in the Scriptures. Oh, it is twisted to seem like it is there, but it is not.

Pentecostals and Charismatics have some of their own damnable doctrines that are also rooted in self-righteousness. No matter what it is, they do not rest on the finished redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Think about it. If you have been a Christian for a while, you have probably been to churches that preach some kind of heresy. If you have not, thank God.

I've said it before, but I will say it again. Christ's work of redemption was fulfilled at the mercy seat in Heaven, not upon the cross on which He hung as so many teach. If we just had the cross, and there was no resurrection and no blood on the heavenly mercy seat, His work would not be completed. Our salvation would be in question.

Hebrews 9:24 - “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true: but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us”.

He had to ascend into the heavens, and he had to bring his precious blood, and he had to sprinkle it on the mercy seat - the heavenly mercy seat in the presence of God - for us to blot out our sins so God the Father does not see our sins any longer. They are removed; they are gone.

Those of you who have been listening to my last day's messages, I like to believe — and there is a reason why I believe this which you'll understand when I get to the goat of Azazel — that my sins were placed in the bottomless pit. Now those of you who have been listening to the last days teaching, you might understand where I am going with that. Those of you who don't, well, it doesn't really matter because at this point, it is just an opinion, but more about that some other time.

So, if a lost sinner doesn't need to feel sorry for their sins, then what needs to happen for them to be saved? We already covered a portion of that. You need to have a change of mind about Jesus Christ. Once you've heard the good news of the Gospel and what He did for you, you better come to the realization that Christ is the only way to have your sins removed. If you don't believe you need to have your sins removed, then you have further problems because you must get past that before you can even see what Christ has done for you.

Back to Romans 3:19 - ***“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty [under judgment] before God.”***

That word “guilty” (besides meaning “being under judgment”) means “being under sentence”: CONDEMNED. In the legal sense, one who has lost his suit. There is no defense that you might produce. The Greek word for guilty is *hupodikos*. It means *under judgment, under sentence, condemned*. Hence, a person must realize his guilt to be saved. You must come to the realization that you are under judgment and that condemnation is your lot and that only Christ can rescue you from that. Only his precious blood provided the means for you to come out from underneath that condemnation.

Now this is different from a feeling of sorrow or remorse over one's sins. You might feel sorry for your sins, but it may never

lead you to feeling condemned because of your sins. There is a significant difference. To feel sorry for one's sins is an act of self-emotion. Guilt on the other hand is a matter of self-awareness. Once again there is a difference. One is self-emotion; one is self-awareness.

Most of the Christian world likes to camp out in self-emotions. You know criminals and convicts are sorry (emotionally, that is) for their crimes, but the only reason most of them are sorry for their crimes is because they got caught. They have no genuine awareness of what they committed and the sin that it is. Well, the same can be true for the person who walks down a church aisle, approaches the altar, and cries out loud or cries with emotion over their failures in life, yet they have no awareness that they are under God's condemnation and awaiting judgment.

So, what am I saying? The feeling of emotion, the sorrow over one's sins, is not Biblical repentance – as it is being called in the Church world - or Biblical change of mind. Biblical “repentance,” or the change of mind which leads to a change of heart is when a sinner becomes aware that they are under the condemnation of God's Law for their own sins, as we saw in Romans 3:19. And once they come to that acknowledgement, hopefully they turn in faith to Jesus Christ the Savior, trusting in his shed blood to forgive and take away, remove, blot out their sins, and send them to the bottomless pit.

I have used the verse in Peter many times, stating that we are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, or the vain conversations that we receive from our fathers, but there is only one Way and that Way is with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. That hasn't changed. I haven't changed on that one iota. There is a reason salvation is found alone in Christ, and why we are to believe ONLY upon Him. It is because of Him that we receive salvation because He paid the precious price with His precious blood.

Consider other religions of this world. Confucius never did that; Buddha never did that; Mohammed never did that. If you were to look into their graves, you could find their bodies. See if you can find Jesus' body anywhere in a grave today. The reason that you won't is because His tomb was empty and because He is alive. And, because he is alive, those who have put their faith and trust in him and have had a change of mind in what he has done for them are alive also.

As previously stated, the Word of God never requires anyone to feel sorry for his sins to be saved. We only need to become aware that we are liable to punishment from God. Go back to Romans 3:19. You will get people to admit this often - that they are sinful and imperfect - but very few believe that they are under God's condemnation and bound for judgment. They do not fully believe Romans 3:19. They have not become guilty before God as Romans 3:19 states. Unless you do that, you cannot be saved. You must become aware of your sinful condition, my friend.

Lost sinners, unfortunately, do not realize their guilt and that the condemnation that is coming is real because, if they did, they would want a savior. They would run to Him. You couldn't keep them away. Too many people have "churchianity" and not Christianity. They have religion without salvation. They are superficially following the teachings of Jesus, but whether they have come to know Jesus as their personal savior is questionable. Why? Because there is very little guilt in the churches today - guilt taught correctly, with the understanding of Romans 3:19 as the foundation, and not some other guilt trips they put on you that are manufactured by man-made doctrines. I repeat, few religious people are aware that they are under the condemnation of God's Laws and deserving nothing other than Hell. Oh, they go to church, but it is mostly for the social events or to find some self-gratification in them, not realizing all they are doing is going about establishing their own self-righteousness instead of submitting to God and receiving his imputed righteousness, which is Christ Jesus. That is the Romans 10 message.

I know some of you are wondering, “What about II Corinthians 7:10?” Some people have brought that up. Okay, let’s go to it now.

II Corinthians 7:10 - ***“For godly sorrow worketh repentance [a change of mind] to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”***

Look at it again - for godly sorrow worketh repentance (They think they have me there!) to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Now Paul was not really speaking to the world in this case, he was speaking to the Corinthian church—and, this was not the first letter that he wrote them. In fact, in the first letter that he wrote, he scolded them and called them carnal. We read that in I Corinthians 3. At first, they felt bad, and they had a change of mind of their sinful ways. So, Paul wrote back, which we have here in II Corinthians, to command and encourage them in the Lord. Paul here was not talking about the salvation of the soul. He was concerned about and mentioning here something else. He wasn’t talking about the salvation of their souls, but of the salvaging of the believer’s life. Again, you have to keep everything in context. We can find verification of this, or Biblical evidence, in Philippians 2.

Philippians 2:12 - ***“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”***

Let’s note here that Paul says to work out your own salvation. He did not say to work out God’s salvation, did he? There’s a big difference between those once again. He says to work out your own salvation, not God’s. How presumptuous of us to think that we can work out God’s salvation. I’m sorry, that is what he does. We have no part in it. All we must do is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten son, to be saved. That is found in Acts 16:31. We can’t do anything to save ourselves. We cannot even assist or help. We must trust in

Jesus alone. It is that simple. It has been made complicated by some, but it really is that simple.

What Paul is actually saying is that we are responsible for our lives while we are here on this planet as disciples of Jesus Christ, and it is our responsibility to yield to God's Holy Spirit - and not when you feel like it, but on a daily basis - and allow God to work in our life through His Word instead of through man-made doctrines. You do that by saturating your mind with God's Word.

When Paul says here to work out your own salvation, he is simply saying that each of us needs to seek God's will as individuals, and not only God's will, but also God's purpose for us in this existence. He does have a purpose for each of us, and all we need to do is realize that we must all appear before Him, before the Judgment Seat of Christ so that everyone may receive the things of this body, both good and bad. I don't even want to think about the bad. I just keep thinking about the good.

This scripture about working out your own salvation and all the others that lead up to it speak only of the believer. Unbelievers will not appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but at the Great White Throne of Judgment - and that is not where you want to be, friend.

Now, as believers, we do have the Holy Spirit in us, who convicts us about the sins of our life. Often making us feel bad for our own benefit. I'm not saying, and I never have said, that that does not happen. It does. It is just like a loving parent and what they would do with a child. The Holy Spirit may convict you through the Scriptures that you can read in God's Word. He could put a thought in your heart that has its foundation in the Scriptures or even a sermon that you heard.

As recipients of that, we should be submissive towards God, as the Holy Spirit convicts us. We should be thankful that He has never let go, and He sees all, and He is still willing to work with us through the Holy Spirit. That is godly sorrow that each one

of us as believers will experience. That usually causes us each to draw nearer to God, not farther away. If you genuinely love the Lord, friend, you will have a desire to please the Lord.

I believe that in our Christian journey we might find ourselves daily on our knees in godly sorrow over the sins and the weaknesses in our life. But I want to make clear now; this has nothing to do with the salvation of the soul. Not one iota. That is God's department and only He deals with that.

In II Corinthians 7:10, Paul was simply speaking about the loving conviction of the Holy Spirit, which is present in every believer's life. Don't confuse the two. It is easily confused by dimwits and knuckleheads that scripture-pick to create a screwed-up doctrine. The notion that a person needs to feel sorry for their sins is not found in the Scriptures. It is no place to be found in the Word of God.

Emotions are irrelevant to salvation. But that is what they try to bring out of you to bring you to that point to where they think you have finally become saved. You need to have a change of mind that will give you a change of heart and that will bring you to the understanding that we are all guilty, deserving nothing more than condemnation and God's judgment, but He has given us a way of escape through His only begotten son Jesus Christ. That is why we can say ***"therefore now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*** Once condemned, now we've been set free.

So, once you have a change of heart because of a change of mind, based on what you now know of what Jesus Christ has done for you, then yes, you will feel sorrowful because he had to die a horrific death because we carry sinners blood, but it is not a requirement for being saved. There is nowhere that God says in His Word that you have to feel sorrowful or feel sorry or whatever way you want to say it because of your sins.

Think about it. How sorry do you have to be then? What level of sorrowfulness needs to be achieved – if that is a requirement for salvation? Think about it! It is nonsense, folks.

It is almost like saying, "If I feel bad enough, God will have to forgive me of my sins." That was never a requirement. It cheapens what Christ did for us. All we need is a change of mind that leads to a change of heart because you have been brought to an understanding that we are all condemned, deserving damnation and judgment. But Christ has rescued us from that, and therefore now there is no condemnation for us who are in Christ Jesus.

What a wonderful savior we serve. Don't be guilty of complicating this message. Don't find yourself doing something that puts you in the category of believing that you have earned, even in some very little way, your salvation. Unfortunately, that is what the word repent has come mean in the English and most other modern translations. It is misleading. It is misguiding. It is just dead wrong. It's none of our efforts.

Yes, I see everywhere in the New Testament the word repentance being used. And yes, I will receive a lot of messages saying, "It says repent there and repent there and repent there..." Well, you know what? Go deeper. Get a greater understanding of what that word really means. Listen or read all the messages that pertain to this subject. I guarantee you will have a better understanding of it.

Oh, some of you will be diehard believers because you've been brainwashed all these years, but you were also brainwashed in regard to last day teachings; living and believing the Christian Science Fiction theory was the only right interpretation until you heard what I teach. Well, that changed your mind, didn't it? The church world for the most part didn't get that right, did they?

You got it? You don't have to feel sorry for your sins. Christ never asked us to do that. So why are you creating that requirement? You are complicating the message. All you have to do is have a change of mind which leads to a change of heart, which brings you to the understanding that the reason you

need that change of mind is because without it, you won't care. But once you understand it, you realize that you are condemned and under judgment.

But God so loved this world that He sent his only begotten son to rescue us from that judgment. If you are part of that group, thank God. You are truly blessed and fortunate that you had eyes to see and ears to hear, and now you are trusting and having faith in our precious savior Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4

It's All About Jesus

For the last few programs, I've been concentrating on the word repentance and I said I was going to continue laying out some church history on the doctrine of repentance. I could sit here and share information about the subject matter with you for hours and hours. I don't have time for that, but I am going to share with you an outline of how this word repentance changed shortly after Jesus' death and definitely after the apostolic fathers to all kinds of doctrines.

So, I am going to continue, and I am going to talk to you concerning the doctrine of repentance in church history.

