

PRAISE THE LORD...PASS THE AMMUNITION...TALK WITH YOUR FEET NOT JUST WITH YOUR TONGUES"

I have been trying to grow and hold myself accountable to true confession, true repentance, and walking out salvation. Then I realized I needed to study the Word and make changes!

What is confession?

Webster dictionary says it is acknowledgement of guilt.

Bible dictionary= acknowledging sin

Yet as Christians, we can't stop there!!! The title of this message does not mean we praise by fighting, forcing...but with the Word of God, and helping each other grow up in Christ.

What is repentance?

Webster=turn from sin and make a decision to change our life

Bible Dict=a theological and ethical thorough change in our hearts from sin toward God

We all need to do these every day. We all know that faith is the foundation of being saved (Eph. 2:8-10, Acts 16:31) but do we know that repentance is tied directly to our faith?

We have to have faith to truly repent and then take steps to bring a deeper character. There can be no saving faith without true repentance!!!

I know sin is not hard to avoid 100% of the time...it is IMPOSSIBLE to avoid 100% of the time. This is why confession and repentance is crucial.

If we don't confess our sins, our prayers do not get answered because we are separated from God.

Isaiah 59:2-4 (The Message) Your wrongheaded loves cause the split between you and God. Your sins get between you so that He does not hear. Your hands are drenched in blood, your fingers dripping in guilt, your lips smeared with lies, your tongue swollen from muttering obscenities. No one speaks up for the right, no one deals fairly. They trust in illusions, they tell lies, they get pregnant with mischief and have sin babies!

Does anyone feel uneasy at church sometimes? How about when Chap walks by? Could mean that we have a problem with confession and repentance.

I am talking about more than just apologizing—anyone can do that. True confessions mean detail...then repent.

Proverbs 28:13 (NIV) Whoever conceals their sins doe not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

(The Message) You can't whitewash your sins and get by with it; you find mercy by admitting and leaving them.

God already knows but I believe that He wants us to say it for our own growth. Whether we think it is too small to care or too big to be forgiven is not our call. We are to be honest with God, ourselves and others.

If we are letting God work in our life, it should be evident by the changes seen outwardly coming from inside.

It is one thing to recognize that we do something wrong, and it is altogether another to be so sad we did it to a point we are determined to never do it again! This is repentance! Changing our thoughts, our habits, and choosing another way. Repentance means being so deeply grieved we do whatever it takes to keep from doing it again.

2 Corinthians 7:9-11 (NIV) As Paul said to sinning Corinthian Christians..." As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved but because you were grieved to repentance. For you felt a Godly grief...for Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this Godly grief has produced in you, an eagerness to clear yourselves of indignation, fear, longing, zeal and punishment."

(THE Message) ..."now I am glad that you were jarred into turning things around. You let distress bring you to God, not drive you away from Him. The result is gain not loss. Distress that drives us to God turns us around. It gets us back in the walk of salvation. We never regret that kind of pain. If it turns you from God you are full of regrets. Being closer to God you are more alive, more concerned, more sensitive, more reverent, more human more passionate, more responsible.

Some of you may remember Chap's showing us up here about turning around in repentance. If you listen to the Holy Spirit you will repent and turn.

Saying we are sorry for cursing, fighting, lying or whatever is nothing more than wounded pride of getting caught. This keeps us

in guilt, shame, self-pity but it won't bring peace or a restored relationship with the Lord.

Verse 11 we read earlier shows that genuine repentance will change our attitudes and behaviors and giving a true effort to do better.

Matthew 3:8 (The Message) Do you think a little water on your snakeskin is going to make any difference? It is your life that must change!

Acts 26:20 (NIV) Paul says "I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. "

I haven't read anywhere it is easy but I have read it must be real and honest. In here it can be especially difficult to go against the popular actions and uphold what is right. Yet repentance involves a dramatic change of course. Some of us are thinking right now it is negative, no fun, etc. Some are recognizing their sins right now and thinking about rededicating their lives to God on a daily basis. We may be telling others we are going to do better.

