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WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

There was a problem with the church at Corinth. A man had been having an affair with his father's wife. The Apostle Paul found out about it and in the first letter he wrote to the church at Corinth he told them to deal with the problem. They were to put the man out of the Church for committing this sin. He was letting them know that "sin in the camp" was not acceptable with God.

In this day and age there is a lot of controversy over "judging." Many get very angry if you say anything to them about their "sinful lifestyle." I was asked as a Pastor if I would allow anyone that was "gay" or "living with someone" to come to our church. My answer was, "Yes, but I would talk to them about their "sin situation" if they continued to come to church." It is not wrong to judge "sin in the camp." When Ananias and Saphira lied about how much they got for selling their property, Peter told them both they had lied to the Holy Spirit, not just to man. They both dropped dead as a result of their sin. That's pretty serious if you were to ask me.

Let's go back to the situation at Corinth. Paul writes another letter to them. He had gotten word and now understood that the man that had committed this sin had repented and wanted to come back to church and they wouldn't let him in. In the second letter he addresses the issue. In Chapter 7:8-9 he says, ***"For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle (letter) hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 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."***

What this means is that Paul is telling them that he is glad he wrote the letter, because it brought true change to the person that had committed this sin. He did not regret writing it because it brought sorrow after a godly matter. There is a difference between just being sorry and truly being sorrowful over your sin. Some people are just sorry they got caught, while others shrug the sin off by saying it is just a minor thing, why make a big deal out of it. It was different with this individual because he truly had sorrow that he had sinned against God, not just the act of sin.

We continue in verse 10 where it says, ***"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."*** There is no true repentance without godly sorrow over our sin. When we sin, it is not just against another person or a willful act we have done, we have sinned against God and His word. He is the one that we have ultimately hurt with our sin, not just another person or ourselves.

Salvation prayers have been watered down where many times people are never told they must repent from their sin before inviting Christ into their lives. Repentance means a change of heart, mind, will, and a decision not to do it anymore. You can tell if a person has truly

repented because they won't go back to the sin. They put it to death so to speak. They see it as something vile and know it hurts God when they do it. They have sorrowed over their sin and have turned away from it.

What about you? Have you had godly sorrow over your sin? I pray you have. If not, please take the time to ask God to forgive you and make a decision to put to death the sin that so easily has controlled you. He will help you if you ask. Remember there is nothing secret with God. He sees everything we do. You can't hide it from Him. He is just waiting for us to repent so he can forgive us!