

Prayer List

Cyndie, Nichole & Lauren
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Conversion in Relation to Sin

by Wayne Earnest

The prophet Ezekiel said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die..." (Ezk. 18:20). The apostle Paul revealed, "For the wages of sin is death ..." (Rom. 6:23), and again, "for all have sinned, and all fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). This should be a sobering thought to all who read the Word of God, thereby making us cognizant that we must turn from sin. The Greek word, EPISTREPHO, means: "to turn about, turn towards" (Expositor Dictionary of New Testament Words -- W. E. Vine). Thus, in conversion, there is a turning "from sin," and a turning "to God." Peter's words were, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" ... (Acts 3:15)). Consequently, the negative side is to "turn from" sin, and the positive side is to "turn to God." Paul told Agrippa that he had declared" ... that they should repent and "turn to" God (Acts 26:20). This is because sin brings forth death. Therefore, we must destroy sin. In the words of Paul that the body of sin might be done away that we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Rom. 6:6).

When a medical doctor treats a disease of the flesh, he finds out what the symptoms are and prescribes something that will destroy those symptoms. Sin is the great disease of the soul, anti we can be sure that it will slay its victim in the by and by. So in order to treat the disease, sin, we must find out its leading characteristics. There seem to be three such characteristics; (1) The love of sin; (2) the practice of sin; (3) and the relationship or state of sin. God has given the spiritual remedy for the spiritual sickness. When taken as prescribed by God, it will cure sin and result in conversion.

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This Week's Question:

What furnishings in the temple were made of olive wood?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Hosea - Hosea 4:13

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The Love of Sin

Let us now analyze the divine prescription in relation to the characteristics of sin. The heart (mind) of man is where we find the first characteristic of sin, the love of sin. Now, this is where a change must take place and the love of sin done away with. God teaches in his Word that this is done by FAITH. Peter spoke of "cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). A belief in God and a belief in the reality of judgment are what destroy the love of sin. Thus, this faith purifies the heart and enables one to choose that which is right over that which is wrong. Faith occupies an important step in God's scheme of redemption. It is no wonder then that Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ..." (Mk. 16:16). But this is only one characteristic of sin destroyed. For sin to be destroyed, the other symptoms of sin must likewise be destroyed. It is possible to destroy the love of sin (by faith) and still be characterized by the practice of sin, which is another symptom of sin. This is true because John 12:42 states, "... many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it (him)." Hence, a doctrinal prescription for the conversion of man that teaches "faith only" is defective and found to be a false doctrine in that there are other characteristics of sin that must be destroyed.

The Practice of Sin

The practice of sin is not destroyed until one repents. Clarence B. Bass in "The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary" says, "The two Greek words translated "repent" in the English Bible suggest the basic meaning of the word. Metanoia (Acts 2:38; Rom. 2:4) connotes a change of mind with regard to sin, a sorrow for sin which primarily is intellectual in nature; while metameleia connotes a change of soul, a sorrow that leads to turning away from sin (Matt. 27:3; 2 Cor. 7: 9, 10)." Repentance implies a "turning from sin." Thus, it is a turning from the practice of sin. REPENTANCE then occupies the second step in God's scheme of redemption, for it destroys the practice of sin. It thus comes as no surprise that Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke 13:3). Consequently, one could destroy the love of sin by faith and FAIL to destroy the practice of sin by repentance and thereby perish.

The State of Sin

The third characteristic of sin is the actual state of sin, and it too, must be destroyed. Jesus taught that there are Just two ways (Matt. 7:13, 14). So far as man is concerned, there are only two states. We thus speak of the kingdom of Satan and the

kingdom of Christ, or the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Hence, one is either "in Christ" or "outside of Christ." To be sure, if one is "in Christ" his relationship is different than the one who is "outside of Christ." Consequently, we should desire to know how to get "INTO" Christ. Paul showed how one changes his "state" or if you please, this "relationship" when he said, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath TRANSLATED US INTO the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13 KJV - Capitals mine). The meaning of the prefix "trans" is "across." As a national transport truck company would move freight from one state "across" to another state, or into all other state, even so God has revealed in his Word how a person stained with sin can have those sins remitted and be translated "INTO" the kingdom of his dear Son.

Thus, in God's scheme of redemption He has revealed "how" to destroy the state of sin by revealing "how" one gets "into" Christ. Paul said, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27 Underlining mine). Therefore, one is BAPTIZED into Christ. In Luke 24, Jesus stated, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." This was fulfilled in Acts 2 when Peter said. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto (for) the remission of sins..."(Acts 2:38). Furthermore, Paul said in Eph. 1:7, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." It was in his death that Christ shed his blood. Thus, Paul has only to say in Rom. 6:3, 4, "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." As we are baptized into his death, symbolically speaking, we come in contact with his blood and receive the remission of our sins.

Dear reader, if you have not put away the love of sin, the practice of sin, and the state of sin, won't you consider now to change your heart through FAITH, your life through REPENTANCE and your state (relationship) through BAPTISM? TRUTH MAGAZINE XIII: 6, pp. 13-14 March 1969