



Realizing Our Condition - 3

(1) HOW CAN WE AS SINNERS BECOME PURIFIED FROM SIN?

Acts 2:38

Related Texts: Acts 3:19; Proverbs 28:13; Ezekiel 36:31; 20:43; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; Psalm 38:18

It is only through Jesus that we can become close to God and be made holy, but how do we come to Jesus? Many are asking the same question as the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, who, when they were convicted of sin, cried out, "What shall we do?" The first word of Peter's answer was, "Repent." Then another time, not long after, he said, "Repent, ... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19.

To repent means to be sorry for sin and then turn away from it. We will not give up sin unless we see its wickedness; until we turn away from it with our whole heart there will be no real change in our lives.

Many of us do not understand the true meaning of repentance. Many are sorry that they have sinned and even make an outward change because they are afraid that their wrongdoing will bring punishment or suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the way the Bible teaches. They cry out because of the suffering instead of the wrong they have done. This was what happened with Esau when he saw that he had lost the birthright forever. Balaam, when he saw the angel standing in his path with a sword, admitted he was wrong so he wouldn't die; but there was no real repentance for

his sin, no change of heart, no hatred of evil. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, exclaimed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Matthew 27:4.

The confession that he had done wrong was forced from his guilty heart by an awful sense of shame and because he was scared of the punishment it would bring. The outcome that would come to him as a result of what he had done filled him with terror. In spite of this there was no deep, heartbreaking sorrow for betraying the spotless Son of God and betraying the Holy One of Israel. Pharaoh, when suffering from the plagues of God, admitted his sin in order to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of heaven as soon as the plagues were stopped. All these people were sorry for the result of sin but did not feel sorrow for the sin itself.

(2) WHAT DESCRIPTION DOES THIS VERSE GIVE OF CHRIST WHO, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, CASTS OUT DARKNESS AND REVEALS THE SECRET PLACES OF THE SOUL?

John 1:9

Related Texts: John 12:46; 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 1 John 2:8; 1 Thesalonians 5:5; Matthew 6:23

When the heart yields to the power of the Spirit of God it will be touched, and the sinner will see something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law: the basis of His government in heaven and on earth. The "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," reveals the secret places of the soul, and shows the hidden things of darkness. The heart and mind become convicted

of their faults. The sinner has a sense of the goodness of God. Because of his own guilt and uncleanness, he is scared to appear before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, and the joy of purity. He longs to be clean and to be brought back to closeness with Heaven.

(3) LIKE KING DAVID, WHAT WILL OUR PRAYER BE IF WE ARE TRULY SORRY FOR OUR SINS?

Psalms 51:1-4

Psalms 51:10

Related Texts: Psalm 32:5; 38:18; Ezekiel 36:31; 20:43; 1 John 1:7-9

This prayer that David prayed after his sin shows what true sorrow for sin is like. He was truly very sorry. There was no effort to cover his guilt and no desire to escape the possible punishment. David saw how great his sin was and how defiled it made his heart; he hated his sin. It was not only for forgiveness that he prayed, but for a clean heart. He longed for the joy of holiness and to be brought back into closeness with God.

A confession like this is beyond our human power to do. It can come only from Jesus who has given us these gifts.

(4) WHAT IS THE RESULT OF CONFESSION THAT FOLLOWS TRUE REPENTANCE?

Psalms 32:1

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Related Texts: Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 128:1; Deuteronomy 5:33; 11:13-15; Matthew 5:8; Micah 7:18, 19

(5) WHAT STEPS LOGICALLY PRECEDE CONFESSION?

Matthew 11:28, 29

Related Texts: Isaiah 55:1-3; 45:22-25; John 6:37; Revelation 22:17; 1 Peter 5:7

On this very point is where many make a mistake, and as a result, they don't receive the help that Jesus wants to give them. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they show sorrow for their sins first. It is true that being sorry does come before the forgiveness of our sins. The reason is because it is only the broken and grieving heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But does the sinner have to wait until he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Should confession be a barrier to keep the sinner from getting to know his Saviour?

The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can accept the invitation of Christ: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

(6) FROM WHAT SOURCE DOES SORROW FOR SIN COME?

Acts 5:30, 31

Related Texts: Acts 3:26; 11:18; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:25-31; Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:26, 27; 2 Timothy 2:25, 26

It is the goodness that goes out from Jesus that leads to true sorrow

for our sins. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken our conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.

Christ is the Source of every noble desire. He is the only One who can put hatred against sin in our hearts. Every desire for truth and purity, every realization of our own sinfulness, shows that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts.

(7) WHOM DOES THE LORD DRAW TO HIMSELF WITH THE GIFT OF REPENTANCE AND OFFER OF SALVATION?

John 12:32

Related Texts: Isaiah 49:6; Romans 5:17-19; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2; Revelation 5:9; Luke 15

As we see the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary dying for the sins of the world, we will begin to understand the mystery of salvation. The goodness of God leads us to sorrow for our sins. In dying for sinners, Christ showed a love that we are unable to understand. As we see this love, it softens our heart and impresses upon our mind our need of a Saviour.

