

# Repentance (June 2002)

by Richard Owen Roberts

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*Richard Owen Roberts emphasizes the critical nature of repentance in understanding God's holiness and experiencing true revival.*

**Duration:** 59:14

**Scripture:** Hosea 4:1, Hosea 4:6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:18, Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 7:10

**Topics:** "Repentance"

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## Description

In this sermon, Richard Owen Roberts discusses the consequences of men who continue to walk in deception and disregard the law of God. He quotes scripture from Hosea 4:1 and 4:6, emphasizing that the lack of truth, mercy, and knowledge of God in the land leads to destruction and calamity. Roberts also highlights the need for repentance and returning to God's will, stating that victory over sin comes from a deep desire for God and a fear of causing Him to depart. He mentions his new book, 'Repentance, the first word of the Gospel,' which delves into the biblical concept of repentance.

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## Transcript

Today we're going to talk again with a guest, a dear and precious brother, Richard Owen Roberts. He is a preacher, he's a historian of revivals, he's an author. Today we're going to speak with him again about these precious issues of our heart regarding the holiness of God, regarding revival.

Before we begin our conversation again, let's just pray together. Mighty God, mighty God, I ask today that your spirit would come and enliven this time. Would you come and meet the cry of our heart that we be able to be filled with your Holy Spirit Would you rend the heavens and come down that the mountains would tremble before you, almighty God.

Would you make your name known to your enemies today. O Lord, there is no one, there is no one who can meet the need of our heart and heal the wounds of the enemy except you, Lord Jesus. Come among us today and change us.

I pray in your Holy Name. Amen. Welcome brother Roberts.

Thank you. We're so glad you could join us again today. You know you've been the topic of conversation and the message you've shared in many homes over the last 24 hours and many have said to us, is it possible to have him again tomorrow? And thank you for joining us.

Jane, we have a question you want to begin with. Thank you so much again for joining us. We're eager to hear.

We're all ears again today. Yesterday you were answering one of the calls concerning the difficulty of repenting and you spoke about two views of God, a low view versus a high view. What is a high view of God and how would that relate to repentance? Can you share that with us? Yes, the high view is obviously the biblical view.

If one were to take their Bible and to mark every passage in which God makes a revelation concerning himself, they would find that a very substantial portion of the scripture is really God unfolding himself to us. And the deep meditation upon these passages, these passages in which God reveals himself, have a profound impact. Let me illustrate a specific approach.

Take passages out of Isaiah 46 as an illustration. There God says concerning himself, I will it, I bring it to pass. If a person were to sit for an hour quietly before that passage meditating, what does that mean? How does that relate to me? And if they were to allow their natural thought processes to function, they would realize why.

I will a thing, but I can't bring it to pass. There are all kinds of things that I will that I cannot do, but there's nothing that God wills that he does not accomplish and he doesn't have to go to work at it. He just wills it and it's done.

Now, as I said, there are hundreds of passages like that, that if one meditates upon, what literally happens is you shrink and God grows. In your estimation, repentance is immediately linked to appreciation. A person who has a very small view of God and a low level of appreciation repents no more than they have to, to get what they want.

But a person who has a high and an ever heightening view of God has a growing life of repentance because this is what happens. When one first comes to Christ, it's a perfectly average person. They come basically out of self-interest.

They come to get something from God, forgiveness, relief from some agony inward, a friend perhaps. There could be any number of motives, but the major thing is they come essentially for their own sake. But as one's view of God grows and the view of self shrinks, this whole reason for coming to God alters.

So it's as if in coming to Christ initially for semi or even solely personal reasons for gain or benefit, one has a terribly small view of the cross. Let's say there's a half inch difference of gap between God and the sinner. So it takes a three quarter of an inch cross to bridge that gap.

So just a wee speck of repentance is sufficient to please the sinner who is self-orientated. But as his view of God grows from scriptures directly, that gap between himself and God gets bigger and bigger. Before long it's a foot, a yard, a mile, a trillion miles, an infinite distance.

