



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[Mercy Said No-
CeCe Winans](#)

[Holy Spirit Come Fill
This Place-CeCe Winans](#)

[Thirst For You-CeCe
Winans](#)

Prayer

Lord, help me find the strength to say no to my flesh and to flee from temptation when it tries to wrap its long tentacles around my soul and drag me into some kind of sin. I know what it's like when sin calls out to my flesh, beckoning it to do something that is forbidden or wrong but I don't want to cooperate with it anymore. I want to walk free—to flee from sin and break free of its vicious grip. Help me bring my mind under the control of the Holy Spirit so I can think rationally when Satan tries to attack me through my mind, my emotions, or my senses. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

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1 THEN ELIPHAZ the Temanite answered and said, 2 If we venture to converse with you, will you be offended? Yet who can restrain himself from speaking? 3 Behold, you have instructed many, and you have strengthened the weak hands. 4 Your words have held firm him who was falling, and you have strengthened the feeble knees. 5 But now it is come upon you, and you faint and are grieved; it touches you, and you are troubled and dismayed. 6 Is not your [reverent] fear of God your confidence and the integrity and uprightness of your ways your hope? 7 Think [earnestly], I beg of you: who, being innocent, ever perished? Or where were those upright and in right standing with God cut off? 8 As I myself have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble and mischief reap the same. 9 By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of His anger they are consumed. 10 The roaring of the lion and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken. 11 The old and strong lion perishes for lack of prey, and the whelps of the lioness are scattered abroad. 12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and my ear received a whisper of it. 13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, 14 Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones shake. 15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up! 16 [The spirit] stood still, but I could not discern the appearance of it. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, and then I heard a voice, saying, 17 Can mortal man be just before God, or be more right than He is? Can a man be pure before his Maker, or be more cleansed than He is? 18 Even in His [heavenly] servants He puts no trust or confidence, and His angels He charges with folly and error— 19 How much more those who dwell in houses (bodies) of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed like the moth. 20 Between morning and evening they are destroyed; without anyone noticing it they perish forever. 21 Is not their tent cord plucked up within them [so that the tent falls]? Do they not die, and that without [acquiring] wisdom?

Chapter 4

So Job has made his complaint, and so Eliphaz, his friend who came to comfort him, he said,

If we attempt to talk to you, will you be grieved? [But really after what you've said] who can keep silent? [He said,] Behold, you have instructed many people, you have strengthened weak hands. Your words have held up the person who was falling, and you have strengthened feeble knees. But now when it comes to you, you faint; it touches you, and you are troubled (Job 4:3-5).

Uh-oh, those are nice words to hear, aren't they? From a friend who has come to comfort you in all your misery. "Well, you know, great one you are. You were counseling and lifting up others. Your words held them up and all and you were going around doing this. But now it comes to you, look what happens, man, you faint. You go under."

Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways? Remember, I pray thee, what innocent man ever perished? (Job 4:6-7)

You see, already he's beginning to get the knife out. "Job, you're not innocent. What innocent man ever perished?" Well, let me tell you this. Many innocent men have perished. There's not really good logic to what Eliphaz is saying at all. In fact, the most innocent of all men was crucified. So there really isn't sound wisdom in what Eliphaz is saying. It's just the argumentations of men which often lack real wisdom.

Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same (Job 4:8).

So Job, you're just getting what you reap, what you sowed. You're reaping it now. Those that sow iniquity and wickedness, they reap the same.

By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils they are consumed. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken. The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad (Job 4:9-11).

Now, he said, he gets all mystic.

Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and my ear received a little of it. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep had fallen upon men, Fear came upon me, and trembling, it made all my bones shake. A spirit passed before my face; and the hair on my flesh stood up: And it stood still, but I could not discern the form of it: an image was before my eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly (Job 4:12-18):

So the guy comes off now super spiritual. Have you ever had those people come around super spiritual, you know, when you're in trouble? And you know, visions and dreams and voices of angels, and spirits and all, and this oohh thing, you know. So here is old Eliphaz, "When other men were asleep, a deep sleep in the night, the spirit passed by. I could tell it was there. I couldn't tell the form. Began to speak, you know. He charged his angels with folly." How much less in those that dwell in houses of clay (Job 4:19),

Interesting and picturesque phrase of our body, a house of clay. But in the New Testament it said, "We have a treasure in this earthen vessel" (II Corinthians 4:7). Same thing. In this house of clay there's a fabulous treasure, for God is dwelling in this house of clay. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16) And we have this glorious treasure, he said, in these earthen vessels. That the glory... God has put a lot of treasure in this dumb clay pot in order that the glory will always go to God, not to the clay pot. I'm just the vessel, but I have the capacity to contain the wealthiest treasure in the world, even God will dwell within my life. But it is ridiculous; it is ludicrous to put something of such great value in such a common container. Just a clay pot. But God has done it, that the glory will not be in the vessel but in the contents. Now, it is always pathetic and sad and tragic

when the clay pot tries to get the glory and tries to draw attention and glory to itself, rather than to the One who dwells within doing the work. So I love this, it's very picturesque. Men who dwell in houses of clay, talking about our body.

whose foundation is the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom (Job 4:19-21).

(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

➔
"Salvation: Part 2" J. Vernon McGee

Up to this point, the doctrines concerning salvation have had to do largely with the work of Christ upon the cross. We dealt with atonement, substitution, redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation. All of them had to do with the work of Christ on His side.

Now we are dealing with something else: first, regeneration, and following this we will cover the tremendous subjects of justification, faith, and repentance. These four doctrines are very important for us to know. They are closely related, yet there is a sharp distinction among them that must be made in order to understand our salvation. All four of them are involved, and not one of them will stand alone.

Will you notice this distinction here at the beginning: Regeneration is subjective; it has to do with the interior person. justification is objective; it is without cause—a judicial act of God. You and I are dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore we need a new nature. We need life, if you please, life from God, which is regeneration.

But we need something else—justification—because by nature and conduct we are guilty. That is, we are guilty sinners before God, and justification is that work or act of God whereby He deals with this fact of guilt. He removes the guilt from the sinner.

And then faith is the instrument. It is that which you and I exercise in order that we might stand justified before God. And repentance is included in saving faith. It's important. In fact, it's essential.

We will go into detail as we come to these doctrines. I've made this distinction, and yet mention them together, so that you might see that they are related, although each one of them is a separate doctrine.

Regeneration.....

First let's consider regeneration. This word does not occur many times, actually only twice in the New Testament, and the Greek word is paligenesia, which actually means "to recreate." It means "the new birth," and that is the word we associate with it. It is that which is essential because of the fact that you and I are dead in trespasses and sins.

Notice something for just a moment back in the first chapter of Genesis:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. (Gen 1:26)

In other words, God said, "I intend to make man, make him after Our image, and this is what I will do for him: I'll give him dominion."

In the second chapter of the Book of Genesis you find the detailed account of the creation of man, and in verse 7 we are told: And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Gen 2:7)

This means that the creature God created had been taken out of the dirt, if you please. On the physical side we are dirt. "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19). That speaks of our physical being.

But God breathed into this man. And He breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living being. That is, man now is able to commune and have fellowship with his Creator. But you see, man sinned. God had told him:

Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (Gen 2:16-17)

Man didn't die physically that day. It was almost a millennium after that before Adam and Eve died. But they did die spiritually that day. That is, they were dead to God. The apostle Paul confirmed that. When he was writing to the Gentiles, to you and to me, he said:

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph 2:1)

That's the reason you and I must be born again. Because of Adam's sin, we were dead to God, dead to the things of God. We had no relationship to Him at all.

The human family demonstrates this in a very emphatic manner. Look into the land of India today, and look into China, and look into any other nation of the world. In fact, look into our own nation today. How many people are actually in a right relationship with God and are having fellowship with Him? Very few. Well, what's the explanation? Men and women are dead in trespasses and sins.

