

Fruit of Repentance

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and forgiveness, warning of the consequences of falling away from God and the opportunity for forgiveness and restoration.

Duration: 1:06:08

Scripture: Hebrews 6:4

Topics: "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Hebrews chapter 6 and discusses the concept of falling away from faith. He emphasizes that it is impossible to restore those who have tasted the heavenly gift, shared in the Holy Spirit, and then fallen away. The preacher uses the analogy of land that either produces a useful crop or thorns and thistles to illustrate the consequences of falling away from faith. He urges the congregation to repent and obey God's word, warning that seeking repentance with tears in the future may not be fruitful.

Transcript

Our text today, we find in Hebrews chapter 6. Hebrews chapter 6. From verse 4. For it is impossible in the case of those who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding them up to contempt. For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it cultivated receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

Shall we pray once again? We once again ask, Lord, that by your Holy Spirit you would speak to us, that in this service you would touch our hearts through your Holy Spirit, that your word would penetrate our hearts and live in our hearts, being sharper than any two-edged sword. Amen. This word, which I have read, is a frightening word.

It does make a person to tremble, and a person fears the Lord. For there is no one like God, and He is awesome and fearful, and it is no wonder that every human being should live in the fear of God. And reading this word, it really makes one to tremble, because one then asks the question, well, who then shall be saved? For it starts by saying, for it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the

word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then fallen away to restore them again to repentance.

This is the type of word that can cause anyone's hope to perish, for who of us have never been in the same boat, who have tasted the word but have gone back to sin? For it says, for there is no forgiveness. It is the word that can end our sleep and can shake a person, that if you've known the and then fall away, there is no more forgiveness. One thinks of Esau, who sought repentance with tears but could not find it.

We need to carefully examine, then, the scripture. We should never take God lightly. You see, a person so easily gets himself back into sin, easily falls into sexual immorality, and so easily confesses his sins but goes back to them in two or three days again.

To tell that person, you are poking your finger into God's eye, you are treating him lightly, and your future is not good. A person mistreats himself and is immoral, aborts babies, kills somebody. The most high God sees that and will punish it too, should you not repent.

Your eternal destiny is evil. What is man that you should be fearful of him? He is nothing. Fear the one who is high above everyone else.

You might kill a baby, bury it, but God sees it. I remember when I was still young, I was working in my father's shop. One day, some people came and said something awful has happened down in the valley because the shop was high up and below the cliffs was a home.

A certain girl, who was still a schoolgirl, but was immoral, was promiscuous because you can't even get schoolchildren who are loose. But God worked that in her being so promiscuous, she fell pregnant. And then she thought, well, my sin is going to be exposed.

Well, that is true, your sin will find you out. Even if you bury your sin, God will expose it. For the most high God, the one who dwells in heaven, has seen you and will always see you.

This schoolgirl then gave birth to the baby. She took a dish and filled it with water and then drowned her baby in the water. Then she went into a maze field, dug a hole and buried her baby, thinking, well, now it's over.

But God, who saw, exposed it. He sent a dog which sniffed the scent right to where the baby was buried. But it is because a dog has got a marvelous sense of smell.

It is a hundred times stronger and better than ours. So the dog followed the scent right to the burial place and began to dig. And then got the baby, took it and ran back to the home with the baby.

The family there and the relatives wondered, what is it that the dog is carrying? And as they drew closer, they saw it was a baby. Finally, I'm just summarizing the story. The police were called and that girl was arrested.

Her sin found her out. In Luke 12, God says, there is nothing hidden that shall not be exposed. It does not matter how clever or intelligent you might be, your sin will find you out.

You might hide it behind a locked door. And with your cunning, you hatch a clever plan, but God in heaven has seen it. Even the cleverest sorcerer or person who uses witchcraft, even if they can kill at a distance and hide their sin, God in heaven sees it and sees you too.

And the wages of your sin is death, an eternal death. In the Bible, we read the story of Esau. Esau arrived home and arrived finding his brother eating a pottage of soup.

He said, brother, I am hungry. Give me of your food, Jacob. Jacob, though, did not agree to his demand.

Esau was the heir. He was the rightful heir as the oldest son. It could have been written, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Esau.

Such a great heavenly position God had organized for him. Esau, though, despised his heavenly blessing. And so Jacob said to him, if you give me your inheritance, your share of the inheritance, I'll give you of the stew.

Esau listened only to his own appetite, to his own will. And so he very easily said, yes, you can take it. I want the stew now.

The future was nothing to him. What mattered was instant gratification. And so his brother Jacob said, all right, give it to me now.

He sold his heavenly blessing. After some time, he regretted it. Esau was immoral.

He behaved badly. He only lived for his carnal desires. But God saw him, and he lost it all.

And today we speak of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was because Esau threw away his blessing. Finally, Esau sought after that blessing with many tears, saying, be merciful, please.