So the cross grows and therefore a tremendous sense of appreciation develops when you think you're saved from but little. There's little for which to be thankful, but when you realize the height of God and the depth of your own iniquity, and it takes an infinite cross to bridge that gap between the two, there is an inward drive toward repentance to say, thank you, Lord, to live a life of holiness, to serve God with all the energy and strength of body, mind, and spirit. Brother Robert, you haven't said this in so many words you have, but you haven't said it directly.

But what I'm suspecting is that if we have a small view of God, we must then have the converse, a very large view of ourselves. Yes, I think we can lay out a pattern in fact that I find invariably true. A low view of God, number one.

A high view of self, number two. A distorted view of sin, number three. And a ridiculously low view of salvation, number four.

So we have people who, if you can remember that old Brill cream ad that used to run just a little dab, there are millions of professed Christians who have nothing more than a dab of salvation, but that's all they need in their mind because they're so nearly like God that it doesn't take any great work of God to save them. But as the view of God gets increasingly high and the view of self increasingly low, the view of sin is altered. Sin becomes more and more obnoxious, more dangerous, more grievous and wicked against God.

And so it's more distasteful. Oh absolutely, distasteful. And therefore the consequence is the view of salvation in life.

So rather than a dab, one wants all the salvation there is. And they can't function without it. It becomes the driving force of life.

So when you said yesterday that you suspect that as much as 70% of those who call themselves evangelical Christians are as lost as the devil, you're saying that humanism has taken over the church. Well, that's exactly right. And even where one might not want to go quite that far, the nature of repentance comes into this very immediately because true repentance is not only of sin, but of self.

And there's a sense in which we can say that the very essence of sin is self. If one were to analyze their own personal sins, for instance, just lay them all out in a long line, not to torment yourself, but to ask this serious question, is there a common denominator that runs through all my sin life? Why, invariably one will find that there is a common denominator, and that's self. We sin against God, so it's me versus God.

We sin against one another, so it's me versus you. Sin is right in the very heart, or self rather, is in the very heart of our sin life. So when we come to true repentance, it's repentance of self as well as sin.

And one really has to ask the question concerning your own heart, did I repent for my sake, or did I repent for God's sake? Years ago, our fathers distinguished this by an expression we're not apt to use today. They described evangelical repentance and legal repentance. Now, what they meant was evangelical repentance is what I do for God, legal repentance is what I do for myself.

Actually, it could be called ego repentance. I turn enough from sin, I think, to gain the favor of God, because at the very center of my religious life is self. But when there is true and full repentance, Christ is the center, not only of one's religious life, but of their entire life.

And therefore, complete turn from all sin and self becomes the driving force of the life. So what I hear you really saying and talking about is this repentance is going to be a growing, ongoing process, because I'm going to want to grow closer and closer to God versus closer to myself. I want to die of self.

Yes, that is absolutely right. And an obvious mistake that the church is often making is to suggest that repentance is a single act. No, in truth, repentance is an ongoing spirit and attitude.

So I don't say I am a repentant, or I don't say I have repented, rather, I say, I am a repentant man. I live perpetually in repentance. And it's a growing repentance.

When I found myself some 14, 15 years ago, just at the end of myself pastoring a very successful congregation, but recognizing there was nothing of God in it, there was simply my own skill as a marketing person, an entrepreneur who was doing it under the guise of the cross. And when that finally crashed into my heart and mind, and the Lord said, now close this thing. Part of what I recognized is that I had absolutely no confidence that God would do what he promised he would do, because I had never seen or experienced God doing anything.

It seemed to me that everything was done by the hand of man. And for these past 14 years, I tell you, my heart cry has been in youth today. I want to see only that which the Holy Spirit will do.

And if he doesn't do it, I don't want to see it. So you want it to be God's church in literal truth. In literal truth.

Yes, exactly. I had the pastor say to me once, the only church I want to pastor is a pastor that is impossible unless God himself is in it. And I'm sure that's what it's the very heart of what you said.