The reason the new birth is so essential is because, first of all, we are dead.

We see something of the necessity and the nature of the new birth when we come to our Lord's first recorded interview, which He had with a religious man. This was not an accident. You see, if this had been Zacchaeus, there would have been folks who would have stepped up and said, "Of course Zacchaeus needs to be born again. He's a publican, a rotten sinner." Or suppose that the man Jesus spoke to had been from over in Gadara, the country of the Gadarenes. People would have said, "Well, I can understand. That fellow was demon-possessed. Of course he needed to be born again."

But Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a leader of the Pharisees, religious to his fingertips. He was following the Old Testament precisely. And yet our Lord said to that man: Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (Joh 3:3)

May I say that the expression He used is very interesting. It is *genos* the *an* other. It means "to be born from above." If you want it literally, "to be born from the top." You've been born down here physically, but you are dead to God. Now you need to be born in the spiritual sense. You need to have life, and that's regeneration.

A man told me about taking his son, whom he thought was color-blind, to the doctor. He was put through all the tests at the clinic, and it was determined that the boy was indeed color-blind. The parents seemed to be distressed over it, for the father told me, "I said to the doctor, 'Is there any cure for this at all? Is there any way in the world that we can change this?'" And the doctor made this strange statement, "The only thing in the world you could do for him is to have him born all over again."

Well now, isn't that what the Lord Jesus said to this man Nicodemus when he came to Him, wanting to talk about the Kingdom of God? Our Lord says, "You can't see. Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." In other words, "You do not have eyes to see the Kingdom of God. You can't understand about the Kingdom of God because your brain is dead as far as the things of God are concerned."

My friend, this fact is being more and more impressed on my mind. I'm not invited as often as I was formerly to speak to groups like the Rotary Club and the Lions' Club. But I've detected the few times I have gone that it's becoming increasingly difficult to present the gospel to unsaved men—actually, to intelligent men. When I was in the East I spoke in a little town to a group of men who represented the top businessmen of the community. It was amazing. They were sharp men. Certainly they were not dummies, and yet they were the densest men spiritually that I had ever addressed! I recognized that I was speaking to a bunch of dead men sitting there.

May I say, that's the thing which disturbs and rather frightens me today. Oh, the spiritual deadness that there is! Men are dead in trespasses and sins. And our Lord said to this man Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

There are those who will interject here, "Our Lord also said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (Joh 3:5). Some folks interpret "born of water and the Spirit" to mean that you have to be baptized by water before you can be saved. It's hard to believe, but there are two denominations which are built on the assumption that you must be baptized by water before you can be saved. Consider what God's Word means when it says here: Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (1Jo 3:5-6)

Notice that He dropped the word water in verse 6, but He did mention it in verse 5. What did He mean? May I say to you that water speaks of the Word of God. Anywhere you turn in the Scriptures, you find that water, when used in a symbolic sense, refers to the Word of God.

For instance, Paul, writing to the Ephesians concerning the husband and wife relationship, said:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word. (Eph 5:25-26)

The Word of God is the water that he's talking about.

The Lord Jesus, talking to His own yonder in the Upper Room, said:

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. (Joh 15:3)

James, in his epistle, wrote:

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (Jam 1:18)

You'll also find that Peter wrote about this:

... having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. (1Pe 1:23)

And you'll find in the Book of Acts that many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. (Act 4:4)

Our Lord is certainly emphasizing the importance of the Word of God for the new birth. I personally take the position—and I think I can substantiate it—that never is there a genuine conversion apart from the Word of God. We have to use the Word of God. There is no substitute.

This is the reason that all of the good courses in evangelistic work tell you never to argue. You never win people by arguing. You may win the argument, but you will lose the person. It's the Word of God only that can convict people. It's the Word of God only that can cleanse. It's the Word of God only that can be used in regeneration, because

faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17)

Unless they hear the Word of God they cannot receive it, they cannot believe, and they cannot be born again. The Word must be used.