Few issues are of more vital interest to those who believe in heaven and hell than the question of what one must do to gain entrance into heaven. Answers to this question nearly always include a reference to repentance. Throughout church history nearly every theologian has taught that repentance is essential for salvation from hell.

Now I teach repentance, but repentance in its proper definition: a change of mind which leads to a change of heart - a change of mind that only comes when you are drawn by the Holy Spirit to hear the truth. Obviously, the truth is what concerns Jesus Christ and what He has done for us to provide salvation. That is what changes your mind about Jesus. Where it connects with faith is when you start *pistis* process.

Pistis means faith. What kind of faith? A faith that comes by hearing, which then persuades you to believe what you heard to be true. That then takes you to another level, the *pisteuo* level of faith, which gives you the confidence concerning what Christ said. Period. It's the truth and nothing but the truth, and

it is a solid foundation on which to stand. It is a change of mind about Jesus Christ, who He was, and what He provided for us.

However, several disparate understandings of repentance have been advocated. This article will delineate those understandings.

I. The Pre-Reformation View

From the apostolic fathers until the Reformers, essentially one view of salvific repentance prevailed. Unhappily this view knew little or nothing of grace.

That was the deception, I believe, that Satan was busy polluting in everyone's mind to believe that there is something that you have to do to earn salvation. It is not all about Jesus; it's about Jesus and YOU. You thought you had to do this or that, and you had to be worthy to even be chosen to have salvation in the first place.

Let me tell you right now. None of us were worthy. We become worthy by the blood of Jesus Christ alone and nothing of our own. That is where our worth lies. I believe the deception and the reason Satan had to be thrown into the bottomless pit was so that *type* of deception would not get worse to the point that all mankind would be lost because no one would've known the truth about Jesus Christ.

A system of works salvation emerged very early in the Church. Amazingly, the first generation after the Apostles distorted the good news which the Apostles had entrusted to their care. On the theology of the apostolic fathers [one professor wrote]:

Salvation is wrought, they thought, certainly by divine pardon but on the ground of repentance [self-amendment before God], not apparently on the ground of the death of Christ alone. There is no doubt about the fact that the early Church felt it was willing to go all the way to martyrdom, but it felt that it was in that way the Christian made saving appropriation of the Cross, rather than by faith...

That is in God's hands; I do not know what was in their hearts or minds. But I don't necessarily believe all these martyrs didn't understand that their martyrdom is not what saves; it is one's trust and change of mind about Jesus Christ and what He can do for you—not what you can do for yourself, including martyrdom.

It was not seen that the whole of salvation is centered in the person and the death of Christ...Failure to apprehend the meaning of the Cross and to make it a saving article of faith is surely the clearest indication that a genuine doctrine of grace is absent.

Three main aspects of the pre-Reformation view of salvific repentance are apparent.

Initial Forgiveness of Pre-Baptismal Sins Only

The church fathers and their successors believed that salvation began at one's [water] baptism [not Spirit baptism, by the way]. When someone was baptized

the sins which he had committed until that point in life [plus his share of original sin through Adam] were forgiven. The fathers thus believed that a person would begin the Christian life with a clean slate. Of course, the slate would not remain clean for long. Since everyone continues to be plagued with sin after baptism (1 John 1 :8, 10), the Church had to develop a plan whereby post-baptismal sins could be atoned for.

Remember, this was PRE-reformation days. Let me tell you right now, the church is still doing that today. They are still trying to figure out plans whereby after your post baptismal sins, there must be something we can do as individuals to atone for those sins. I repeat: THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING except trusting what Jesus did for us because of our change of mind which puts our focus on Him and not our own efforts.

Forgiveness of Post-Baptismal Sins by Repentance/Penance

With such a view of baptism and the forgiveness of sins it is no wonder that people began putting off baptism until they were near death.

That is exactly what happened. People were worried because yes, after baptism they got a clean slate, but their slate wouldn't stay clean for very long because they would continue sinning one way or another. Even if they confessed their sins to someone else and they went through an act of penance to have their sins supposedly wiped out, they will still keep sinning. People didn't feel comfortable about that. So, they came up with ways to try to avoid hell by making sure they were baptized just before their death. Now if you died in war or died prematurely, that created a whole new set of

problems. But most people started believing they could put off baptism until just before their death.

In that way they could be assured of total forgiveness [of all their life's sins]. The church fathers and their successors dealt with this problem by proposing repentance [or as some have called it, penance] as the cure for post-baptismal sins.

Don't wait until you're almost dead. We'll come up with a plan for you to be baptized where you can do penance and that will wipe out your sins.

At first the early fathers debated whether major post-baptismal sins could be forgiven at all. It was generally agreed that even "mortal" sins could be forgiven; however, there was some disagreement as to how many times a person could repent and be forgiven. A few leaders, such as Hermas, held that there could be only one opportunity for repentance after baptism. That view did not prevail, however. The prevailing view of the early fathers was that one could repent and be forgiven on several occasions. At first they did not specify exactly how many times someone could repent for fear of giving churchmen an implicit license to sin. This, of course, led some people to put off penance until their deathbeds. By the fifth century, in spite of the fear of giving people a license to sin, the Church uniformly specified that a person might repent and be forgiven an unlimited number of times.

So by 400 AD (1600 years ago), this was how they were already thinking.

***Repentance Defined as Contrition,
Confession, and Performing Prescribed
Acts of Penance***

The apostolic fathers taught that in order to retain salvation from eternal judgment one had to feel sorry for and confess his post-baptismal sins to a priest and then do whatever acts of penance were prescribed by the priest.

Briefly, I'll share again that I was a Catholic. Periodically, more often when I was in Catholic school, we had to go to the priest. One class at a time would go to the church and then wait our time in the confession booth. Once in the confession booth, the screen would open. You knew someone was behind that screen, but you could not quite make him out. You were told that the father or the priest was behind that screen, and you'd start confessing saying, 'Bless me father, for I have sinned,' and you'd go on to list all your sins. Because I was in Catholic school, we went so often that I was running out of sins to confess. I mean, I was just a little kid. I couldn't think of all the sins that somehow I was part of but didn't think they were sins, so I started making up sins because we were told we were to confess and leave all our sins there in the confession booth. Then get your prescription, usually a bunch of Our Fathers and Hail Mary's, with more Hail Mary's than Our Fathers. While making sure to kneel in all the right places, we would then take it up to the front part of the church and kneel at the altar. We would start praying and then light a few candles on the way out, and then all is well.

My friend, it was a whole ritual. I made up sins because I thought it'd be foolish, even as a kid, to go in the confession booth and say, "Bless me father, but guess what? I haven't

sinned. Your work is done here, let me move on.” That is how I thought of it as a kid.

I was raised with a strict Catholic, my grandmother. She would make me pray the rosary on almost a nightly basis before bed on my knees for at least an hour. This went on for several years when I was living with her from about 8-12 years old. That alone wasn't good enough; we really had to show God and Jesus that we really were sorrowful for our acts of sin. About fifteen minutes of that hour she made me, along with her, on my knees walk around praying the rosary. Now that was a strict Catholic point of view of what I had to do and what she had to do; we had to complete our works so God would see us sinless.

Thank God, I was delivered from all that and eventually I used my own voice. I would race home on my lunch hour when I was about 18 years old, only spending about 15-20 minutes at a time, but day after day, I would come home and I would share with her the good news of Jesus Christ in the best way I could. I remember clearly that after a few months of that, one day I came home on a lunch hour, and I couldn't find her because she was out in the backyard with my grandfather. They liked to grow their own vegetables and have fruit trees and all that, so they were back there.

But I went to her bedroom looking for her because she had a standing altar full of all the saints and you name it. It took up a part of her bedroom. I came home, but was running out of lunch time, and I didn't see all that altar stuff. All the saints were gone. I finally found her with joy on her face. She finally rejected all that nonsense and I believe that for the first time in her life, she truly knew what salvation meant –and she threw all those things away in the trash! It was an AMAZING time. I am sure other have had experiences with family members or friends coming to Jesus and hearing the true salvation message of the good news. She was 86 at the time, and it was less than a year later that she died.

The transformation was done by Christ alone. All she had to do was hear the good news. It started with her and worked down each family member. Don't tell me there is no power in the good news. You don't need works. You just need the rightly divided word of God with the true message presented to you.

The apostolic fathers taught that in order to retain salvation from eternal judgment one had to feel sorry for and confess his post-baptismal sins to a priest and then do whatever acts of penance were prescribed by the priest.

The Latin Fathers translated, or rather mistranslated, the NT words metaneo and metanoia to reflect their theological bias. They translated those terms as poenitentiam agite and poenitentia, "to do acts of penance" and "acts of penance," respectively. Those mis-translations unfortunately became part of the Old Latin and then the Latin Vulgate versions of the Bible. It was not until the Reformation that those translations were given a serious and widespread challenge.

Imagine that you were a member of the Church in the fifth century under such a system. Your parents firmly believed these things. You were baptized as an infant. As a young child you were taught the necessity of penance and confession to your confessor priest both by your parents and the priest. By the time you became a teenager you were convinced that salvation was only in the Church and that you had to strive hard against sin if you were going to get into heaven.

Oh, how you hoped you would get in! You hoped you were good enough today and that you would stay good enough tomorrow. You hoped you wouldn't die right after committing a mortal sin such as adultery, idolatry, murder, or denying the faith while being tortured. You wondered exactly which sins were mortal sins in God's eyes. What if you died after being jealous or envious or hateful and it turned out those sins were big enough to send you to hell? Sometimes you even feared that your confessor priest may not have been strict enough with you when he meted out your penance. After all, there was no set penalty for given sins. What if your priest made a mistake? What if you didn't do enough to atone for your sins? You were terribly frightened of hell and without any assurance of escaping its flames.

By and large, it was far easier to gain admission to the Church than to re-enter it, once its ideals had in any way been renounced by its adherents. The initiated, through baptism, were given a clean sheet. Whatever evils had previously stained a man's life, it was forgiven and forgotten, as a new adventure in Christ began. It was when the Church had to deal with those who had soiled the sheet after their admission, that difficulties arose. Light offenders were met by different forms of censure, such as temporary exclusion from Holy Communion or varying

degrees of penance. In dealing with the mortal sins of idolatry, murder, and adultery, not to mention apostasy, Church leaders differed concerning the form of punishment.

Surely there has always been a remnant of people who knew and apprehended the grace of God in Christ, even in the years between the Apostles and the Reformation. However, the vast majority of people knew nothing of grace.

Satan's deception took hold. If he was not cast into the bottomless pit, that deception might not have been just the mass majority; it could have possibly been everyone.

The reason he had to be thrown into the bottomless pit was not because of all of the true evils, which he also creates, but because of the greatest evil of all. This is the twisting and the deceiving message concerning God's grace and how we receive salvation. Satan wants to make it all about you and what you do, but the Good News - Christ's message - is it is not about you; it is about Him.

However, the vast majority of people knew nothing of grace. They knew only legalism and Pharisaism. There was a serious need for a mass reform of the Church. It was centuries in coming. Indeed, for more than a millennium terrible darkness covered the Church until the Reformation.

The reformers challenged all three pillars of the church view on salvific repentance.

And they did. I believe they did not go far enough, but they went as far as bringing the true meaning of *metanoia* and *metanoeo* to the forefront, to get people to realize once again that it is not about penance, it is not about your works, and it is not about your self-righteousness. It is about Jesus—who then imputes His righteousness into us. It's the kind of righteousness we should be seeking - HIS righteousness, not ours. It is not the fabricated nonsense that we call righteousness and is not our good deeds.

“Are we going to do good deeds?”

Absolutely! That is just an attribute of the Holy Spirit working through you, but it has NOTHING to do with Salvation in how we obtain it and how we maintain it.

It's all about Jesus Christ.

We will be looking at the reformers and how that was changed. How was it changed? It was changed through understanding of what it originally meant. It has nothing to do with penance. It has everything to do with a change of mind concerning Salvation.

Chapter 5

Reformation to Present

Open your Bible to Galatians 1:1.