Yes. And the obvious reason we mentioned prayer meetings yesterday, the obvious reason why the prayer meeting is all but abandoned in the church is who needs God to run a man orientated church? Yes. God gets in the way.

He messes it up. Yes, absolutely. Let's go to another question that we desperately need to talk about.

And that is, what part does repentance play in revival? Because as you've already said, if God does not come, we're lost. So how does this issue of repentance and revival fit together? Well, it's a very intricate hit and a tremendous consequence of one. There's a proverb that describes the backslider saying the backslider in heart is filled again with his own ways.

So let's think of a person who truly did repent and believe. There's a very marvelous fact in which when one truly repents and believes, they're emptied of themselves and filled with Christ. But the backslider, as the proverb says, is filled again with his own ways.

That's true of individuals. That's true of churches. That's true of denominations.

It's true of all nations. So backsliding really is very, very prominent throughout America. Huge numbers who have had a very genuine religious experience, an experience with Christ, and were once emptied of self and filled again with their own ways, or once emptied of self and filled with Christ and filled again.

Now, the tragedy is the backsliding has occurred, but they're clinging in so many cases to that past experience. People say to me, you don't have to worry about me. I accepted Christ.

I'm all right. They do not conceive of repentance as ongoing. They're not keen to turn daily from self.

So when we speak about revival, what we're really talking about is God himself drawing near. The presence of God always in scripture resulted in some form of man falling on his face and crying out such expressions as, woe is me. I'm undone.

I'm a man of unclean lips, of an impure heart. Depart from me. I'm not worthy.

Every instance of scripture where God draws near, there is this awesome sense of God's holiness and of man's sinfulness. So in a season of revival in the church, God draws near. His holiness is manifested.

People are deeply ashamed. They're sorrowful. They're profoundly convicted.

They want to run away, and yet they can't because the presence of God is so precious, so sweet, so significant, so hopeful, and so they carry in his presence and are overwhelmed with a spirit of repentance. And persons who have come to that new level of repentance and revival somehow never forget it. Check the records of past revivals.

For instance, years and years ago, it can't be done any longer, but in my regular trips to Wales, I would meet people who were subjects of that great revival in 1904, 1905. They couldn't forget it. It was embedded deeply in their heart.

The impression was so great that it lingered all through life. Now they've all gone on to glory, essentially. But that's the normal effect of a revival, the awesome sense of the presence of God, the manifestation of his holiness, and the deep, deep repentance that follows.

I mentioned yesterday that we wisely distinguish between revivals and awakenings. So the Lord appears in a manifest fashion to the church. The church comes to levels of repentance they've never before known.

Then that change in the life of the believer becomes visible in the world. The world is impressed. For instance, in Washington, D.C., there are no doubt men who run small businesses, say markets and variety stores and their neighborhood types of stores, and they know personally that many of their customers, and they hate a particular church nearby because some of the leading members of that church have pilfered over the years.

But revival comes to the church, and we'll say that it starts on a Sunday morning, and by Wednesday, there's an overwhelming sense of the presence of God. So when the shopkeeper goes to unlock his front door on Wednesday, there, standing on the doorstep, is the deacon of this church who has been pilfering from him. He says to himself, that is, the shopkeeper says to himself, what a miserable way to begin a day.

Then he opens the door, and he says, well, what do you want? Well, you never knew that I was stealing from you, that I have been stealing, and I've come to make restitution. I've calculated, I've stolen \$800 worth of things. I've brought \$500 with me, and here's an I.U. or an I.O.U. for another \$1,000.

I'll be bringing payments in month by month. Wait a minute, you said you stole \$800. You're bringing me \$500.

You're giving me an I.O.U. for \$1,000. Oh, yes, interesting to see, sir, and oh, I'm so grieved and sorry that I have done this, so ashamed. Well, how many times is the shopkeeper going to face that kind of restitution before he's at church, remembering what went on? He wants to go and find out what happened.

Absolutely, so a revival in the church results in an awakening in the world. You know, listening to you describe this just with tears, I'm so hungry to see this and to know this revival. Yes, yes, and the records, you know, the records of revival are simply incredible.