When I was a student at Dallas Seminary, some of us fellows used to go down to the mission on Ackard Street. A gray-haired lady known to everyone as Mother Moore lived right there and ran that mission on skid row, and many times she did it alone. My, what a witness that woman was!

One day when I was there I heard a testimony from a man who was a graduate of either Yale or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was a top engineer. He had worked on Boulder Dam but was finally discharged from the job, not because he didn't have ability, but because he stayed drunk all the time. And when he was thrown off that job it was difficult for him to get another, so he began just bumming around—and he stayed under the influence of liquor. When he got to Dallas, he did what a lot of these bums do, he headed for the mission, knowing that he would at least have one or two nights there.

Mother Moore always talked to the men when they first came in, and so she wanted to talk to this engineer—but not in the manner he anticipated. He had been through that ritual before elsewhere, so he knew what was coming when she said, "Now after you get cleaned up, you come down before dinner. I want to talk to you." He went upstairs to the showers with a feeling of self-satisfaction. That poor old woman down there, when she starts trying to convert me, will I tie her up intellectually! I will make her look very foolish! This highly educated engineer could see that she was not what you'd call a member of the intelligentsia.

When he went downstairs, he saw it was the same old routine he had been through before, and he knew all the answers. Mother Moore began to present to him the plan of salvation. Now he had been able to tie up many of the smart boys, because they would argue with him. But she didn't argue. He'd say, "Well now, I don't believe this because of this." But she'd say, "Well, but the Bible says..." and she would turn to another verse. Then he'd say, "Wait a minute." And she'd say, "Yes, but the Bible says...." He'd say, "Yes, I know, but I want to put in this," and he would insert a contradiction, and she would say, "Yes, but the Bible says...."

Later in his testimony he said, "You know, I never could get that old woman away from the Bible. If I had for one minute, I would have tied her up, but she wouldn't let go of it." Then he said, "That's what finally got me. I found out I couldn't answer it. All of a sudden, I discovered that the Bible was answering me! It was giving me the answers, and if I was honest at all, I would have to accept what it said."

That man came to Christ by the use of the Word of God. And I do not believe that our clever books nor our clever tracts, and certainly not our clever arguments, win people to Christ. Nothing does but the Word of God. Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot be born again! Born of water, yes, the Word of God. But don't bring H2O into this verse! The Bible is the water that our Lord is talking about; it's the Word of God.

There are three outstanding conversions in Acts: the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and the conversion of Cornelius. In the conversion of all three of these men the Word of God was used. Always the Word of God is used, or there can never be a conversion. And that is exactly what our Lord was talking about to Nicodemus.

Now let me present that which to me is conclusive, and I do not believe there is a rebuttal to this at all. I turn to Paul's first letter to the Corinthian believers. The Corinthians were babes in Christ, carnal believers, and they were arguing over who was their greatest instructor. Each was saying, "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos" or "I am of Cephas" or "I am of Christ."

Notice this very carefully—if Paul thought baptism by water meant salvation, he sure slipped up here!

For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. (1Co 4:15)

Their contentions were causing divisions among them, you see. And Paul says, "Listen, you may have many instructors, but you have only one father—I am your father. The way I begot you was through the gospel. All of you believers there in Corinth are my children because of the Word of God I used. That was what brought you to a saving knowledge of Christ and made you children of God." But wait a minute. Paul had already told them back in chapter 1, verse 14, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius"—then he was reminded of another—"the household of Stephanas" (verse 16). But their new birth came when he preached the gospel. Apparently the water of baptism was not essential to salvation, because Paul said he was thankful that he had baptized only a very few. "And if there were any others, I have even forgotten about it. But I do know this, I preached the gospel to all of you, and you were saved." Baptism was not essential for salvation, you see.

Let me emphasize that regeneration, palingenesis, means "the new birth," "born from above," if you please. This is God's work. Do you remember what was said in the Epistle of James?

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (Jam 1:18)

May I say this to you today, and would you pay careful attention, because we hear a great many wild-eyed ideas about witnessing: The work of conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit! Look carefully again at what James says here: "Of His own will He brought us forth." The Holy Spirit is sovereign in this matter. You don't tell the Holy Spirit whom to convert; He will tell you.