Before we read this verse, I want to read you a message I received from someone in response to *Do I Have to Repent to Get to Heaven?* Their response is:

“Yes, because Acts 3:19 is teaching us to do so.”

Once again, no clue what the word repent means. People who are brainwashed to think they know what it means in the original language of Greek put on it a modern definition—well not that modern, but a definition they know of today—and keep using that understanding to pervert the Gospel. That is exactly what has happened; a perversion has taken place.

“Yes, because Acts 3:19 is teaching us to do so.”

Acts 3:19 does not say repent; it says change of mind.

“While it is true that faith in God’s grace will save us”—well thank God— “in my opinion...”

I am not interested in your opinion or my opinion. I am interested in what the Word actually says.

“It should be followed by good deeds or works.”

I never said there are not going to be good deeds. I never said there was not going to be works. That is part of your discipleship. Those are things you are going to be involved in to further the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I repeat: It has nothing to do with salvation.

“Jesus taught us what to do to have eternal life.”

Yes. He did. But the word has been perverted.

“His teachings say following and obeying and doing his teachings, actions, or works. The letter of James 2:14 says, ‘What good is it for you to say that you have faith if actions do not prove it? Can that faith save you?’”

That is James 2:14. I preached through this verse before. You can find it in the Teaching Center in the archives. People are using those words they find in James to further pervert the Gospel.

I get messages like this all the time concerning this topic, especially this message, *Do I Have To Repent To Get To Heaven?* I guess they didn't read past the first paragraph in that message because I did quote the John 3:16 scripture, **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever....”** repents? It doesn't say that. And that is where I started all this. It says **“whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** It does not say repent; it says believeth. And there the word is *pisteuo*; it is trust and confidence in what Jesus Christ has done for us, who He is, what He has done, and the benefits we receive from it: the free gift of grace and salvation He provided.

How could something so simple become so perverted?

Who cares about your opinion? Who cares about my opinion? We should seek what the word of God rightly divides for our own understanding.

“Well that is the way it has been taught.” Get over yourselves, especially when you don't even know the reasons why. I have just been summarizing through it, giving you the shortened version, because I could spend a whole year going through volumes and volumes of books, reading those books to you and sharing with you my words concerning what I just read, which lays down the history of this corruption that has been preached all the way back to the apostle's day.

Paul writes in Galatians 1:1, **“Paul, an apostle [sent one], (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ...”**

Right there Paul is saying, “I didn’t get my calling and my instruction by some religious institution.” He was a Pharisee, but he left all that behind. That was a one-way dead-end journey he was on. God got his attention, and he had a change of mind.

“...(not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: grace to you and peace from God the Father...”

They, all these traditionalists, legalistic Christians, constantly want to remove our peace. They are constantly saying that we need to do certain things to be saved. The only thing I need to do to be saved is to have a change of mind about Jesus Christ and what He has done for me. Period. Everything else is heresy... plain and simple. If you are part of that heresy, you are a pervert of the Gospel.

“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

We can’t say that enough.

Verse 6, ***“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel...”***

The context of the book of Galatians indicates that a different gospel from the one Paul preached had penetrated the church in Galatia. It started way back, even when Paul was still alive. Paul calls this another gospel. The Greek word for ‘different’ in verse six is *heteron*, which means ‘qualitatively different’. However, in verse seven, Paul uses an entirely different word which is translated as ‘another’. It is *allo*, which means ‘another of the same kind’.

“...which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.”

It is another gospel which looks very similar, but it is of another kind. It is not the True Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It just looks similar. The true Gospel of Christ can be declared in different ways by different people, but to remain the True Gospel, its truth can never be altered. However, that is exactly what has happened the last two thousand years: a constant alteration has taken place.

But let's go back to verse six. ***"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."*** And verse seven reads, ***"Which is not another but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ."***

Look at that word 'pervert'. The Greek is *metastrepho*. What does *metastrepho* mean? We have a modern definition of what perversion is and what perverts are, but *metastrepho* is different in the Greek. It means "to turn around by corruption." To turn someone around using another gospel that is similar is a corruption of the True Gospel of Jesus Christ. Another translation is "one that twists and turns around". In this case, we are referring to people who twist the Gospel, which eventually would turn around someone's mind about the Gospel.

That is what happened shortly after Jesus' death, even with the apostles preaching. Others would come and twist the Word, corrupting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and salvation was their starting point, specifically how salvation comes about. Of course, they added all these conditions on how you can be saved. We have looked at how it has always been like that and will continue to look at in this message. Nothing has changed. There have always been institutions and individuals who have tried to change the true message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have corrupted it, my friend.

Oh, many are angry at me. I am sure Satan and his minions are furious. Some have said that there is nothing that angers Satan more than the giving message. Sorry, that is not

accurate. It's up there, but it is not accurate because if Satan can get you at Salvation and what it truly means, he's got you. So, if someone comes along and preaches what the true message of salvation is, the forces of hell are going to be unleashed upon individuals and upon the ministry that is proclaiming it. THAT is what takes the keys away from Satan, the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ, who has already done that.

The question is this: Has He done that for you? Or are you still under some system of bondage because of man-made traditions of what you should and should not do in the salvation process?

An additional translation of *metastrepho* is "to turn one's mind from a gospel that is similar to their way".

See, all these messages that are challenging me are not challenging me on the basis of what God's Word in the original language says and what these words that Paul used in this case mean. They are not challenging me on that. They are just challenging me because I am different. I am preaching something totally different, and it goes against the stream. Therefore, because I am going against the stream, I am the one that is headed to hell. They believe I am the one that is perverting the Gospel, and that is their only defense.

They can't use the Bible because when they start using that (like the person who wrote in quoting Acts) it tells you that they don't really know what it says. They are just going to read from whatever translation they are reading from and say, "This is what it says." So, if this word means that according to their understanding, that is what they believe it truly means.

Sorry, my friend. I don't even call you a milk Christian; forget the meat. You are whatever it is before it becomes milk. And because of that, YOU have turned around the true message of Jesus Christ to something that sounds similar and looks similar and have brought your own corruption like so many preachers and organizations have done across the centuries.

You have twisted and turned the ways because of your opinion on how one changes their mind and truly receives the wonderful salvation that has been provided by the free gift of grace of Jesus Christ. You have turned your mind, and, unfortunately, you have turned the mind of others to YOUR way of thinking, not what the Scriptures say. You have perverted, in the true sense of the word, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and there is no worse perversion than perverting it with corruption of something similar that looks like the Gospel. GOD HELP YOU.

Now we've looked at pre-Reformation views concerning the viewpoints that have been established for how someone receives salvation and how someone keeps salvation. Now let's look at Reformation views and beyond.

Remember, this is just a very brief study. If you are considerably interested or you don't want to believe me, do the research. By the time you do the research, you will want to throw all those volumes of books at the wall, I guarantee you that because you will see how the true Gospel of Jesus Christ became corrupted and perverted.

The reformers challenged all three pillars of the church view on salvific repentance. The three views are as follows:

- 1) Forgiveness of pre-baptismal sins only - That was not a popular view for very long, but it was a view. After you were baptized, you couldn't sin. There were problems with this view and that is why some postponed their baptism until their deathbed.
- 2) Forgiveness of post-baptismal sins by repentance through a form of penance
- 3) Performing prescribed acts of penance for the continuing forgiveness of sins

That is what we covered in the last message on this subject. Now let's move forward.

The reformers challenged all three pillars of the church view on salvific repentance.

Initial forgiveness of sins pre- and post-baptismal. Calvin, and to a lesser extent Luther, taught that all of one's sins, pre- and post-baptismal, were forgiven when a person became a Christian. Such teaching clearly marked a radical break from Romanism. What would become of the practice of confessing one's sins to his priest and performing the mandated acts of penance? Logically, it would cease in churches which adopted the thinking of the Reformers on forgiveness of sin. As we know, that is exactly what happened.

Calvin completely rejected the idea that one must perform acts of penance to atone for post-baptismal sins in order to maintain one's salvation. He taught that Christ's death, once appropriated, finally and completely atoned for all the sins one would or ever could commit

Luther, however, in light of his linear understanding of conversion, held that while penance itself was unnecessary, one who abandoned his faith in Christ and fell into sin would perish unless he returned to Christ again through renewed faith. Commenting on Jerome's view, the established position of the Church, that penance was "the second plank after shipwreck," Luther wrote:

You will likewise see how perilous, indeed, how false it is to suppose that penance is “the second plank after shipwreck,” and how pernicious an error it is to believe that the power of baptism is broken, and the ship dashed to pieces, because of sin. The ship remains one, solid and invincible; it will never be broken up into separate “planks.” In it are carried all those who are brought to the harbor of salvation, for it is the truth of God giving us its promise in the sacraments. Of course, it often happens that many rashly leap overboard into the sea and perish; these are those who abandon faith in the promise and plunge into sin. But the ship itself remains intact and holds its course unimpaired. If anyone is able somehow by grace to return to the ship, it is not on any plank, but in the solid ship itself that he is borne to life. Such a person is the one who returns through faith to the abiding and enduring promise of God.

Luther rejected penance formally. He felt that penance “torture[d] poor consciences to death.” However, practically speaking he still held to the necessity of something not unlike penance. In order to be saved in the end from eternal judgment, according to Luther, one must endeavor to continue

in the faith, both morally and doctrinally.

So Calvin is the Once Saved Always Saved (OSAS) and Luther, to summarize it, says you do not need to do penance to be saved, but you can lose your salvation if you fall into the way of sin again; you could lose your salvation unless you come back to Jesus Christ.

There are people who ask me: Where do you stand? I don't believe OSAS because I believe we have examples in the Scripture. Demas comes to mind. I do not necessarily believe in how Luther presented it either. However, scholars write off Demas by saying he was never saved. How do they know that?! They say because his actions didn't show what a saved person looks like. So, they are basing it on performance: what he did, what he said, etc. How do you know what is in a man's heart? How do you know what is in a man's mind? People are just assuming that.

I dare not assume anything. That is God's role, not mine, and not anyone else's. So I don't believe OSAS because I believe you can fall away. If sin is the precursor of falling away, then we all have fallen away, if you go by Luther's viewpoint. When you read Luther, you could get confused as he does technically say that you need to continue in faith both morally and doctrinally to be saved from the flames of fire. I am not taking anything away from faith, so don't twist my words because I believe you can fall away, but if sin is the precursor for us falling away, then we all have fallen away, and there is no hope.

I tell you that I sin daily. I am a work in progress. I still have the flesh that I fight against, the carnal nature in me, and so do you if you are willing to admit it. Thank God for Jesus' precious blood; that is why I preach so much on it. He has redeemed me. He has picked me up time after time because of those sinful moments that can and will, if you allow them, lead you astray and cause you to fall away completely.

That is what happened to Demas and others who are listed here to give us an example that you can have a change of mind about Jesus Christ. However, if you don't pursue Jesus, if you quit following him, and if you do not pursue the life of faith, I believe your carnal nature will creep up on you, slowly in some cases and rapidly in others, and if it takes over it will lead you down a road of no return until you have another change of mind if you are fortunate enough to have that happen again.

I have had people tell me that they were Muslims, became Christians, and went back to being Muslims. They are Demases. They have fallen away. They are heading to eternal damnation. Faith saves you and keeps you saved, but it is faith in Jesus Christ, not faith in the things that you do.

Now that is going to tweak the nerves of some because they think the things that they do for Christ are what keeps them saved. That is part of our walk as an obedient disciple of Jesus Christ. He wants you to participate in things that further Him, not yourself. You happen to grow spiritually through that process, but it furthers His message, not yours. We are weapons, instruments, and tools that He uses to further the Gospel and the instruction that comes with it.

People confuse salvation and discipleship constantly on a daily basis. It is extremely frustrating for me and may be for some of you as well. So, I don't believe OSAS. I believe you can fall away. There is something about falling away that takes you to the place you were before you had that change of mind, and what is that place? You quit denying yourself and start denying Jesus Christ. Don't tell me OSAS can apply to someone that falls away to the point where they deny the precious blood of Jesus Christ and its saving power. If they get to that point, I'm sorry, if they were saved once, they are not always saved because they rejected the Savior by their falling away.