I have here a record of revival in Ireland, where a huge industry there built a large new warehouse as a result of the revival, because men who were touched by the Holy Spirit came bringing tools of all kinds, things that they had stolen. This huge warehouse was soon filled to overflowing, and the management of the company issued a notice to all employees, please do not bring back anything else. Make your confession to God, and that will be sufficient.

We can't handle all the returns. Yes, that's exciting to hear that that kind of response happens in the heart of man. Yes, and these are well-established facts in that revival which I made reference in Wales, and this is a literal fact.

In South Wales, there were many of these deep mines, coal mines, down in the bowels of the earth, and there were pit ponies and mules that were used down there for years, and during the revival of strangest things, most lovely things, when you think about what happened, these pit mules and ponies went on strike, but what had happened was these animals had been driven down the bowels of the earth, pulling the ore carts by kicks and curses, and when a revived miner came down into the pit, and he put his arm around his pony, and he said, now pony dear, we're here to serve the Lord Christ today, and to begin our day's work, we're going to have a song and a prayer, and the pony absolutely did not know how to respond to kindness and had to be retrained. Now, this kind of revival, do you know of any place in America where this is taking place? No, I'm very sorry to say I do not. We hear reports, but if you do any investigating, things are grossly exaggerated.

We hear of movements where tens of thousands of people have been saved, and the chief of police in the community says the crime rate has not been altered. Well, you can't have a revival of real consequence, but what the same thing will happen has happened in Wales. Day after day, judges went into their courtrooms and laid a pair of white gloves on the podium, signifying there was not a single case on the docket to be heard.

Policemen, in fact, organized themselves into gospel quartets and went around singing in the meetings because there were no criminals to pursue. The major work during that wonderful season of revival was crowd control, that so many people were crowding the churches, they feared they would collapse. Lord God, Lord God, you hear the word that is being spoken, but almighty God, we need you to come down and rend the sky.

You also spoke yesterday about America being the great exporters of the gospel. Do you see anywhere in the world that this kind of a revival is even beginning to happen, let alone blossoming or even full-blown? Well, we hear reports, some of which we hope are genuine. My own travels have been not exclusively but very largely in the English-speaking world, and I know of nowhere in the English-speaking world where there's any real powerful work of spirit taking place.

But we hear, as I said, of reports in some nations, but having no means of verifying their truthfulness, I simply don't know. I'm very suspicious of most of what I hear, not suspicious of God, but knowing what liars men are and how they like to publicize themselves. I'm just fearful that things are being said in the name of revival that are no more legitimate than things that are being said in local churches here in America.

Brother Roberts, we have just about one minute before we go to our first break. You've just written a new book, and it's been published, I understand, today. Could you tell us just quickly what that book is? The title of the book is Repentance, the First Word of the Gospel.

It's a large book, 368 pages, dealing purely with the subject of repentance, taking it in a very systematic, biblical way, describing how indeed it was the first word of John, of Christ, of Peter, of Paul, of all the apostles. There's a chapter on repentance in the Old Testament, one on repentance in the New Testament, a chapter on the seven myths of repentance, the seven maxims of repentance, the seven marks of repentance, the seven motives of repentance. I just have a great deal of time in preparation for that writing.

We'll be back in two minutes with more from Richard Owen Roberts. We're back for the second half of Springs of Living Water. Our guest today is Richard Owen Roberts.

He's out of Wheaton, Illinois. And we invite you to call with any questions that you might have on repentance and revival. That number is 1-877-534-0780.

Again, that number is 1-877-534-0780. Brother Roberts, you were just sharing with us this new book that you've completed. The title of that book was Repentance? The First Word of the Gospel, I believe.

Is that what you called that? We're not able to hear. Are you with us now? Yes. Yes.

Okay. We couldn't hear you. We're back with you.

All right. The book that you were just speaking about that was called Repentance, the First Word of the Gospel. That's correct.