It is true that people sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways and give up some of their bad habits even before they are aware that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to change, with a true desire to do what is right, it is the power of Jesus that is working in their lives. A power that they don't even know is there works upon their heart. The conscience is aroused and their outward life is

changed. As Christ draws them to look at His cross, to see Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to their conscience. They can see the evil things in their life and the deepest sins of their heart. They begin to understand the goodness of Jesus and question, "What is sin, that it should cost such a sacrifice to save us? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation essential so we would not perish, but have everlasting life?"

We as sinners may resist the love of Christ, but if we do not resist we will be drawn to Him. When we learn of His plan to save us, this will lead us to the foot of the cross and to sorrow for our sins which have caused Christ to suffer.

(8) WHAT WONDERFUL INVITATION DOES THE LORD OFFER TO THOSE WHO THIRST FOR MORE THAN THIS WORLD CAN GIVE?

Revelation 22:17

Related Texts: John 7:37, 38; 4:10; Isaiah 55:1-3; 12:3

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to our hearts and giving us an inexpressible desire for something we don't have. The things of the world cannot satisfy this. The Spirit of God is begging us to seek for only those things that can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ and the joy of holiness. Our Saviour is always at work to draw our minds away from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin and attract us to the endless blessings that can be ours in Him. To all of us who are trying to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is given, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17.

You who in your heart long for something better than this world offers recognize this longing as the voice of God calling to your soul. Ask Him to give you sorrow for your sins. Ask Him to reveal Jesus to you in His endless love and His perfect purity.

(9) WHEN WE SEE THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST, WHAT DO WE AS SINNERS REALIZE?

Isaiah 64:6

Related Texts: Isaiah 53:6; Job 14:4; 15:14-16; 25:4; Psalm 51:5; Romans 7:18, 24; Ephesians 2:1, 2; Ezekiel 36:31

In the Saviour's life the principles of God's law were perfectly shown as love to God and man. Kindness and unselfish love were the life of His soul. As light from our Saviour brings us understanding we begin to recognize how wicked our own hearts are.

We may praise ourselves as Nicodemus did. We may think that our life is upright and that the morals of our character are correct. We may think that we do not need to humble our hearts before God like a common sinner. But when the light from Christ shines into our soul, we see how impure we are. We see the selfish reasons for the things we do and the rebellion against God that has defiled every act of our life. It is at this point it becomes obvious to us that only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from the filth of sin and remake our heart to be like His.

It only takes one ray of the glory of God, one gleam of how pure Jesus is, getting through to our hearts to make our every wrong painfully clear. It shows the ugliness and the faults of our human character. It makes clear the unholy things that we desire, the

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unfaithfulness of our heart, and the unclean things we say. Our conscience is awakened and troubled under the searching power of the Holy Spirit. This awakens our great need of Christ. We despise ourselves as we look upon the pure, spotless character of Jesus.

(10) WHAT EFFECT DID IT HAVE ON DANIEL WHEN HE REALIZED THE FLAWS IN HIS CHARACTER?

Daniel 10:8

Related Texts: Daniel 8:17, 18; Revelation 1:17; Mark 9:6; Luke 1:12

When the prophet Daniel saw the glory of the angel that was sent to him, he realized just how weak and imperfect he was. He described this experience in the above verse. The persons who are touched in this way will hate their selfishness and their love of self. Through the goodness of Jesus they will search for the purity of heart that reflects God's law and the character of Jesus.

I am thankful I have accepted Jesus' invitation to come and learn of Him that I may find rest to my soul.

Circle: Yes Undecided

As He has drawn me, and I have been spending more time with Him in His Word, I see His righteousness and realize that my life and character are impure and unholy.

Circle: Yes Undecided

(11) LIKE PAUL, WHAT WILL WE SAY WHEN WE SEE THE PURITY OF CHRIST AND REALIZE THE TRUE MEANING OF THE HOLY PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S LAW?

Romans 7:9

Related Texts: Romans 7:7; 3:20; 8:3-7; 1 John 3:4; Luke 10:25-28; Galatians 3:10; 2:19-21

Paul says that as "touching the righteousness which is in the law," which means as far as obeying the law was concerned, he was "blameless," but when the holy part of the law was considered, he saw himself as a sinner [Philippians 3:6]. If he were judged by whether he followed the law as men see it and apply it to the outward life, he had kept from sin. Then when he realized what the real meaning of the holy principles were, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in shame and confessed. When he saw the holy nature of the law he saw how ugly sin really is and his self-esteem was gone.

He is now putting within my heart the desire to be more like Him but I realize I am powerless to change on my own.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful I can come to Him as I am—sinful, helpless, and dependant—and claim His promise to make the changes in my life that will bring Him glory.

Circle: Yes Undecided