By the same token, I do not buy Luther's argument that you have to continue the faith morally and doctrinally either. That

is a roundabout way of inserting works into your salvation. There are works, but they have nothing to do with salvation. That is where he confuses the subject of salvation.

In contrast to the Church's definition of metanoia as involving contrition, confession, and the performance of acts of penance, Calvin and Luther concluded that it retained its classical sense of 'a change of mind'. Salvific repentance according to Calvin and Luther was a change of mind whereby one recognized his own sinfulness...

I'd like to also add here 'their own guilt and condemnation'

...and need of forgiveness and then turned in faith to God to provide that forgiveness in Christ. In essence, then, Luther and Calvin viewed salvific repentance as an essential part of saving faith.

By the way, some people think I don't believe you should repent of your sins, the ones you commit daily. I do not in the way you understand the word repentance, and I already preached on guilt a few messages back.

Don't get me wrong; I am sorrowful. I constantly ask the Lord to remove my sins, and I know the only way that is going to be done is I have faith and trust in what He did for me and in how important His precious blood is. I just don't use your traditional thinking on what repentance is. I try to be more in line with what Scripture says, not what man has created.

And man has created these ideas. We have evidence in the book of Galatians 1:6-7 of how it was perverted even in Paul's day. Now add about 2000 years. How much perversion do you think has taken place? It has compounded upon itself. That is

why we have so many doctrinal viewpoints on salvation. I will be listing six of them in our remaining time together.

The Reformation introduced a new view of salvific repentance. Calvin taught that all sins were forgiven at the point of conversion, that penance was unnecessary for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins, and that the NT term metanoia referred to a change of mind...

At least they got some of it right in bringing back the original understanding of what the word repentance means instead of what people developed over the course of centuries and what eventually became. They brought back what the original says, and what the original meaning meant: A CHANGE OF MIND.

“Luther agreed completely with the last of those points and somewhat with the first two. Those who are burdened for the purity of the Gospel of grace find it disappointing that Luther held to a linear view of salvation and the possibility of forfeiting it by departing from the faith.

The monolithic power of the Roman Church had been broken. No longer would the proponents of grace be limited to a few modern-day Elijahs. The Reformers looked back to Christ and the Apostles rather than the church fathers for their view of salvific repentance and the Gospel. Would their followers retain a high view of grace? Or would they, like the apostolic fathers, lose a proper understanding of grace and depart into a man-made, legalistic ‘gospel?’”

Which would bring us then to the post-reformation views.

The post-Reformation period has seen the continuation of the previously held views and the emergence of new ones.

The Roman view of salvific repentance has continued from the Reformation until the present. The views of Calvin and Luther have continued as well. However, their views have in some cases been modified so that today there are basically three Protestant views of salvific repentance.

[The first view is] turning away from sin. Those holding to this view consider salvific repentance to be the actual turning away from one's sins and not merely a willingness or intention to do so. They would tell an alcoholic, for example, that in order to become a Christian he would first have to stop getting drunk.

In other words, works: you must do this before you can have salvation. It is YOU: your works, your doings, and YOUR salvation, not Christ's salvation.

[The second type is] a willingness or resolution to stop sinning. Others argue that one needs to be willing to turn from his sins. They would tell an alcoholic that in order to become a Christian he would first have to be willing to stop getting drunk. They would stop short of saying that he actually had to stop drinking before he could be saved.

It makes you wonder - where is the power of the Holy Spirit to change a person. I guess the Holy Spirit doesn't have that kind of power in and of Himself. You have to get involved first to kick-start it or to energize the Holy Spirit according to their viewpoint. It is back to you again and what you do. The only thing you do is have a change of mind about what you heard that persuaded you that you are guilty and condemned, and only Jesus Christ saves; there is nothing you can do to save yourself.

People holding to these first two views might stress to varying degrees the need to be sorry about one's sins and to commit oneself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Very few people have this next view.

[It is the] change of thinking [view]. Some Protestants suggest that salvific repentance does not involve turning from one's sins or even the willingness to do so. Rather, they argue that salvific repentance is a change of mind whereby a person recognizes his sinfulness and need of salvation...

I'd like to add in here, recognizing one is condemned or guilty means they believe they are the ones that should have been hanging on that cross. My hanging on a cross won't save anyone else, but it may save myself—but that was not part of God's plan. I'm sure someone will come up with that as another gospel though. It was Christ and Christ only, the one who was promised all the way back in the Old Testament, back in Genesis, that would come and redeem mankind. A person needs to recognize his guilt, which will lead to being sorrowful for the state he is in, and he is condemned. But they also understand that there is nothing they can do to bring them out

of that condemnation except to trust and have confidence (Jn. 3:16) in Jesus Christ.

“...and sees Jesus Christ as the sinless Substitute who died on the cross for his sins. They thus understand NT metanoia in its classical sense.”

Very few even today understand that.

“They would tell an alcoholic that he had to recognize his sinfulness [along with condemnation and guilt] and need of salvation and place his faith solely in Jesus Christ in order to be saved from eternal condemnation. They would avoid giving the impression that the individual had to change his lifestyle or be willing to do so in order to obtain salvation from eternal condemnation.”

Will your lifestyle be changed? It is not a prerequisite for salvation, but will your lifestyle be changed? I guarantee you, it will because as you grow as a Christian and as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you'll want to be more like Christ's image, not your own pathetic image and not my pathetic image. Do not follow me in my example. If you want to mimic anyone, mimic Jesus. He will change you.

Paul lists the attributes of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 and other areas of the New Testament in the letters that he wrote to the churches. Other apostles also mention it. The Holy Spirit will go to work with you in the areas that we know the Holy Spirit works on. See if you don't change.

That doesn't mean you are going to stop sinning. Believe it or not, we fight unseen evil forces that are constantly bombarding us with all these temptations and all these thoughts to lead us astray. And some of you holier-than-thou

ones like to say and brag that you have Christ-like faith 24-7. I'm not there yet. I admit it. And I know enough about Scripture to know that I will never get there 100% until sin is totally eliminated from my everyday existence.

There have been variations of the three Protestant views.

It should be noted that some persons who hold to the three Protestant views of salvific repentance do not necessarily believe that salvation once obtained is secure and inviolable. Some Protestants teach that salvation can be lost due to unfaithfulness subsequent to one's conversion. Such teaching is actually inconsistent with the Reformers' view of depravity and Jesus' once and for all substitutionary death. Some Protestants have, in effect, a Roman Catholic view of salvific repentance—albeit one in which confession to a priest and formal penance are substituted with confession directly to God and an informal system of penance. However, we will call these variant views "Protestant" since those who hold them are members of Protestant and not Catholic or Orthodox churches. In reality, then, there are actually six Protestant views of salvific repentance: 1) turn from sins and keep on doing so to obtain and keep a salvation which can be lost, 2) turn from sins to obtain an eternally secure salvation, 3) be willing to turn from sins and then, after conversion, actually turn from sins as a manner of life to gain and keep one's salvation, 4) be willing to turn from sins to obtain an eternally secure salvation,

5) change your mind about yourself and Christ to gain initial salvation and then turn from your sins as a manner of life thereafter to keep that salvation, and 6) change your mind about yourself and Christ to gain an inviolable salvation.

From the early second century until the Reformation one view of salvific repentance prevailed, the Roman position. It held that at one's baptism only his prior sins are forgiven and that subsequent sins could only be forgiven by confessing one's sins to a priest and then carefully carrying out the acts of penance which he prescribed.

The Reformation introduced two new views. Calvin held that at conversion all of one's sins, pre- and post-conversion, were forgiven and that confessing one's sins to a priest and performing acts of penance were not needed. Luther held a position somewhere between that of Calvin and the Roman Catholic Church. He believed that confession to a priest and performing acts of penance were not needed to maintain one's salvation. However, while he rejected those formally, he continued to believe that one could fail to obtain final salvation by choosing to indulge in a life of sin.

Since the Reformation the Roman view has continued and six Protestant views have emerged. [I contend there is more than that, but let's continue] We must be very careful not to base our theology on

a majority vote of our contemporaries or predecessors. The majority may be wrong-and in this fallen world it often is.

Why, then, should we study the history of interpretation? Because by so doing we are better able to come to and maintain our own conclusions [rather, our conclusions will be based on what the scriptures say] and to interact with others, believers and unbelievers. If, for example, I understand the Roman position on salvific repentance, my witness to Catholics is strengthened considerably.

Which of the views stated is the one correct view of salvific repentance? The change of-mind-secure-salvation view is the biblical one. If a person must give up something or even be willing to do so to obtain salvation, then it is not really a free gift. If one must live an obedient life to keep salvation, then it is conditioned upon faith plus works, and grace is nullified. Other views of salvific repentance fail to grasp the gravity of our plight as sinners in the hands of a holy God. Nothing which we can do to try and clean up our lives will impress God. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can atone for our sins. And, the only way to appropriate Jesus' blood is by faith alone in Christ alone. The only thing we need to give up is a self-righteous attitude. We must cease viewing ourselves as good enough to merit

salvation and instead place all of our trust on what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us as our Substitute.

No one can work his or her way to God. Yet many try. The only thing people need to do is recognize their complete helplessness and need of a Savior and then put their faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone to save them from their sins. A change of thinking is needed. Once one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ [in the true sense of what a believer means], he can be assured, based on the promises of Scripture, that he is and always will be a part of God's eternal family. God has done everything for us except that we must receive the free gift. That is our part.

Additionally, I will add, never deny the saving power of the blood of Jesus Christ. As I said earlier, if you go down that road after being saved, you risk falling away and being in the same position before you had a change of mind. I repeat, I do not preach OSAS. Equally, I do not preach faith as a continuing action of works that keeps you saved because that substitutes something that you can do to be saved. Those works are there, and Christ gave us those works to accomplish by empowering us with the Holy Spirit to do what He wants us to do for the advancement of the word of God to reach all areas of this lost world. Also, in doing those works we show our obedience. Furthermore, when it is all said and done, He rewards us with all the eternal rewards that are so unimaginable, you cannot put a number to them. There is a purpose for works, but it has **NOTHING** to do with salvation. To say it does is a perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in any form. It might look similar, but if you twist that message, it is another gospel.

A change of thinking is needed. Once one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, he can be assured, based on the promises of Scripture, that he is and always will be a part of God's eternal family. God has done everything for us except that we must receive the free gift. That is our part.

And how do you receive that free gift? By having a change of mind by what you heard and became persuaded by (pistis) and to believe that is the truth—which will give you the trust and confidence of who Jesus Christ was and what His wonderful benefits do for us, including that wonderful gift of grace.

The Gospel presents the cure for sin and its consequence, hell. The message of the Gospel is extremely powerful as long as it is not distorted. Pure living water will forever quench the thirst of parched souls.

That is why this ministry exists; to quench the thirst of parched souls.

I know I have an unseen battle to face because the truth is being brought to the surface once again, without all the buts and without all the conditions of what salvation truly means. It is by Christ and Christ alone. I will have the Christian world to contend with. They will think I am a fanatical heretic. Well. So be it. If it brings some to the truth of what the *real* Gospel says about salvation.

Now this was just a very quick summary of how this perversion has taken place over the millenniums. In these last days, as long as God gives me breath, I plan to un-pervert the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I just laid out our mission. Are you with me?

Chapter 6

If Any

Open your bible to John 3:16.

Everyone has heard of John 3:16. It reads, ***“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”***

Now whether you are a Christian or not, you have heard this verse quoted, or you have seen this verse at sporting events, or you’ve maybe seen someone holding a sign on side of the road. This has to be the most popular verse that is used and quoted.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

If you were to memorize one verse, or if you were told to memorize one verse, this was probably the verse you were told to memorize. It is a great verse and it holds a wonderful and beautiful truth to it. There is no questioning that. But understanding that *whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* is the beginning of our journey: believing in his precious blood and what it did when he spilled it for us, it brought us salvation. It paid the penalty that needed to be paid because of Adam’s sin and the sinners’ blood that flows through our veins because we are Adam’s descendants to make us right with God once again.