I could not find any verses on rededication but there are plenty on repentance. **WE HAVE NOT REPENTED IF WE CONTINUE IN THE SAME SINS WILLINGLY** with no effort to change.

Remember Judas Iscariot that betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver? In his mind he felt sorry YET he never repented or tried to ask forgiveness with Jesus or the other disciples. Instead he went to a lonely field and hung himself. (MT. 27:3-5)

On the other hand, Peter denied Jesus three times (Luke 22: 54-62) but he began to weep, show remorse and repent. His life sure

changed. He preached, helped build the Church even when persecuted. He never committed that sin again!

Take responsibility! Sometimes we refuse to take responsibility for our actions. Adam and Eve did it in the beginning. Our excuses are many...our parents did not raise us well, our friends let us down, our friends were doing it so we did, in prison what do you expect.....making excuses means we are nowhere near repentance.

When I was young, a man around town stole things like shovel, rake, etc. During a revival, he gave his life to God. I heard grownups saying he would steal again, not change, etc. Then he started returning things to people and people stopped questioning his repentance. I would say one shovel carried back to make amends can be more powerful than many sermons.

Are we hungry? Are we lonely? Bored? What do we do to help that we know is wrong for us to fix it?

Sin starts small sometimes. Eve took one bite and that one action led to evil in the world and our flesh.

Look at David—King, stayed in from battle, committed adultery,, murdered the woman's husband to cover it up, woman pregnant, child died---but you know how he came to be called a "man after God's own heart?" When the prophet Nathan confronted him, he truly repented. PS 51 is David's prayer for forgiveness and repentance.

I will share what I think are 8 important steps to repentance:

- 1) Define the sin. David used 3 words—iniquity, sin and transgression (Ps 51:1-3) Each word was deliberately used for its meaning.
Iniquity is distortion of what should be
Sin is missing the mark God sets for us
Transgression is rebellion against God's authority
- 2) Appeal to God's mercy. Ps 51 begins with "have mercy on me O, God, according to your unfailing love..." Here David asks forgiveness based on what he knows about God's character. When we come before God in true repentance, we do so because of His covenant with us thru Christ.
- 3) Avoid defensiveness and see God rightly...David's sin hurt multiple people. As shared already he committed adultery, orchestrated a murder, tried to cover it up, etc. and yet he says to God, "against You, You only have I sinned" (v4)
- 4) Look to Jesus...v7 says "cleanse me with hyssop"...David knows it signifies purification with blood (see Ex24) we know Christ bloodshed for us but David did not know exactly how it would be done.
- 5) Ask God to break you and then heal you. When our sin is revealed by God it is painful and unpleasant. God fractures, breaks but then sets and heals (v8)
- 6) Be comforted by the Spirit. David prayed "do not take your Spirit from me (v11). The fact that David is grieved over his sin is a sign the Spirit is at work in him. I know I have been so discouraged by my sin that I wonder how can God love me. Then I question my character, etc. I can take comfort in my grief and questions because the Holy Spirit is working, causing me to hate what God hates.

- 7) Rejoice and proclaim truth (v12-15) David asks to be so joyful that he can't help but share the gospel.
- 8) Resolve to OBEY! Let me say, we can do steps 1-7 but if we are planning to keep repeating the same sins then grace is not truly taking root. God desires true repentance--- a heart that is broken by sin a truly sorrowful.

Until sin becomes a bitter taste to us, Christ will not be sweet!!

If our heart is set on obedience but we stumble, make mistakes...God will not despise us.

The Message Ps 51:16-17 Going through the motions doesn't please God. A flawless Performance is nothing to Him. I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered. Heart-shattered lives ready for love don't for a moment escape God's notice.

I know there are some of us that know mistakes can be turned into miracles through confession, repentance. You may say this faith stuff is not for you but you really do want to have dreams, pray prayers believing for answers to them.

I am still paying for bad decisions 37 years and 7 months and 14 days ago but it is a miracle I am right here getting to share with you. God does not always remove the consequences but I live each day with hope that He will 😊

If we want to see God do the impossible in our lives, we can't run from our sins, can't hide, can't deny and certainly can't live in them. Bring it to Him, bring it in here, bring it to each other...