I get so many letters from folks who write, "I witnessed to So-and-so and he didn't accept Christ. What's wrong?" If this is your question, you ask God—He's running it, not I. You ask Him. He is sovereign in this matter. "Of His own will He brought us forth." And you and I need to remember that He is the One who is leading the parade. We are following.

Oh, how we need to follow the Holy Spirit in this matter! That's the reason I believe we need more prayer for doing evangelistic work than for anything else we do. You need to pray, really pray about it, and ask the Lord to open up the door for you. Maybe you have a neighbor next door to whom you witnessed, but she slammed the door in your face! Well, did you pray about it before? Did the Holy Spirit lead you to do that?

"No, I wanted to witness."

Well, I know, but you are to let the Holy Spirit lead you in this matter. "Of His own will He brought us forth." And, my friend, that just happens to be very important. "Born of the Spirit" is His work. He is God, and you and I need to follow along in this matter and trust the Holy Spirit to do the converting.

I'd like to give you a personal illustration of this. When I was a young preacher in Nashville, there was a young man whom I was determined to lead to the Lord. I went after him, and I really antagonized him and drove him away. Months went by, and one night he knocked at my door and asked me, "Would you explain to me the plan of salvation?" After I had quit, given up, there were other people praying for this man, and there came the day when the Holy Spirit could take over and get rid of some of us who wanted to run ahead of God in the matter. What a thrill it was when that man knocked on my door and asked to hear the plan of salvation! I got a big piece of paper and put it down on the living room floor. He wanted to know about the dispensations, and since I like to explain those too, I had him down on the floor with me. I charted them out, explaining how God saves us today by grace.

May I say to you, let's quit trying to take the place of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is God's work, and when we are born again, it opens up a new world, a brand-new world.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God.... (2Co 5:17-18)

A new world opens before us. And when it says that old things are passed away, it means relationships—not little habits, but relationships. We no longer are joined to Adam; we're now joined to Christ. This world becomes a new world to us. When you are born again you become a child of God. We are joined to Christ, and we are in Christ, if you please. We have a new life, and that new life is a very wonderful thing. I want to give you two Scriptures in this connection.

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1Jo 3:9)

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. (1Jo 5:18)

When we are born again we are given a new nature, and that new nature can never sin. That may be the reason some Christians are having such a hard time—including this preacher. Do you know why? It is because when we were born again we were given a nature that cannot sin and won't sin. And when you and I lapse back to living in the flesh and in sin, the very fact that we are having trouble is probably the proof we are children of God. The man in the world can get by with sin, but if you are God's child, you can't get by with it for long. Your new nature won't let you, because that new nature is of God and knows your life is wrong.

That may be the reason you toss and turn in your bed and cannot sleep. And this is the reason you said, "Oh, why did I do that thing? I'll never do that again." That new nature won't sin. It's when you drop back into the flesh and live in it, committing sin, that you can expect to have problems and difficulties. And that's the reason you're not satisfied with your life.

My friend, you can see that regeneration is a tremendous word!

Justification.....

We have come now to the most important word of all. Have you noticed that some of the words we have considered are used very seldom in Scripture? You find very little concerning reconciliation, propitiation, and regeneration. But justification is a word that you'll find again and again and again. The fact of the matter is, it occurs about 229 times in the Bible, and in one epistle, the Epistle to the Romans, it occurs 92 times! To be justified before God simply means to be right before God. We are hearing today what I first heard in college when the sociology teacher and the psychologist asked the question, "What is right?" How do you know what's right? One person says this is right, somebody else says another thing is right. How do you know what is right? My friend, that which is right is what God says is right. And if anyone is to be righteous, he or she has to be right with God.

Now you may disagree with God's standard, and you may not like some of the things that He likes, but to be right with God is to agree with His standard and to meet it. You and I cannot be accepted until we have done this.