I have no problem with John 3:16. As I said, it is a wonderful and beautiful verse that proclaims the truth concerning Jesus Christ and what God allowed to happen - the giving of His only begotten Son to rescue us. But if I was going to use this verse and just this verse alone, I personally believe it would be incomplete. This is why:

Luke 9:23 - ***“And he said to them all [Jesus speaking], If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*”**

If you are going to include this verse, especially those of you who are out there sharing these verses, don't stop at John 3:16. Follow it up with Luke 9:23.

Now look at the words 'if any'. I have a lot to say about that, but let's put the two verses together to make the point.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth [pisteuo] in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

'Believeth' here is *pisteuo* in the Greek, not *pistis*. ***Whosoever believeth*** - or whosoever has trust and confidence in Jesus - ***should not perish but have everlasting life.***

Now jumping over to Luke 9:23, we follow it up immediately with these words:

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

There we have the journey from the beginning to the end, A through Z, wrapped up in those two verses alone.

John 3:16 emphasizes the believing, the *pisteuo*, in Jesus Christ; and Luke 9:23 focuses on the following. It starts with the believing, the *pisteuo*, and it moves into the following. You cannot have one without the other if you expect to be a complete disciple of Jesus Christ. They go hand-in-hand. Too much of Christianity wants one without the other. Usually they leave the Luke 9:23 out of the equation, but there is no John 3:16 without Luke 9:23. They are matched together.

Now in Luke 9:23 it says, 'if any'. If you really think about it, Jesus begins his call to follow him with an 'if any'. What does that mean, 'If anyone' or 'if everyone'? There is no list of

prerequisites to check off when given this invitation or when coming to the knowledge of this invitation through God's Word. His invitation is clear. If you are going to believe in him and you are going to follow him, it is addressed to **any**: male or female, no matter what race or age you are, where you came from, or what you use to believe. Now you believe in Jesus Christ and now you are following him—you are in that 'if any' crowd.

Unfortunately, too many people think they have to be prequalified because "there is no way the Lord Jesus would ever let me into this group if he realized what I have done in my life." Really? To believe that is to demean what he did at the cross. He paid for every sin known to mankind past, present, and future. That payment was paid in full.

Some say, "Well, if Jesus knew what I did with my life, he wouldn't want me to be part of the group. He wouldn't want me to be following him." In other words, you are saying to yourself that you cannot make the cut because of what you were like or what you are today. You haven't invented some new way of sinning. Believe me, that has all been done in the six thousand years prior. There is nothing new that you are going to come up with, my friend. And if there was anything new, Christ already knew about that, and the price has already been paid in the penalty that he paid for your sins to be washed away and cleansed from your life.

Of course, too many individuals take the attitude that they are just not qualified to be a Christian. Because they take that attitude, what is the use? Why even try? In other words, if you know for a fact that you are not going to be approved, why would you even put in the effort?

My friend, you can't approach Jesus like you approach a credit application. Have you ever seen people with iffy credit? They are somewhere between fair and poor and someone asks them, "Do you want to fill this application out? You might get this card" or "You might get this credit". And they are just

shaking in their boots as they're filling out the application because they are not sure if they will be approved. A lot of them know they are on the borderline, so they don't even try because they don't want the risk of being turned down.

Well, thank God that He does not approach us that way. We come to Him. That is what the 'if any' designates. We believe in Him. If we go after Him and deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow Him, there are no disapproved applicants. There are work-in-progress applicants — and, believe me, I am a work-in-progress. Sometimes I marvel at myself and at how much work still needs to be done. When I think I just need a chiseling here and there, the Lord reminds me that it's time for a sledgehammer. Let's get that chunk out of your life. It is going to involve a spiritual sledgehammer.

"Well I am too stained. And Jesus must know that I am stained. He surely doesn't want us that are stained."

Because we think that, we think he disqualifies us.

Now I believe, outside of Paul, there is another apostle in the Scriptures who probably felt that way. Now you might read through the Scriptures and never realize what this apostle (who was first a disciple) was thinking when Jesus approached him and said, "***follow Me.***"

I am referring to Matthew. His is the first Gospel record that we find in the New Testament. He was a stained individual. I am sure his friends, his family members, and acquaintances wrote him off. Why? Because he was a disappointment to them. I am sure his parents had these grand plans for their son. Remember, his name is Levi in the other Gospel records, not Matthew. When someone was given the name of Levi in that period of time, it meant that your parents expected you to be in the service of the Lord just as the Levites were in the Old Testament. And what did he become? A tax collector. And not just a tax collector for the Roman Empire, a tax collector for THE ENEMY.

Think about the disappointment of the people who raised him with the hopes that he would be a spiritual leader in that nation in those times. More than likely his father, grandfather, and other ancestors were probably all priests who served the Lord. If they were, and I believe they were, Matthew by the age of 12 had to recite the first five books of the Torah (the Old Testament). It had to be memorized. I wouldn't doubt that Matthew tried to become a disciple of one of the many rabbis of his day.

For some reason, which we don't know, he just didn't make that team. He didn't make the cut. Maybe he just flunked out of whatever the religious school for rabbis was in that day. Whatever happened, he became a disappointment. Something went wrong.

I don't know exactly, but instead of serving the Lord, what did he do? He started serving himself, friend. In essence, he turned his back on his own people and became a tax collector for the Romans. Whether he took the money fairly or unfairly, he was still working for the Romans, the enemy of the Jews. In those days there was no such thing as an honest tax collector. A tax collector in those days was seen as an outcast. Period. In fact, some would go as far as saying he was ceremoniously unclean. "He's stained. There is no hope for him."

If you know your history, once you were labeled that way, they would not even let you into the outer court of the Tabernacle. That is how stained one was. That is how much of an outcast one was. Think about it. I don't know about you, but I have a lot in common with Matthew (or Levi).

Like Matthew, maybe we became disappointments to acquaintances, family, friends, or maybe to our own selves. Maybe we didn't live up to what was expected of us. Well, the book of Romans says that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. My bible says everyone is stained, including religious leaders that think that they never were stained or that they never had any staining from the day they

turned to Jesus. Well if they become stained, they have the promise that Jesus will wash them clean before, during, and after that staining process. Glory to God.

Now I am sure Matthew probably thought and had regrets at times; maybe he wished he hadn't become a tax collector, just like maybe you have thoughts of things you have in your life that you wish you hadn't done. Sometimes it seems as if no matter how hard you have tried to scrub those stains out in your life with your own efforts, they just don't come out. You don't have the stain remover. Jesus does. That is what we must remember. Jesus is the ultimate stain remover.

I wonder at times if Matthew wondered at times what point there was in hiding what he had become. I am sure as a boy growing up he never thought he'd be working for the Roman Empire, and as a tax collector on top of that, going against his own people. Did he have any regrets? Did he have any guilt? I believe he did, and that is why, I believe, Jesus approached him. Matthew thought his stains were set, but let me tell you, here comes The Stain Remover. When he thought they were never coming out, here comes Jesus.

Now let's read a little bit of the story of Matthew where he meets Jesus. We find the story in three of the Gospel records (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), but go to Matthew 9:9.

“And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew [here he is named Matthew], sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me.” That's it. And what did Matthew do? ***“And he arose, and followed him.”***

Verse 10, ***“And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans [tax collectors] and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.”***

Sinners: They were people labeled as those that deviated from the way.

So these tax collectors and people that deviated from the way came and sat down with him and his disciples, ***“And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”***

Now go to Mark 2:13.

“And he went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom [where the taxes were collected], and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.”

Here Mark calls him by the name he was given at birth, Levi. Here we have the information that we need to come to the conclusion that his parents had hopes for him to work in the priestly order and to be a servant of the Lord because you would not name your child Levi unless that was your intention and you came from a certain lineage. *And as he passed by, he saw Levi.* Well, he certainly didn't come through for his parents or himself really. As I said, he started working for himself. Something went wrong somewhere in his life, and I believe he still carried the guilt and the disappointment that he had concerning what he believed, maybe when he was a child, his destiny should have been - and whatever went wrong, what it became, it wasn't what he or anyone else expected.

Verse 15 - “And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.”

Who did Jesus sit with? Not the religious leaders of his time, but with tax collectors and people that deviated out of the way. Talk about one heck of an I.R.S. party! To put it in our day and age, Jesus sat down with a bunch of I.R.S. employees and all kinds of other sinners, probably drunks and prostitutes...you name it!

Let's go to the final account in Luke 5:27.

“And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.”

Two Gospel records called him by his original name, Levi. Matthew called himself Matthew, how he wanted to be identified as a follower of Jesus Christ.

“Follow me.” Now somewhere down the line you must believe or assume that Matthew heard about Jesus. Matthew heard about this unconventional rabbi that was traveling around. You couldn't keep Jesus' reputation a secret. Matthew heard about it.

Look where he is located. He is at a place where everyone would have to come to him. Don't you think they came with stories from all over of where Jesus had traveled up to this point? And as he was listening and listening —reminds you of *pistis* again, doesn't it? — something was starting to click in his spirit. “I have to know more about Jesus. I have to come to know him.”

Jesus said unto him, ***“Follow Me,”*** and in the very next verse it says, ***“And he left all...”*** —“See ya! I'm going after Jesus. To heck with all of this, you keep the books. You guys collect all this money for Rome. I am going after him.”

“And Levi made him a great feast in his own house” — He threw one heck of a party, a celebration for Jesus and his disciples, and look who were the attendees — ***“and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.”*** Not just one or two tax collectors, but a great amount of tax collectors ‘and of others’. We know from the other Gospel records that the ‘and of others’ were people that deviated out of the way. There were all kinds of sinners; tax collectors and sinners. Like I said, it was one heck of an I.R.S. office party and the guest list included the worst of the worst of tax collectors and sinners.

Now, that is what my Bible says. I don't know what your Bible says, but that is what my Bible says.

I am sure that before Jesus arrived at that tax collecting location, Matthew thought to himself that he'd never be wanted by God again in his life because he couldn't make the cut earlier. But as I said, he heard about the new rabbi that was traveling around. His name was Jesus, and he was not like others. He was doing things differently. He was not like your normal rabbi. Matthew was in his little booth collecting the money, and Jesus stops by. I think things were said to Matthew, but it boiled down to two words: Follow Me.

It is still true today: Follow Me.

Who could ever imagine a Jewish rabbi asking a tax collector... Put yourself in their time; put flesh and blood into this story. Who would have EVER thought a Jewish rabbi (whether you thought the rabbi was any good or not) would ask a tax collector who was working for the Roman oppressors to be one of his followers. Amazing, isn't it?

It is unthinkable if you put yourself into the scene. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall as Jesus is asking this tax collector. Believe me, the Pharisees found out about it because they were starting to murmur about the celebration party that Levi (Matthew) put together, and they weren't invited. Only more tax collectors and all kinds of people that deviated from the way were on that guest list. "Come celebrate with Jesus. Come hear what he has to say."

I am sure Matthew had heard of Jesus prior to Jesus approaching him. He probably never thought the scenario that he was faced with was the opportunity to follow an unconventional rabbi.

Jesus was not like other rabbis. If you really think about it, how many of you today would follow a rabbi or a teacher that was homeless? As I said, put flesh and blood into this story. Yes, Jesus was a rabbi. Yes, he was homeless. Yes, he was

unconventional. Yes, he was teaching things that other rabbis were not teaching.

Matthew looked at this as an opportunity to follow Jesus as his rabbi. It was probably a second chance to do what he and others had hoped for him to do. He was going to be part of a special group, a group that was called the Talmidim. Talmidim were disciples or students of a rabbi. So a rabbi would have a talmidim or a group of students. That is exactly what Jesus was forming, a group of students – which we know as disciples of Jesus before they became Apostles – a group of students, a group of talmidim that Jesus was molding.