But God had closed the door. Beware of what you do. With Noah too, God said, build an ark, for the whole world is depraved.

He couldn't build the whole ark just with his three sons. He needed outside help. And the people there said, probably about a thousand workers.

And he preached to them always, saying God will destroy this world. The people said, how would that be possible? There's not even a sea here, no ocean, no water. Even though the people worked building the ark with him, but they were disobedient, did not hear.

The same is true even here at Kwasi Zabantu. You might be employed here, you might be a worker, you might be a school child. You're hearing the gospel often, you don't repent.

God will finally destroy you. Even if you cry with tears, be merciful. Amazing.

Animals went in, a dog, a donkey, etc. But human beings refused to listen. They were preached at every day.

And the day will come when you seek repentance with tears, but will not find it. That is why the Bible says, today if you hear his word, his voice, do not harden your hearts, repent, obey. In 1 Corinthians 10 from verse 1. For I want you to know, brothers, I do not want you to misunderstand it, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea.

And all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And all ate the same spiritual food. And drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not pleased. For they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

Just as they were idolaters. Do not be idolaters as some of them were. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and 23,000 fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents. Nor grumble as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction. A person who takes God's word lightly is brainless.

Not one of us listening to this should avoid repentance. We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction.

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction. This should cause every one of us to tremble, lest we don't repent and there's a woe and a curse upon us. But there is a comforting word, one that we find in the same chapter.

For many of us would say, yes, we had repented, but there was the time when we backslid. Then one asked, so is there no forgiveness? There is a verse that is like bait for us and can offer help to us. We find it in verse 7. For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated receives a blessing from God.

Now, as you have heard, that it is something that is impossible and the word is so sharp, it is like a hammer striking a rock. You might despair and say, oh, so that means I can never be forgiven, I cannot repent again even if I seek after it with tears. God, however, says, the rain, when it falls upon the earth, it brings forth crops that help those who have ploughed it.

God, however, says, the rain, when it falls upon the earth, it brings forth crops that help those who have ploughed it. However, if it brings forth thorns and thistles, it is close to being cursed and burned. If you have sinned, backslidden, come back to the Lord.

Like the earth into which the rain has sunk brings forth a crop causing the owner of that farm to be happy. God, however, says, the rain, when it falls upon the earth, it brings forth crops that help those who have ploughed it. It is cursed and close to being burned.

You who have accepted Christ and yet you have then gone back to sin, repent today. The grace is still available from the Lord Jesus. If you repent immediately, however, should you not and you just bring forth thorns and thistles, you then are cursed.

It says, for your end is nigh to be burned. In other words, then no more forgiveness. We have heard from 1 Corinthians 10.

That they displeased God, for grace was available, but they despised it, rejected it. They were baptized. They had water from the rock, the rock being Christ.

But after that they still went back to their idolatry and their sexual immorality and God destroyed them. This is written to remind us, it is written for our instruction so that the one who stands should be careful lest he fall. The one who stands should be careful lest he fall.

The one who stands should be careful lest he fall. Now this includes you, if you are from Paggite and you have received Christ and then after a while you go back to your sin, even if you seek after repentance with tears, it is not available to you. If you read this in Hebrews, whoa.

If you read it on your knees, you will be struck by fear. And it forces you to say, Lord, whatever this condition I am, whatever it is, help me now to stand and never to go back again. This is written to Hebrews, Jews, they who had kept every ritual of the Jews and then received the words of the Lord.

That he had died and that he was the Lamb of God sent from heaven who was bruised and crushed because of our sins. Historically, the context is that some of them, some of these Jews said, no, Jesus is not enough, we must keep the law that we have been given, the rituals. And the second generation, because it can happen that parents are believers, but their children, the next generation go into sin, into evil.

Be careful. Young people, children of Christian parents, beware, be careful, lest you fall into this condition, where even when you one day seek repentance, you cannot find it, though you seek it with tears. But if you've not lived well, even so, God gives you the chance today.

For he is also the one who says today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. If you go out of the service, after hearing this, you leave and then you just bring forth thorns and thistles like you've never heard the Word of God, woe to you! I don't know if this is understandable. But it would be good if the one who has an ear to hear would listen.

This is the opportunity. If you have brains in your head and you can think, make this decision, come back to the Lord, this is your chance to repentance. Don't delay it.

I remember that story of the girl in America who had gone to her doctor while in the waiting room. Her doctor was busy with another patient. She looked at the table where there were magazines and books.

That particular doctor was a believer. He had put a black Bible on that same table. She had never read the Bible.

You find so many pagans today, even if they have a Bible available, they don't read it. As she looked at this black Bible, she thought, maybe that is really a Bible. For she remembered that back at school, the teachers and children had sometimes referred to the Ten Commandments.

She was inquisitive and thought, maybe that is to be found in the Bible. She took that Bible, just opened it, and turned to Exodus 20 as she opened it. The very place where the Ten Commandments can be found.

