

Repentance Must Go With Forgiveness

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon's sermon emphasizes the inseparable connection between repentance and forgiveness in the Christian faith.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Ezekiel 18:30, Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15, Luke 13:3, John 3:16, Acts 5:31, Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 7:10, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Repentance"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the inseparable connection between repentance and forgiveness, asserting that true pardon cannot exist without genuine repentance. He argues that to forgive an impenitent sinner would undermine moral order and promote a dangerous license for sin. Spurgeon highlights that both repentance and forgiveness are gifts from Jesus, who offers them together to those who seek Him. He encourages believers to understand that true repentance is accompanied by a heartfelt desire to turn from sin, and that both elements are essential for a complete experience of salvation. Ultimately, Spurgeon reassures that as one grows in faith, both repentance and the assurance of forgiveness will flourish together.

Transcript

IT IS CLEAR from the text which we have lately quoted that repentance is bound up with the forgiveness of sins. In Acts 5:31 we read that Jesus is "exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sins." These two blessings come from that sacred hand which once was nailed to the tree, but is now raised to glory. Repentance and forgiveness are riveted together by the eternal purpose of God. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Repentance must go with remission, and you will see that it is so if you think a little upon the matter. It cannot be that pardon of sin should be given to an impenitent sinner; this were to confirm him in his evil ways, and to teach him to think little of evil. If the Lord were to say, "You love sin, and live in it, and you are going on from bad to worse, but, all the same, I forgive you," this were to proclaim a horrible license for iniquity. The foundations of social order would be removed, and moral anarchy would follow. I cannot tell what innumerable mischiefs would certainly occur if you could divide repentance and forgiveness, and pass by the sin while the sinner remained as fond of it as ever. In the very nature of things, if we believe in the holiness of God, it must be so, that if we continue in our sin, and will not repent of it, we cannot be forgiven, but must reap the consequence of our obstinacy. According to the infinite goodness of God, we

are promised that if we will forsake our sins, confessing them, and will, by faith, accept the grace which is provided in Christ Jesus, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But, so long as God lives, there can be no promise of mercy to those who continue in their evil ways, and refuse to acknowledge their wrongdoing. Surely no rebel can expect the King to pardon his treason while he remains in open revolt. No one can be so foolish as to imagine that the Judge of all the earth will put away our sins if we refuse to put them away ourselves.

Moreover, it must be so for the completeness of divine mercy. That mercy which could forgive the sin and yet let the sinner live in it would be scant and superficial mercy. It would be unequal and deformed mercy, lame upon one of its feet, and withered as to one of its hands. Which, think you, is the greater privilege, cleansing from the guilt of sin, or deliverance from the power of sin? I will not attempt to weigh in the scales two mercies so surpassing. Neither of them could have come to us apart from the precious blood of Jesus. But it seems to me that to be delivered from the dominion of sin, to be made holy, to be made like to God, must be reckoned the greater of the two, if a comparison has to be drawn. To be forgiven is an immeasurable favor. We make this one of the first notes of our psalm of praise: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." But if we could be forgiven, and then could be permitted to love sin, to riot in iniquity, and to wallow in lust, what would be the use of such a forgiveness? Might it not turn out to be a poisoned sweet, which would most effectually destroy us? To be washed, and yet to lie in the mire; to be pronounced clean, and yet to have the leprosy white on one's brow, would be the veriest mockery of mercy. What is it to bring the man out of his sepulcher if you leave him dead? Why lead him into the light if he is still blind? We thank God, that He who forgives our iniquities also heals our diseases. He who washes us from the stains of the past also uplifts us from the foul ways of the present, and keeps us from failing in the future. We must joyfully accept both repentance and remission; they cannot be separated. The covenant heritage is one and indivisible, and must not be parceled out. To divide the work of grace would be to cut the living child in halves, and those who would permit this have no interest in it.

I will ask you who are seeking the Lord, whether you would be satisfied with one of these mercies alone? Would it content you, my reader, if God would forgive you your sin and then allow you to be as worldly and wicked as before? Oh, no! The quickened spirit is more afraid of sin itself than of the penal results of it. The cry of your heart is not, "Who shall deliver me from punishment?" but, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Who shall enable me to live above temptation, and to become holy, even as God is holy?" Since the unity of repentance with remission agrees with gracious desire, and since it is necessary for the completeness of salvation, and for holiness' sake, rest you sure that it abides.

Repentance and forgiveness are joined together in the experience of all believers. There never was a person yet who did unfeignedly repent of sin with believing repentance who was not forgiven; and on the other hand, there never was a person forgiven who had not repented of his sin. I do not hesitate to say that beneath the copes of Heaven there never was, there is not, and there never will be, any case of sin being washed away, unless at the same time the heart was led to repentance and faith in Christ. Hatred of sin and a sense of pardon come together into the soul, and abide together while we live.