If you made the cut to be one of the talmidim by another rabbi, you were considered very fortunate because, if you didn't, you would wind up learning some local trade that was passed down from your family members. But if you made the cut, you were part of that elite group. You had to go through an application process. They would not just choose anyone.

Now Jesus' application process was much different than other rabbis. That is why I said he was unconventional in His approach. I am sure Matthew's jaw dropped to his tax collecting table when he heard the words "follow me." "You mean follow you as a member of the talmidim? A student of yours? Wait a minute." He could have hesitated, if you know the structure of how the talmidim was selected. You just couldn't be anyone. You had to pass the prerequisites, including memorizing the first five books of the Old Testament we call the Torah. One of the requirements was that if a rabbi decided to give you a chance to see if you could make the cut, he could on the spot ask you to quote one of the chapters word by word for any of the books of the Torah. For instance, he might say, I want to hear Deuteronomy chapter two. Just think about that. You would be put on the spot and expected to answer immediately.

To tell you the truth, it is the equivalent of applying to colleges. You have to score pretty high on your SATs and other tests if

you want to go to one of these Ivy League schools such as Stanford or Yale. You better at least have a GPA of 4.0 and a very high score on your college entrance exams because if you don't, you probably won't get in. Well, the same thing was true of their application process if you wanted to join one of these rabbis and go to one of their schools.

This application process was intense. Why? Because the rabbis had to be thorough because eventually the student would reflect the quality of the teacher. So these rabbis were selective. They didn't want just anybody. If you produced quality students, you were sought after as a quality rabbi. So, the rabbis' reputation was on the line. Therefore, only elite selected talmidim were chosen who would make the cut to be part of the rabbinic school.

If your students proved out to be intelligent and brilliant and they deserved to be part of the elite group, that rabbi was admired by the community and almost put on a pedestal as a god, even though they forbade that.

But that is not the way Jesus selected people. Think about it. Once again, this unconventional rabbi comes by, and all he says is, "Follow me." Whether you are a fisherman, a tax collector, or anyone else, "Follow Me." He invited His followers. He didn't put them through some grueling application process.

Why? Unlike the other rabbis, He could see their hearts. The approach of just going up to anyone and saying, "Follow me," just wasn't done by rabbis. But Jesus is not just any ordinary rabbi. Furthermore, do you think these rabbis would go up to these potential talmidim students and run the risk of being rejected? They just wouldn't do it. They would not take that risk.

But to Matthew, if you go back to Matthew, he says "Follow me." I am sure anybody that was in ear shot to hear, knowing that Jesus was a rabbi — maybe not a rabbi they were fond of but still a rabbi — can you imagine what their jaws looked

like? Their jaws probably hit the ground. They were in total shock. What in the world is he doing? Don't you realize who you are asking to be part of your talmidim? This is a traitor, an enemy of the Jewish state. This is a turncoat. He's a tax collector. The Jews didn't look upon the tax collectors kindly.

What about the other disciples? They were not an enemy of the state. There were already a few chosen before He comes across Matthew. What about the other disciples? I am sure they were pretty shocked. Maybe they were offended. How dare Jesus ask this tax collector? He is the ultimate sinner. He willfully sins for a living.

Paint a picture with me. Here is Matthew sitting at that tax collector table, seeing Jesus, this rabbi coming toward him, approaching him. What was going through his mind as he sees Jesus coming to him? "Uh oh! Jesus is coming here to scold me. Point his finger at me. Lay into me." I'm sure he got it from other rabbis. But what did Matthew encounter? Just the opposite. He received a gracious invitation, friend, not a pointed finger for his sinning or shortcomings. Of course, after that, they went to have one heck of a celebration party, and they invited other tax collectors and sinners, people who deviated from the way.

Luke 5:27, "And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others [people that deviated from the way] that sat down with them."

These were probably prostitutes, drunkards, people that deviated from the way, whatever sinner you were like. Here is this gracious invitation given to Matthew. Clearly a different invitation than any other rabbi in Israel this day. I just can't get off this point for now.

I want to hammer home one additional point. Here we have this unconventional rabbi not looking for the ones who were the religious elite, the ones that were perfect in their own eyes, or the ones that were morally upright. Don't you think those other rabbis were looking for all those that had what they considered good qualities in an individual? They were looking for people who we would refer to as "those having their lives together". Now Jesus calls and invites graciously people whose lives are stained with sin - all kinds of sin. He doesn't shy away from them. He invites them. He throws out the elitist application and says, "Come unto Me. Follow Me." No prerequisites required. No asterisks at the bottom of his application.

Have you ever tried to apply for credit, especially when you are just starting to establish your credit? You fill out the application for something like buying a car and you see the asterisks; you'll get the great interest rate or the terms that sound fantastic but with the condition of "with approved credit". Then they run your credit report, and it is not the elite credit that is required to get what you were seeking. Jesus' application has no asterisks anywhere on the application that says you must meet certain criteria to be chosen by Him. There is only one criteria: to believe that He is the Son of God and that He came to rescue you, He paid the price and He paid the penalty to do just that. That is what he did for Matthew in this story.

Jesus doesn't care if you have had struggles in your life that kept you away from the religious elites. He doesn't care if you're filled with addictions. He doesn't care if you are divorced. He doesn't care about those things. He doesn't care if you are part of a certain political party.

Too many churches, and unfortunately too many preachers, preach the message that anyone can follow, but do they really mean anyone? They often say, "you've got to clean up first." Oh really? Show me that in the Scriptures. My bible doesn't have any of that, and I have combed through it quite a bit in

my lifetime. How many churches have signs out front that read, "We welcome everyone." But once they get you in the door, they keep an eye on you. Maybe it is because you don't wear the same kind of outfits that they wear. Maybe your clothing is a little bit different. Maybe you have some tattoos. Maybe you have a different way of speech that they are not accustomed to hearing daily. Maybe your short conversation exposed some past history in your life that puts them on alert for whatever reason. They have put an asterisk on their welcome, if you really think about it. "Everyone Welcome...except." However, they can't justify that attitude and application process with the Scriptures.

There are some people who, right when they walk through the door, appear to be troublemakers and you can tell that they are there to make trouble. I am not talking about those type of people. If they cause trouble in the church service, I have no problem kicking them out quickly. But I have seen too many times in my lifetime people who were treated a little bit differently because they were different. As far as appearance goes, I'm sure to the surprise to some of the people that were so critical about them, I have seen those same people they were critical about turn out to be very faithful participants in the ministry.

Back to Matthew. Here he sits at the collecting booth collecting taxes. Now he receives this offer, "Follow Me." He knew the kind of invitation this was and what was involved. He knew it and he knew that it would mean that he had to give up a lot of his comfortable living to follow Jesus; there was no way he could accept that invitation and have his life remain the same.

That is still true today. I have never seen anyone truly invited by Jesus who turned their lives over to him and didn't have their lives changed. Some of the change was painful and some of it joyous; nevertheless, it was all changed for the better.

See, the 'if any', the if any follow Me people that Jesus graciously invites, I've never seen it any differently. They have

to come to the realization that they will have to give up something, if not everything, depending on the invitation. That is exactly what Matthew was faced with: living the same kind of life he was living, which was probably a comfortable life or giving that up and following Jesus. I believe he had a original opportunity, but that didn't pan out for whatever reason — not by some conventional rabbi, but this unconventional rabbi Jesus inviting him and now he has the opportunity to get up, leave his life behind, and follow Him.

When we look back in the Scriptures, we don't look at his life as a failure as a tax collector, as an enemy of the state, or as an embarrassment to his parents or to his lineage. We know him as an Apostle, a follower of Jesus Christ, and the first Gospel record in the New Testament. The reason I had us looking at John 3:16 and Luke 9:23 is because Jesus as a rabbi, and he does that through his word and gifted teachers that he has selected, doesn't simply invite us just to follow; he teaches us how to follow.

Unfortunately, too many pastors are teaching how to follow, not according to the rightly divided word of God, but through traditions of men, created nonsense doctrine by a lot of different denominations that lead people astray and really just turn them off or develop critical Christians that put you through an application process to see if you can make the cut.

So who is invited to follow Jesus? If any. If any includes divorced people, those with a shady past, addicts, alcoholics, Democrats or Republicans, anyone who has stains. Jesus is looking for people to have a change of mind concerning Him. He is not looking for people to repent of their sins. If that is the case, we'd be repenting for the rest of our lives and still coming up short, thinking that it is because of our effort

It is about a change of mind about what He can do for you, not what you can do for yourself. He is calling people; he is inviting people continuously to follow Him.

“Well, you cannot mean me. You really don't know who I am.”

Yes, he does. He knows all about your stains, but He knows by what he did at the cross that all my stains and all your stains have been washed clean and that they are whiter than snow. That is what His blood has done for us.

IF ANY means just that: if any and everyone would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and follow Him, then He will take you on the rest of the journey. He will give you the knowledge as a talmidim of His, and He will give you the power to make the trip. It is nowhere promised that the trip will be liked or that it will be without burdens and trials or affliction. The promise is He will be there with you so that you get through all those things and you make it over there.

That is why they can celebrate, as in Luke 5:29 - ***“And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans [tax collectors] and of others [people that deviated out of the way] that sat down with them.”*** The elitists were not there, and what did they do? ***“But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?”***

It sounds to me like they already given up on Jesus. They murmured against his disciples. They were still hoping for them to be rescued from that unconventional rabbi that doesn't know what he is doing.

“And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.” And by the way, that also included those Pharisees and Scribes. They just didn't realize they were sick. They thought they were whole. But Jesus is telling these Scribes and Pharisees that they are spiritually sick like the rest of you and they need a physician. ***“I came not to call the righteous [the ones right with God], but sinners to repentance.”*** And the word there, defined correctly, is a change of mind. ***“I came not to call the ones right with God”***, if there was any right with God, they don't need a physician, but sinners, people that deviated from the

way to a change of mind, need to know how to get back on the true way. It starts with a change of mind about Jesus, God's only begotten Son.

It is very simple if it reaches home for you, if you are not part of the ones on the Way with Christ. If you are a part of the deviated ones, you don't have to think that you must be good enough to be accepted. Jesus came up to a tax collector and graciously invited him, and not just him but anyone that realizes they are spiritually sick and needs a healer, a healer that paid the price and the penalty to heal you as was promised; that healer is Jesus Christ. He has paid the price and he has spilled his blood. He has also presented it to the Father saying, "all is finished; I am bringing them home. They are my talmidim."

All we must do is keep trusting and having confidence that Jesus can do just that. I believe he can. It is now the time to have a change of mind. Get away from all these traditions that you were taught and stop thinking that you could never make the cut because the qualifications were too great of a demand on your life. He will put a demand on your life, but not according to manmade traditions. Those traditions almost make it impossible to be accepted unless you become a cookie cutter robot just like them, saying the same things, doing the same things, wearing the same things, and acting the same way. Jesus is not looking for Christian robots. He is looking for true talmidim that He can mold into the vessel that He wants you to be, not only now but throughout eternity.

As for this church and this ministry, tax collectors and all kinds of sinners are welcome without any application process. You just need to have a change of mind about Jesus and let him take you from that point on for one heck of an experience and journey that will change your life forever. That is all that is required, a change of mind.

Chapter 7

Sin Has Been Removed Forever

Turn in your bible to Hebrews 10:26.

I received a communication from a young man who, after a few years of becoming born again, came across the verse in the book of Hebrews where it reads, ***“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”*** He understood that since he was made a new creation, he was made free from the bondage of sin, but then any sins from then on had to be willful sin, and that if he sinned after being washed and born again, there was no hope for him after that. When he asked his pastor if this was true, his pastor replied, “I guess so.” It devastated him, causing him such great depression that he began drinking and using drugs in an effort to escape the knowledge that he was doomed and would never be with Jesus. He even attempted suicide and has been in mourning ever since.

He writes, “I am so sorry for what I have done. I relive it every day. At night I dream about it, about failing the Lord. I pray all the time going before the Lord for forgiveness and healing from the addiction. I realized I had excluded myself from fellowship with Jesus and Salvation.”