Then she began reading and her eyes fell on this verse, Do you shall not kill? That word struck her. You shall not murder. She said to herself, I have fallen pregnant 16 times and I have killed every one of those babies, aborted them.

She began to tremble and weep. She got up and went to the receptionist. She said, I need to see the doctor.

I need to see him immediately. The receptionist said, but he is still busy. She insisted and said, even so, I must see him immediately.

She went to the receptionist and said, Doctor, there is a patient out there who is crying and is insisting on seeing you immediately. The doctor said, while I am about to finish anyway, when the patient leaves, you can bring her in. The receptionist came out and said, the doctor is going to see you very soon.

So she could go in when the other patient came out because the secretary then ushered her in. The doctor said, sit down. He was on one side of the table, she on the other.

He said, it is a good thing. If you are going to speak to the opposite sex, keep your distance. Be on the other side of the table.

She broke out in tears, it was like a river of tears in her weeping. She said, Doctor, I did not know the Bible. I saw this black book in the waiting room and I thought it could be a Bible.

Then I took it. I opened randomly, not knowing where I was opening. It said there, you shall not kill.

She said, my heart was so convicted. It cut my heart. For I remembered how I have aborted 16 babies.

I have killed those souls. She said, I do not know how to get out of this. I am full of sin, with so many sins, 16 souls that I have murdered.

How many have you murdered? You go off to the clinic, you have a quick abortion. Here in Pietermaritzburg in the Edendale area, a certain schoolgirl fell pregnant, and realising that she was now expecting, didn't know what to do to try and hide it, because she knew that this is growing within her, and she won't be able to hide it later. Her friend came to her, and she told her of her difficult situation.

I'm pregnant, she said. I don't know what to tell my parents. I don't know what they'll say at school.

I don't know what my friends will say about me. And her pal said, don't worry, that's no trouble at all. I know of a certain auntie, and she has the ability to help you in your situation.

She uses a long needle and can cause an abortion. She's helped many others. So they went to her.

She said, I am so troubled, I need to get rid of this pregnancy. Well this lady then used her tools of the trade, killed the baby. She began to bleed, and the abortion happened.

But amazingly enough, her bleeding never stopped. She couldn't even go to school, she was hemorrhaging so badly. She went then to a doctor.

He tried to give her some medicine, but it didn't help. She was extremely troubled inside herself. For we have a conscience, and that conscience will not give you peace if you have committed sin like this.

It will give you no rest. She went to the witch doctor. The witch doctor then said, well somebody has bewitched you.

It's your neighbour. And she told the parents too. When her parents heard about this, that her daughter was bewitched, this girl was so happy that her sin now had been passed on, she had passed the buck.

But even the witchcraft potions could not help her, and her bleeding continued. She grew thinner, and thinner till she was skin and bones. Finally, the parents then took her to Edendale Hospital.

At that time it was a newly built hospital, a very nice one. They tried to cure her, she just would not get better. And the doctors asked, well what's wrong with you, what's happened? She said, well the witch doctor says that I've been bewitched.

But she got thinner still, till finally she couldn't eat anything. Sometimes she couldn't even speak, she would fall into unconsciousness. And the sisters thought, well now she is dying.

Then sometimes she would regain consciousness, but she could only groan, trying to say something. The doctors and nurses said to each other, well she is about to die. Yet she woke up again, trying to speak.

The nursing sister came, put her ear close to this girl's mouth. Well she realized the girl is trying to say something. The nurse asked her, what are you saying? And then she could make out a few words.

This girl said, I arrived there at the door of heaven. As I got to the gate of heaven, I saw this little girl, a beautiful little blessed girl. She was white, beautiful, looked like an angel.

This child said, oh so you are my mother, you are the one who killed me. She said, how could you do such a thing to her mother? She said to the nurse how she would tell this little child, get out of my way, I want to go through the gate into heaven. The little child said, I am not moving, I am standing in your way.

She found that she could not enter into heaven because of this child that she had aborted. Even though she begged the child to move, the child said, I am not moving, I am right here in your way. She died and so it was in that condition that her soul left her.

I wonder how you are going to die. You might say, I have never killed anybody. The Bible says, even if you get angry with your brother, calling him with bad words, you have murdered him.

You are a murderer. You will never go into heaven with that. You will cry, seeking repentance and not finding it.

Unless you truly repent now before God and tell him, Lord, I have sinned, please forgive me. For God also says, even though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. The word says, today is the day of repentance.

Is there still unconfessed sin in your life? Will you allow the Lord to change you so that you bring forth a good crop or a bad crop? Or will you continue with your thorns and thistles and you land up in the same boat as Esau? Shall we stand to our feet and we are going to pray. Lord Jesus, I ask you that your word would not be in vain. But bring forth much fruit so that the one who has not yet repented would truly repent.

The backslider would come to you so that you would plow his heart and plant that which will bring forth a good crop and not thorns.

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