May I say that to be justified before God never means to be made righteous. God never makes a sinner righteous because the word justified means "to be declared righteous." It's a legal term. For instance, you are arrested and brought up before a judge, and the charge is read against you. The judge hears the evidence and the judge says, "Not guilty." That doesn't change you, but it does change your standing before the law. You may have been guilty before you were arrested. Now you have been declared "not guilty," and you are turned loose. That is what being justified or declared righteous is.

And that's also what it meant back in the Old Testament. I have been reading a most profound book, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* by Leon Morris, an Englishman. It is one of the finest books I've read, and he has two chapters on justification. I have been greatly blessed by reading what he has to say concerning this. He points out that justification carries this same thought even back in the Old Testament. Abraham had it. When God told him He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, this is what Abraham said: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen 18:25). It's an Old Testament concept, you see, this matter of being right and doing right.

Notice Deu 25:1, which concerns a legal matter:

If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked....

You see, it's a legal term. When two men are at odds, one is right and one is wrong. They are to come before the judge, and the judge is to declare one of them righteous and the other one wrong.

Now, friend, God exercises that prerogative. He must judge you and me as guilty sinners; there is no other alternative for Him. He has done that. He says that you and I do not meet His standard; we have never kept His law; we are in rebellion against Him; we are sinners and are guilty before Him. And He says that the penalty is death: "The soul who sins shall die" (Eze 18:4). God goes on to say this, "You are guilty, the penalty must be paid, and I cannot be lenient with you."

Oh, if we could only see that! God, when He forgives you, my friend, is not being lenient with you. It's not that He's letting down the bars. It means this: Christ bore the penalty. So now God can justify a guilty sinner and declare the guilty sinner "not guilty," because the penalty has been paid by Another. We are now right before God because God has declared that we are righteous in His sight. Jesus our Lord

was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. (Rom 4:25)

The picture is of a courtroom. The Judge (God the Father) looks down at mankind and He says to us, "You are guilty. The penalty is death—eternal separation from Me." But, you see, the Judge (God in the person of His Son) leaves the bench, and He comes down to where the prisoner is. He says to the prisoner, "Move over." He then looks back at the Judge on the bench and says, "I will pay the penalty."

The Judge says, "That's satisfactory to Me. You can take the penalty. You are worthy and You are able." So God the Son takes the penalty. The Lord Jesus bears the crushing load of our sin in His own body on the tree—delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification. Now a holy God can look down on a sinner, and He can declare that sinner righteous, not because of anything within the sinner, not because of anything that he has done.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. (Rom 3:28)

God now can look down at a lost sinner, and He can say to that sinner, "You are no longer guilty. I make over to you the righteousness of Christ so that you can stand in My presence, and there can be no charge brought against you."

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (Rom 8:33)

So today a sinner stands in God's presence saved! Not because of some compromise that's been worked out in the back room, or because God has somehow or another opened the back door and slipped us in. That's not the way we get to heaven. We come in the front door. We come in like Christ comes in! We stand complete and accepted in Him.

Now you have the same right in heaven as Christ has or you don't have any right there at all. You are in Him completely, 100 percent saved, or you are lost, out of Christ, 100 percent lost, and it doesn't make any difference how many merits you are trying to earn. We are not saved by our character.

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. (Heb 10:14)

Jesus Christ, by the offering of Himself, has made us 100 percent acceptable to God, so nothing else is added to that.

Faith.....

The only thing that God asks of you and me is faith. Faith is more than intellectual assent. It includes that, but it is also personal trust in God. Faith does, however, rest upon knowledge.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17)

The only condition of salvation is faith—it's to believe God. It rests upon one foundation: the integrity of God. We believe Him. We take Him at His word; we believe in God.

He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb 11:6)

It's the same old illustration we have everywhere that "saving faith" is mentioned. It is always used with a preposition, either the preposition eis, "into," or the preposition epi, which means "upon." To be saved means to put your trust either "into" or "upon" Christ. You can stand by a chair from now until judgment day and say, "I believe this chair will hold me up," but faith is not exercised until you sit in it, trust your whole weight to it—believe into it, if you please, or believe upon it—and when you do that, then the chair is holding you up.