No, you have not. Anybody that tells you that including that pastor who says “I guess so” is full of it. You have brainwashed yourself into believing a lie, and it is a shame they couldn’t help you through this present struggle you’re in and the condemnation that you have placed yourself under.

Oh, how this verse used by ill taught morons has done so much damage. This chapter is concerning the believer’s access to God. It is not the *sinless*’ access to God; it is the believers access to God.

Hebrews 10:26, ***“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”***

What “knowledge of the truth”? It is the knowledge that the only person who can rescue you from your sins and remove your sins is Jesus Christ. Put your focus away from your sin, and put it on *who* rescues you from that sin: Jesus Christ. So the focus here is not on your sin so much as the *one* that removes that sin.

“...there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins”

That is right, because He sacrificed himself once, and that is all that was necessary.

“But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died...”

Here is the clue on how to interpret verse 26 — not that damnable way that unfortunately far too often has been interpreted to mean that if you keep sinning willfully then you are going to die eternally and will not have any hope of being with Jesus. These pastors are playing right into the hands of Satan; these supposed pastors of churches lead these congregation members right into the pit of hell with their stupidity concerning God’s Word. If you want to get my ire going, this is one area where I have a real sensitive spot; they really hit a nerve when they pervert the Gospel message that Jesus Saves.

“He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:”

Right! You couldn’t follow the Commandments; you couldn’t follow the Law exactly to the ‘t’ with every ‘i’ dotted and every ‘t’ crossed. You were doomed. That is why they had animal sacrifices. So, with those annual sacrifices, those sins from their lives could be covered. But Jesus, the more perfect

sacrifice, the unblemished sacrifice, came — once and once only for all time (past, present, and future) — and removed all sin.

Hebrews 10:29, ***“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”***

In other words, if you connect all the verses together in context what is said is this: You live by the Law; you die by the Law. If you don't live with the understanding that Jesus rescues you from the Law and He has removed your sin, and you deny it or you don't accept it, then you are going to die eternally.

As I mentioned in a previous message, there are books, and then there is the Book of Life. If your name is not written in the Book of Life, you are doomed for eternal misery and death. If you are found in the Book of Life, you will forever be with Jesus eternally.

“... who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing...”

In the Last Days Series, I have pointed out that Muslims deny the Son of God. They say God has no Son. It is even written in their dome in Jerusalem. They are guilty of this. So in that case they are willfully sinning because they have rejected Jesus. Some might say, “Well, they accept Jesus.” They do not accept Him as the Savior, not as the one who shed His blood to give them life.

Going back to verse 26 - ***“for if we sin willfully,”*** What is that willful sin if we continue to do it? That willful sin is trodding underfoot the Son of God. As the Scripture says, if you keep trodding underfoot the Son of God continuously and hath

counted the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, you are willfully sinning, and your destination is not a happy place.

You might have problems in the flesh, but you are not without hope. Our sins of the flesh are some of the things that Christ will repair if we allow Him to take the reins and do the job. I am not saying it is going to be easy, especially if you are addicted to drugs, to not feel the physical consequences, but to Him it is nothing to heal you of those things.

Stop looking at the sins of the flesh and condemning yourself because the message is this: Sin has been removed forever, whether you are a believer or not. It is the Lost Message of the Church.

Some of the greatest preachers of Grace and Peace have left that out for some reason or another. Maybe they didn't see it, but there is no one who has not been forgiven and is not continuously forgiven for their sins because Christ paid the price for all sin for every single person walking on this planet past, present, and in the future.

There is a song sung – *“He Set Me Free”* - how few Christians actually believe that because there is way too much condemnation happening in churches today that like to point to the sins of the flesh to keep you from Jesus. Well they are condemned to hell if that is their viewpoint because it is a perverted gospel; it is another gospel. It is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ! I won't bend one iota from God's Word on this subject matter. Yes, we try to avoid the sins of the flesh, and there are plenty of scriptures that warn about what those things are, but if you do fall, there is hope. If you do fail, there is someone who can mend you and repair you, and His name is Jesus. Keep running to Him.

One Sunday morning I asked the congregation: Did Jesus die on the cross for all sinners? Did He forgive all sinners? Did His blood that was spilled forgive everyone without exception?

One initially responded, *“No, all the sins of this world have not been forgiven but the price has been paid. The potter’s field is still just a field. The distractions, the dangers, the sin is still out there. Only the treasure therein has been forgiven. Only those who are faithful have had their sins forgiven and washed away. So long as we don’t jump off the wheel and back into the pit, we will continue to have our short-fallings and our sins forgiven until He takes us home.”*

I responded, *“That is pretty much the traditional thinking”* and left it at that. They gave it further thought and wrote:

“Red flags flew in my mind when you mentioned tradition, which has gotten me thinking about my answer these last few days. I said no, but what if the answer is yes? What if everyone’s sin against God has been nailed to the cross and the Law has been satisfied? Everyone has a clean slate up until they die. If they don’t recognize and trust Jesus, that He did it all once and for all, then they will stand before God in their own righteousness, which falls way short. They will have no excuse. They blew it by not trusting in Jesus.

The Scapegoat: All the sins of the people were laid on this goat and then the goat was lead out of the camp into the wilderness never to be seen again. That is everybody’s sin, not just the devout. That points to what Jesus did. He forgave everybody’s sin. Children when they die, way too young to know any better, I’m sure as you proposed, Jesus will gather them up unto Him and take care of them. Their sinful nature has already been forgiven.”

That is right. There are many people who wonder what will happen to their children if they do not reach that age of accountability. I think that is different depending on the child and the environment he is growing up in and what kind of knowledge that he receives concerning the Truth, along with some other factors. They are in God’s hands. He has forgiven everyone’s sins: the people that have gone before us, people that are alive today, and people that are still yet to come,

including a little child if he dies. I personally believe they are in the hands of Jesus, and He takes them home to be with Him.

I will go even one step further. I also believe when they get their new bodies they won't be babes anymore, but they will have some type of adult human body probably around the same age Jesus was when He got His as our first-goer. That part is my personal opinion.

The letter continues:

"If yes, this brings up some interesting thoughts. An Adolf Hitler, the Little Horn, doing what he did, yet having all his sins forgiven without his even acknowledging Jesus."

If you ask most Christians, they will say that never could happen.

"A jihadi-John running around out there and all his sins, past, present, and the ones he will commit are already forgiven."

Every living person's name in the Book of Life, if they die before acknowledging Jesus, die without trusting Him, then their name is blotted out, not before.

If everyone's sins are forgiven, then God does not see them. Their sins have gone out of His sight. He will then grant eternal life according to how one sees Jesus. They will either have faith and trust in Him or be antichrist and go to hell.

Therefore, it is not sin that will send you to hell. It is your rejection of Jesus that will condemn you."

All I can say to that is, AMEN!

"What has angered God is a person worshipping false gods, worshipping anything other than Him. Jesus is the key if you have faith in Him. You are worshipping God. If you deny Jesus, you are antichrist and you are worshipping a false god."

Contrasting this with the traditional view out there, no, only the ones who have responded, the believers in Jesus, have had their sins forgiven. Sin will condemn you to hell. Your shortcoming under the Law condemns you. Your sinful nature, indeed, even your poisoned, corrupt sinful blood condemns you. Your rejection of Jesus isn't even being factored in. You were doomed from the get-go. How depressing. Indeed, even for the believer this is troubling.

Believing only that your sins have been washed away, but mankind's sins, your unbelieving neighbor's sins, are still there creates a sense of privilege that somehow you had something to do with your sins being removed by your faith in Jesus. 'And you better be careful and don't turn away from falling into sin again. He forgave you once, but you better measure up now.' That just doesn't seem right. I have to say after thinking this question through, I am leaning toward yes, Jesus forgave everyone's sins. No exceptions. He only had to do it once and once was enough.

When I think on it, what a wonderful message to explain to someone who is depressed, and/or suicidal. 'Hey! Cheer up. Your sins against God have already been washed away. God doesn't see them because Jesus took care of them for you. He washed them clean away. In God's eyes, you have no sin. Let me tell you more about Jesus.'

I love it when you ask questions like this. It makes me think things through. This is what I got out of it: Get your eyes off sin. God doesn't see it. It has been washed clean away. Put your eyes on Jesus. Sin has already been dealt with for all humanity. It is gone in God's eyes. God will determine your eternal fate by what you do with Jesus. Preach Jesus. Don't dwell on sin."

I love when I receive messages like this because it shows me you are thinking things through. That is a message in itself, whether this HOF in Northern California realizes it or not. He preached it. That is why I come down so hard on people that preach a perverted gospel.

Paul warns us in II Corinthians 11:3 - ***“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve”***—today you can pen in different words, as the serpent beguiled the churches, because that is what is happening— ***“through his subtilty [cunning craftiness], so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”***

See, the Gospel message is not difficult. It is really simple; what Christ did for us. He kept it simple. Even though it cost Him everything, He kept it simple. But then He gained all of it back and then some because He has victory over the grave, He has victory over death, He conquered it and we get to benefit in it.

“For [if] he that cometh preacheth another gospel.”—another gospel, a gospel that is different and altered.

The Gospel starts with a very basic and simple message: Jesus removed all sin from His Father’s eyes. God sees no sin, my friend. That doesn’t mean we have a license to sin because we want to become more of Jesus’ agent. He wants to keep creating and mold us in the image that He wants to perfect, but let me tell you, you are going to sin. Even you “perfect” ones out there that think you have no sin, you’re sinning because you still have that sinful blood in you; we constantly need that transfusion (figuratively) of Christ’s blood in us that deals with all that. Christ doesn’t want you to concentrate on your sin. After your born-again experience, He wants you to concentrate on how to become a better disciple of His for His purposes! The main purpose of your life, whether you want to accept it or not, is to be His ambassador in the way and means God called you to participate in this Great Commission that no one is excluded from. NO ONE.

They are preaching another gospel; something that is altered, something that is different, which is ***“another Jesus,”*** not the Jesus of the Scriptures, ***“whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel [in the Greek, another of the same kind], which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”***

This message is against the “I guess so” pastors that really want to keep you under the bondage of sin, i.e. don't do this sin, don't do that sin, because if you do there is not much hope for you.

I started this message sharing about someone from the United Kingdom, a young man, who has addiction problems, who has to deal with the sins of the flesh that are bringing him down and keeping him down, but the only way he is going to have some success over that is to turn it over to Jesus and let Jesus turn over his life. As another HOF said before, “Let Jesus turn your life upside down to make you right side up.”

Most drug rehabilitation centers are failures. Have you ever noticed that? The success rate of those facilities (some of which are very expensive) proves them to be failures. I have known several people over my lifetime that tried several different ones. I know one person that tried three. NONE of them worked. They fall back right into the same pit of addiction. You need Jesus. You need to run to Jesus. You need Jesus to take over your life. He paid the price to remove that sin from you. Stop holding sin over your head. Yes, you must acknowledge that you are a sinner. Yes, you must acknowledge that you fall short and that there is nothing you can do yourself to make you whole again. It is Christ who will do that for you and only Christ. There are no substitutes in any other religion, by the way. Only Jesus: Jesus is the Way for abundant life in the now and in the future — and not the kind of ‘abundant life’ nonsense that is preached out there.

Are sinners forgiven? EVERY SINNER is forgiven. No exceptions. Every sinner is forgiven. Every sinner, as I have said so many times, has had their sins forgiven whether saved or unsaved. Yes, the ones who have not acknowledged Jesus Christ as their Savior, their sins are forgiven, too.

This message will not be accepted very kindly, and especially with the Sister Sal's who want to point out every sin in your

life. It goes against everything that Christian religion preaches these days.

I would rather point out Jesus and how He can change you and mold you more than I am concerned about pointing out your sin. If it doesn't interfere with the spreading of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in my life, I don't want to know about your sin. That is between you and Jesus. My bible tells me He has forgiven all your sin. You are forgiven whether you want to believe it or not, my friend. But it won't do you any good — and hear me closely — it won't do you any good unless you believe it and trust and have faith in what Christ did at Calvary.

