

GRAPPLING WITH REPENTANCE

Isaiah 59:20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD. (NASB)

Essentially everyone who adheres to "Conservative Theology" recognizes the necessity of REPENTANCE. There are too many verses to escape the fact that God demands REPENTANCE. "Conservative" theologians all agree that the basic meaning of REPENTANCE is "***to have a change of mind***".

However, there is still great disagreement. A key issue involves what does one change their minds about? Some say the only thing we must change our mind about is CHRIST without any consideration of our SIN. Others, (rightly so) argue that a change of mind about CHRIST necessarily involves a change of mind about SIN. Must we change our mind about SIN in order to be saved? The answer is a resounding YES!

"Repentance is a change of mind regarding sin and God, an inward turning from sin to God, which is known by its fruit--obedience. (Mt. 3:8; Acts 26:20; Lk. 13:5-9)" - **Jim Elliff**

The great question is this: "Must a person repent of their sin to be saved?" The Bible clearly teaches that a saving faith change of mind about Christ necessarily involves a change of mind about sin. They go together.

"Repentance is not a satisfaction rendered to God, but a condition of the heart necessary before we can believe unto salvation. Furthermore, true repentance never exists apart from faith. That is, one cannot turn from sin without at the same time turning to God. Conversely, we may say that true faith never exists without repentance. The two are inseparably bound together." -**Henry Clarence Thiessen**

"How luminously clear this makes the whole question before us! To repent is to change one's attitude toward self, toward sin, toward God, toward Christ. And this is what God commands. So to face these tremendous facts is to change one's mind completely, so that the pleasure-lover sees and confesses the folly of his empty life; the self-indulgent learns to hate the passions that show the corruption of his nature; the self-righteous sees himself a condemned sinner in the eyes of a holy God; the man who has been hiding from God seeks to find a hiding place in Him, the Christ-rejecter realizes his need of a Redeemer, and believes unto salvation.

Which comes first, repentance or faith? In Scripture we read, 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel.' Yet we find true believers exhorted to 'repent and

do the first works.' So intimately are the two related that you cannot have one without the other. The man who believes God, repents; the repentant soul puts his trust in the Lord when the gospel is revealed to him."

- **H. A. Ironside**, UNLESS YOU REPENT, p. 19-20

We are saved by FAITH alone, but it must be the right kind of faith - a change of mind kind of faith.

This kind of faith recognizes Christ as Lord which inherently involves a change of mind about sin; it is a kind of faith that recognizes Christ as Savior which inherently involves a change of mind about self. Lord and Savior is a package as are repentance and faith. So closely are they tied together that sometimes the Bible emphasizes repentance and sometimes faith. However, to exercise one is to exercise the other and it is the GRACE OF GOD ALONE that brings it to pass. Genuine repentance is a matter of the heart. It is the work of God in the heart. As with faith there is mystery in the tension between the sovereign work of God and human responsibility.

Repentance is the gift of God (Acts 11:18) and yet it is the responsibility of man to repent (Acts 17:30). There is biblical tension here that is beyond what we can completely comprehend. (cf. Rom. 11:33) The ultimate issue is the NATURE of saving faith that is brought about by the GRACE OF GOD.