At this moment you say you believe in Christ. But how do you believe in Christ?

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! (Jam 2:19)

The demons believe and tremble, but they are not saved. Is this faith? And among some Bible-believing folks in our day it has become just sort of a little intellectual assent to something. Oh, friend, that's not salvation. It's not until you and I come and trust ourselves to Jesus Christ that we are 100 percent saved.

Repentance.....

Faith alone saves. Somebody says, "What about repentance? Don't we need to repent?" Well, the word for repent, metaneo, means "to change your mind." And all the repentance God asks for is in the word believe. You see, in the New Testament, salvation is made a matter of believing.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (Joh 3:16)

Paul and Silas said to that Philippian jailer:

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. (Act 16:31)

There are 150 passages in the New Testament that make salvation dependent on believing and believing alone. In the Gospel of John and in the Epistle to the Romans, it is faith and faith alone. Repentance is not there.

"But," somebody says, "isn't repentance necessary?" Yes, it is. But it is included in saving faith. Paul, when he was writing to the Thessalonian believers, said:

For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. (1Th 1:9)

Obviously, Paul, when he came to Thessalonica, found the people worshiping idols. He probably said to them the same thing which he later said in Athens. Let me paraphrase, "When I came, I found an idol to the 'unknown God.' You worship every kind of god here, and you're afraid you'll miss one of them, so you put up an idol to an unknown god. Well, I'm going to tell you about an unknown God. And that One is the living and the true God." And then these people heard about Christ. They heard that He would save them from sin, and they turned to God. But when they turned to God, they turned from idols. And when they turned from idols, that was repentance. Metaneo means "change of mind," and that's in faith. You could not turn to Jesus Christ in faith without turning from something.

For this reason I keep repeating that these people today whose lives have not been changed, although they say they trust Christ, are deceiving themselves. The apostle James makes it very clear:

Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (Jam 2:18)

In other words, "I want to see something," James says. He is not talking to them now about being saved by works. He is saying that you are saved by faith, but the faith which turns to Christ turns from something, so repentance is there. And we need lots more of it today.

Repentance is not just shedding tears nor just being sorry. Repentance means a change of mind. It means right-about-face and turning to God. When we turn to God, my beloved, we certainly turn from something. Believe me, people will know when you have been converted because your manner of life changes. And if it doesn't change, there is something radically wrong.

May I say that repentance is a word that's primarily in the New Testament, and it's used for believers. When our Lord wrote to the seven churches of Asia Minor (Revelation, chapters 2 and 3), He used the word repent frequently. And that's His message to every church in our day: "Repent." That's His message to every believer: "Repent." This is something that we as believers need to do a great deal more of, since repentance is changing our minds and our direction about sin and indifference. How many of us are really convicted about being cold and indifferent? I don't find many.

Are you satisfied to keep going along in an indifferent way? Are you satisfied to be a nominal Christian in these difficult days? Are you satisfied doing nothing for God? Well, what our Lord says is, "Turn around, and start in the other direction."

"Remember," He says, "and repent." That was His message to the church in Ephesus. "Remember." Do you remember when you were converted? Do you? Do you remember what a thrill it was? I never shall forget that Christmas holiday conference in Memphis, Tennessee, when Dr. Harry Ironside and Dr. Louis Sperry Chafer spoke. I had never heard anything like that before, and I would get down to the church before they even opened the doors. The caretaker said to me, "You're a funny fellow, coming this early!" I said, "I don't want to miss a thing."

Remember? I even go back to God today and say, "Oh, restore unto me those days. And give me the thrill I had at that time." Remember, and repent. Start in the other direction.

Oh, may I say, there needs to be repentance for the sinner, but there is repentance for the believer also. The believer needs to do a great deal of repenting. We need to see more tears in church than we are seeing today. We need to see more of these cold hearts of believers stirred and sorry and turning to God with a full purpose of, and an endeavor after, a new obedience to Him. Beloved, how we need to repent!

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 761-762)

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