I repeat, all are forgiven, but it won't do you any good unless you trust and have faith in Him as your Savior.

If you look at the Old Testament characters, starting with David, they all lived under the Law but looked unto the future to be delivered from that Law. David is one who looked to the future more than once.

We've been here before, so I am not going to go into details on a subject I've preached already, but go to Psalm 103:12.

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions [our rebellions] from us.”

David knew about transgressions. He knew about rebellion. Everyone has heard of David and Bathsheba: how David sinned, a public sin that led to the death of two people - Bathsheba's husband and the child they had because of David's sin. It brought David pain, and it brought David regrets.

Go to Psalm 51:3, ***“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.”***

Why? Because he was still living under the Law. This is a psalm that was written when Nathan the prophet of God confronted

David concerning the sin that David found himself in with Bathsheba. David knew what he did by all rights. If you really think about it, being under the Law of Moses, David should have been executed for his sin. That is according to the Law. Now maybe the reason why he wasn't being because he was king, but according to the Law, whether he was executed by others who caught him or not, he was still under the Law in God's eyes. So, he was a walking dead man anyway. But what did he do? He appealed to the One who was greater than the Law. If you look at that same chapter it reads, ***"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."*** In the Hebrew I would translate it 'wipe out' in today's language or 'remove' "my transgressions". He didn't go to sacrificing animals. He didn't do anything. In a way, he was looking forward to the time when Christ would come that would remove sins forever. Animal sacrifices at best only lasted a year, and you had to do them yearly. Christ removed sins forever. I think David had a revelation here because when you go to Psalm 103, it does say He did not treat us as our sins deserved. David asked God here to blot out his transgressions - to remove them — and not just to hide them. Covering was an Old Testament concept, but as I preached, he asked to have them not only covered but removed.

It is like me putting a pen under a handkerchief. The pen represents my sin. In the Old Testament, the handkerchief represents the blood of the animal which would cover it. You only see the outlined shape of the pen but don't see the pen anymore because it has a covering. Well in the New Testament, He not only covers it, but removes it, and there is no pen there to be seen. It is not to be seen anywhere by anyone including God the Father. God can do anything, but He chose not to see it to honor His Son and what He did for us.

David is not the only example. Go to Isaiah 43. All of these are Old Testament characters who are looking to a future when someone would come and remove all transgressions.

Isaiah 43:25, ***“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”***

Of course, he is directing that message to ***“O Jacob, O Israel”***. For those of you who have been around a while, you know who that is directed to. But in a general understanding of it for all mankind, Christ came, He died, his blood would blot out all transgressions for everyone’s sake, and their sins will not be remembered anymore.

Isaiah 42-45 is the advertisement for the New Covenant. Under this New Covenant, their sins would be blotted out and remembered no more. Isaiah saw this coming.

We live in a day and age where this has already happened. How blessed are we to have this knowledge that our sins have been blotted out by Christ whether we are saved or not? Now it won’t do you any good, as I said, if you don’t have any trust and confidence in that, but nevertheless, God sees sin no more.

Let’s consider another major prophet in the Old Testament. Jeremiah chapter 31 - this whole chapter was about a future covenant that was coming. He foresaw the same promises as these others that I already covered. In Jeremiah 31:33-34, ***“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law [the Gospel] in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”***

Repeatedly, we have this concept, this theme that was developing that Christ would come and He would remember sins no more. So why do we keep dwelling on sin, sin, and more sin wherever you turn in the Christian world? We do this

because it is another gospel about another Jesus, but not the Jesus that removed sin forevermore.

He has already done it. He appeared once, and once and for all. If you look at the Hebrews chapter 9 message, He did away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He's already done it. He was the High Priest who offered that one-time sacrifice for everyone, everyone that would have breath in their lungs. When He did it, all these prophecies were fulfilled, friend. Jesus didn't die for only confessed and repented sins, according to the traditional church concept. He died for all sin. That was John the Baptist's message. Go to John 1:29.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Whose sin did Jesus take away? The sin of the world. It doesn't say it excludes unbelievers. Does the world include unbelievers? Absolutely. Then we can only conclude that unbelievers are forgiven. The sins are no longer being recorded.

I preached about the books in Revelation; the only thing that is recorded in those books are names. Either your name is going to be in the Book of Life, or it will be blotted out. Those are your only two choices. Your sins are not recorded. They were recorded up to the New Covenant, but since the New Covenant has been established by Jesus Christ, those sins that had been recorded have been removed. I said his blood has invisible ink ingredients in it that removed all recorded sin. So from Jesus' day forward, no sins are recorded.

That is the Good News, my friend. All have been reconciled through Jesus Christ. Whether you are going to benefit or not is dependent on whether you trust and believe He is the Savior. The choice is still yours. I believe He will draw you, but will you take the next step.

Men have sins, but God is neither counting them up anymore nor remembering them anymore. That is it.

“OH! unbelievers are not saved!” I didn’t say they were. I didn’t say unbelievers are saved. All I said is they are forgiven. There is a difference. Hopefully you are spiritually in tune enough to figure out what that difference is.

If you really think about it, when were your sins forgiven?

I can almost feel the vibrations out there. This is something you have not been brought up in or been taught in your churches, unfortunately. When were your sins forgiven? They were forgiven when you were dead in your sins.

Take another church concept about repentance and forgiveness. You were forgiven before you repented. Think about that. You were forgiven of your sins before you confessed. The church says just the opposite of that. I don’t believe in confession. The Scripture in the Greek is very clear. It is not confessing; it is acknowledging what you are and Who can deliver you from it. There is a difference there, too.

“I was forgiven before I repented or confessed?” ABSOLUTELY. “Well, I never heard that.” Well, it is about time you did because that is truly the Good News. “I was forgiven before I was born again?” ABSOLUTELY. You were forgiven long before you were ever born, my friend; forget born again, before you were even born. “Well, I don’t understand this. How can this be possible? I didn’t even do anything to receive my forgiveness.” That’s right. That is why it is called GRACE, which brings Peace. Stop believing all the peddlers of the bad news. “Well, I didn’t know my sins were forgiven. I didn’t give God the permission to forgive my sins.” When was the last time that God had to check with you to see if He could forgive your sins? You are the creation; He is the Creator. He doesn’t need to check with you for anything, my friend. He doesn’t need your permission to forgive your sins. Through His wonderful gift of Grace, He did that anyway! His forgiveness is entirely based on His work on the cross at Calvary. I have told

you this over and over. I preach it in the Communion messages. I repeat - anything else is called bad news. Furthermore, you can't find it in the scriptures. You can twist the scriptures to believe in the bad news, but you can't find it in the Scripture if you rightly divide it.

Don't believe these lies. Jesus didn't die for SOME sin; He died for ALL sin. I do not care how bad you think you are. Those sins had been removed before you even realized it. His one-time sacrifice for the sin of this world was perfect and complete. It doesn't have to be improved on.

Modern Christianity would love to improve on it because they want to add their "this has to happen" or "that has to happen first". No, it does not. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. That has not changed in the Scripture, and not just for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. It is the Good News the prophets that I briefly read from foresaw.

You need to start believing in it. Start trusting in what you've been persuaded, by the message of the Good News, to believe to be true. You need to put your faith in the Good News, my friend. Run from the bad news. Run as fast as you can from the bad news.

In Acts, Jesus says that forgiveness of sins is a gift, but it must be received. If you don't receive it, then there is no blotting out of your name in the Book of Death.

Now there are two kinds of people that will never receive this gift - this wonderful gift of Grace: those who think they don't need a Savior and those who think they must do things and confess things or repent to earn God's forgiveness. Those two will never receive this gift.

Everyone is forgiven, friend. But unfortunately, not everyone believes they are forgiven. That message I read from the United Kingdom is proof of that. It could not have been timelier because this is the message I planned to preach today, way before I even received that message.

Those who don't believe reject the gift of God that He offers them, and that is Jesus.

You are forgiven, and you might think you are the worst sinner on the planet, but by the Grace of God, you are forgiven.

GOOD NEWS. GOOD NEWS.

Do you think right now Jesus is running around trying to cover up your daily sins? Do you really think that? Think of how silly that is. "Oh! He sinned over here. Let me get my magic eraser and remove those before God has an opportunity to see them." Get off it, my friend. You are living in kindergarten Christianity. It is time you chew on some meat.

His redemption work is done, and He has extended His invitation to you and me to enter in to His Rest, which gives you Grace and Peace when correctly understood. You are forgiven whether you believe it or not, as I have said now several times, but it won't do you any good unless you believe it.

Galatians 1:6, ***"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel [another of the same kind; it sounds familiar, but it is different or altered]: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert [turn you around by corruption: to turn one's mind to their way] the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."***

Those are harsh words, but if anyone comes before you and preaches another gospel and another Jesus and twists the Scripture to keep you under bondage of some condemnation, Romans 8 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Are you in Christ Jesus or not? If you are, then stop worrying so much about your sin because He's removed that, and pray to God that He turns your life upside down to make you right side up and be a true servant

of His, to mold you into what He wants you to be the remainder of this life and throughout eternity.

Let God have control of your life 100%. He will do a better job with your life than anything you could possibly consider doing. Your efforts will always wind up in failures. They will lack success. They will be a complete failure. Even though it might seem like you've got everything figured out, wait until your last breath or just before it, and see what that means as far as accomplishments. See if anybody remembers the servant of God you were or were not. Let's just focus on the not: a million years from now, you will be blotted out from history, you will be blotted out from eternity. Or as His servant, your name will go on forever.

I have a funny feeling that part of the rewards is that God will take your life and place it on display like when you receive a trophy. We are his trophies. You don't know what He has planned for the eons of time. God is a creative God. I have a pretty vivid imagination, and I cannot even imagine the things that have not even been created yet that will be created when He finally removes Satan from the scene, all his evil minions and hell and death and the grave are all cast into the Lake of Fire.

It says, "in the beginning," and we are still in that stage of "in the beginning". The best still lies ahead. Why would you want to miss it for earthly accolades down here that don't add up to diddly-squat? Let God use those earthly accolades to be a servant of His to achieve His purposes.

There is nothing wrong with success down here as long as it is controlled by God and used by God. But you won't even get that far with God if you keep listening to these preachers and these false prophets and angels of light who preach another gospel with another message that is not Jesus - one that keeps you under the constant bondage of sin and that keeps pounding you for everything under the sun to keep you under their submission, power, and control. Well, to hell with them!

That is my message for our 10th Anniversary! To hell with this world! To hell with the Christians that want to keep you down! Get up and live for Jesus! Get up and be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

And that is my message to those who preach another gospel: YOU ARE ACCURSED! if you do so. ***“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”***

Like I said, this is not a popular message, and I will be greatly criticized for it. But you know what? So be it. I'm not looking for the pat on the back from man. I am looking for what I have said so many times, to hear “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That's it.

If I can turn on lights and let the Message from the Old Testament to the Gospel message of the Good News of Jesus Christ ring loud and clear - the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and not the bad news - as long as I have breath in my lungs, I am not going to let these perverts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ off the hook. Why should I? Paul said they are accursed. They are in Jesus' hands and God help them.

So as we start this 11th year, let's start it out by proclaiming Jesus Saves. He's already forgiven your sins before you even knew about it, before you even acknowledged it. So get that behind you. Now start trusting and having confidence in what His blood has done for you and start living a life for Christ. He will take care of your sins and you will still have some. If you press close to Him, and keep pursuing Him, He will get you through, He will fix you, and He will heal you spiritually. He won't let you go that easily. He's got a good grip on you. Sometimes we let go, but He won't. This 11th year, let's begin by focusing on Jesus and realizing that He is the only one that

matters. And if anyone else preaches anything besides that, let them be accursed.

Copyright 2018 Faith Cometh By Hearing Ministries

Please email us at email@teachingfaith.com if this has encouraged and strengthened your faith.

Write us at

Faith Cometh By Hearing Ministries
539 W. Commerce St, Ste# 577
Dallas, TX 75208