These two things act and react upon each other: the man who is forgiven, therefore repents; and the man who repents is also most assuredly forgiven. Remember first, that forgiveness leads to repentance. As we sing in Hart's words:

Law and terrors do but harden,

All the while they work alone;

But a sense of blood-bought pardon

Soon dissolves a heart of stone.

When we are sure that we are forgiven, then we abhor iniquity; and I suppose that when faith grows into full assurance, so that we are certain beyond a doubt that the blood of Jesus has washed us whiter than snow, it is then that repentance reaches to its greatest height. Repentance grows as faith grows. Do not make any mistake about it; repentance is not a thing of days and weeks, a temporary penance to be over as fast as possible! No; it is the grace of a lifetime, like faith itself. God's little children repent, and so do the young men and the fathers. Repentance is the inseparable companion of faith. All the while that we walk by faith and not by sight, the tear of repentance glitters in the eye of faith. That is not true repentance which does not come of faith in Jesus, and that is not true faith in Jesus which is not tinctured with repentance. Faith and repentance, like Siamese twins, are vitally joined together. In proportion as we believe in the forgiving love of Christ, in that proportion we repent; and in proportion as we repent of sin and hate evil, we rejoice in the fullness of the absolution which Jesus is exalted to bestow. You will never value pardon unless you feel repentance; and you will never taste the deepest draught of repentance until you know that you are pardoned. It may seem a strange thing, but so it is--the bitterness of repentance and the sweetness of pardon blend in the flavor of every gracious life, and make up an incomparable happiness.

These two covenant gifts are the mutual assurance of each other. If I know that I repent, I know that I am forgiven. How am I to know that I am forgiven except I know also that I am turned from my former sinful course? To be a believer is to be a penitent. Faith and repentance are but two spokes in the same wheel, two handles of the same plough. Repentance has been well described as a heart broken for sin, and from sin; and it may equally well be spoken of as turning and returning. It is a change of mind of the most thorough and radical sort, and it is attended with sorrow for the past, and a resolve of amendment in the future.

Repentance is to leave

The sins we loved before;

And show that we in earnest grieve,

By doing so no more.

Now, when that is the case, we may be certain that we are forgiven; for the Lord never made a heart to be broken for sin and broken from sin, without pardoning it. If, on the other hand, we are enjoying pardon, through the blood of Jesus, and are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, we know that our repentance and faith are of the right sort.

Do not regard your repentance as the cause of your remission, but as the companion of it. Do not expect to be able to repent until you see the grace of our Lord Jesus, and His readiness to blot out your sin. Keep these blessed things in their places, and view them in their relation to each other. They are the Jachin and Boaz of a saving experience; I mean that they are comparable to Solomon's two great pillars which stood in the forefront of the house of the Lord, and formed a majestic entrance to the holy place. No man comes to God aright except he passes between the pillars of repentance and remission. Upon your heart the

rainbow of covenant grace has been displayed in all its beauty when the tear-drops of repentance have been shone upon by the light of full forgiveness. Repentance of sin and faith in divine pardon are the warp and woof of the fabric of real conversion. By these tokens shall you know an Israelite indeed.

To come back to the Scripture upon which we are meditating: both forgiveness and repentance flow from the same source, and are given by the same Saviour. The Lord Jesus in His glory bestows both upon the same persons. You are neither to find the remission nor the repentance elsewhere. Jesus has both ready, and He is prepared to bestow them now, and to bestow them most freely on all who will accept them at His hands. Let it never be forgotten that Jesus gives all that is needful for our salvation. It is highly important that all seekers after mercy should remember this. Faith is as much the gift of God as is the Saviour upon whom that faith relies. Repentance of sin is as truly the work of grace as the making of an atonement by which sin is blotted out. Salvation, from first to last, is of grace alone. You will not misunderstand me. It is not the Holy Spirit who repents. He has never done anything for which He should repent. If He could repent, it would not meet the case; we must ourselves repent of our own sin, or we are not saved from its power. It is not the Lord Jesus Christ who repents. What should He repent of? We ourselves repent with the full consent of every faculty of our mind. The will, the affections, the emotions, all work together most heartily in the blessed act of repentance for sin; and yet at the back of all that is our personal act, there is a secret holy influence which melts the heart, gives contrition, and produces a complete change. The Spirit of God enlightens us to see what sin is, and thus makes it loathsome in our eyes. The Spirit of God also turns us toward holiness, makes us heartily to appreciate, love, and desire it, and thus gives us the impetus by which we are led onward from stage to stage of sanctification. The Spirit of God works in us to will and to do according to God's good pleasure. To that good Spirit let us submit ourselves at once, that He may lead us to Jesus, who will freely give us the double benediction of repentance and remission, according to the riches of His grace.

"BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/repentance-must-go-with-forgiveness/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net