Hey I am preaching and getting onto myself also. If I don't that means I have given up on myself and you the kingdom. When we know we are doing wrong and no one bothers to tell us

especially if we are not convicted by the Holy Spirit, that is a BAD place to be!! We can become hard-hearted; have a reprobate mind, depraved in spirit....

Life is hard enough especially if we are always headed in wrong directions. Paul talked about the thorn in his side. I think God prefers an occasional limp to a prideful strut!

In our morning devotional and prayer in the chapel, one day I shared that we have all used excuses "we are only human" "we live in this flesh suit" yet as Christians we grow away from these excuses because we are more than human, we have the Spirit living in us to do better!

Proverbs 15:4 and James 3:2 are verses that tell us if we will start giving God just our speech, our words we see a difference.

God may whisper to us in our pleasures, speak to us in our Spirit but I think He shouts to us in adversity and sin! Repent before we keep ending up flat on our backs and get the message. (Ps 119:75)

If we have habits or make daily decision that mess us up, get rid of them. Don't waste another day in regret, guilt or shame.

John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, Peter.....spoke on repentance so it must be important. We have to do it every day on some level. Acts 2 shares that early Christians did not stop repenting and they strived not to argue, fight, etc.

I believe that if we stay in a repentant heart, we will see sin leave our lives and God will show up and show out!

The Message I John 1:8 "If we claim we are free of sin, we are fooling ourselves. A claim like that is nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins simply come clean about them- God won't let us down."

Many of us say we like "The Chosen" series. Is it the acting, the old settings or can we say it is because it asks us to consider how deep our faith really is?

I John 3:9-10" People brought to life by God do not make a practice of sin...The one who won't practice righteous ways is not from God." Message

What is our "go to reaction" when around negativity, violence...Will we choose to respond from a repentant heart or one stuck in sin?

The things we call church---shouting, singing, traditions—do they cover our heart?

Do we tell God the same lies we tell others?

Repentance is a heart product, and manifested in a lifestyle of God changes, what we can do on a daily basis not Sundays in Chapel, right?

I pray for us it is not about going to church all the time but that it is about being the church keeping God in our thoughts, actions and sharing Him with one another.

Are you thirsty? Thirsty for a clear conscience? Crave a clean slate? Yearn for a fresh start?

What are you becoming? If you are not sure what you are becoming, let me give you a hint. You are going to be whatever you think about and talk about all the time!!

People can listen to us for 30 minutes or less and tell what we are becoming or not becoming! It does not take a prophet to do that.

Have we listened to ourselves? If so do we like what we hear? If not change it! Nobody but you can determine what you are going to become but YOU! Don't blame it on satan, our parents, *our background*, or our circumstances and certainly don't blame God.

Let us become what God says we are, become wise, be bold, be a powerful witness.

You got small papers when you came in this morning, if you feel led to lay down something in your life, turn something over to God, ask God to help you with something, as forgiveness, write it on that paper, and bring it up here. This shredder represents letting it go and letting God work on you and don't pick it back up.

If we are out of control in an area of our life, be honest about it. Today can be our day of deliverance. We got a small piece of paper as we walked in this morning. If we want to be bold, if we are thirsty, if we want true change, a clear conscience, write down the area that is holding you back on that paper, and bring it up here, shred it, let go of it, don't pick the bad habits, back up. Give it our best effort to do it right.

PRAYER...Lord, everything we have done and all that has been done to us, we lay it at Your feet. We give you our bad memories, heal us to wholeness so we no longer hurt, hurt other or let things control us. We give you our past failures. Deliver us from them. We are unable to completely resist the pull of certain things here on our own, we know You can set us free.

Lord, help us to separate ourselves from anything that has no value and worth in the life You give us. Help us root out all that should not be there. Give us the wisdom , knowledge to know what is worthless and remove it. In Jesus name...Amen

In Christ
Karen Brown