You said that just was published this week or today? Yes, we just received the first copies today. Praise the Lord. We'd like to give everyone a telephone number where they could order this book.

And I urge you to do so. Jan and I will be ordering our copy of it. That telephone number where you can purchase that book is area code 630-752-4122.

Let me give you that number one more time. It's area code 630-752-4122. If you miss the number, you're welcome to call the office at the end.

The number will be given and our staff will be happy to give you that number. And I want to say no profit from this book will go to Springs of Living Water. We simply want to get this book into your hands.

There's another book, brother, you've written on revival. Yes, that's right. That's the title, Revival.

And that's the book that I've read. And it was given to me by Pastor John Hall from Ohio. And that book is a treasure.

So I would urge our listeners to purchase both of these books. And you can order them both at the number I've just given 630-752-4122. Now, talk just a bit about some of the marks of repentance.

Well, that indeed is a wonderful subject and one that we need to be very serious about. Immediately when you mentioned that comes to mind the marvelous seventh chapter of 2 Corinthians. These words deal specifically with the marks of repentance.

For behold, what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow has produced in you. What vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong in everything you've demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. So in that single verse, there are seven

marks of repentance.

Earnestness or great care is number one. Vindication of oneself, number two. That means you've repented to such a level that no one can ever accuse you of being guilty of that sin again.

Yes. Number three. Grief or indignation, indignation really onto grief, such deep sorrow, such anger against self and sin that you turn completely from it.

Number four, a truly repentant person bears the mark of fear. Fear lest they anger God. Fear lest they disappoint Christ.

Fear lest they cause another brother to stumble. A repentant person lives in perpetual fear that their repentance will be inadequate. Now, not fear that's debilitating, but fear that is helpful, that drives them to deeper and deeper ongoing repentance.

Number five, longing. Hold what longing, says the apostle. This very thing, this godly sorrow has produced in you a longing for holiness.

How many people that we know who call themselves Christians are in the grip of a longing for holiness? Yes. Not many, tragically. Number six, zeal.

Why do we know people who are zealous about baseball and zealous about making money? But how many have a zeal for the Lord that consumes them? And then number seven, the avenging of wrong. Now, one, if they're careless, could make the wrong conclusion there. Oh, I'll avenge myself.

I'll get even, in other words. But no, what the apostle is describing is avenging wrong in the sense that you make wrong right. Yes.

Or restitution. So these are the seven marks that Paul lays out of repentance. I would urge every listener to go to 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and focus on verses 8 through 11.

Thank you. We have lines, every line is jammed. And we'd like to take some of your calls, be patient, and we'll get to as many of you as possible.

But brother, as you're describing this, I recognize in my own life that every time the Lord has given me victory over a sin bondage that has held me over pride or bitterness, every time that the victory has come as he has given me this terrifying fear of causing him to depart from me. Yes, yes. And that is right there, mark number four.

Yes, where I want God more than I want this sin anymore. Absolutely. And I can't have both.

Yes. So we could even go back to the question of yesterday. What will help me with repentance? What will prompt it? Well, there you have that list of seven.

Interesting, doesn't it? Yes, it does. Well, let's take some of the callers. I know some will want us just to pray together with them.

David, welcome. Welcome, Pastor Ray, Pastor Jay. Welcome, David.

We're glad you could call today. What would you like to ask? Well, I have a two-fold question. But question number one is, have we gone so far in America away from God that, I know that with God all things are

possible, but have we just gone too far? And also, I just think about sometimes the hardness of my own heart.

And I just want, I just need prayer. Okay, thank you, David. Brother Roberts, how would you answer? Hello? Somehow we lost Brother Roberts.

Let's see if we can get him back. Mighty God, I just ask right now in your great mercy. I ask right now, oh my God, that you would hear David's cry.

Lord, this work of repentance has to be done in my brother's heart. And I ask by your grace and your mercy that you would accomplish this. Oh Lord God, I ask that you would accomplish this work of grace.

And Lord, I ask that these marks that our brother has described would be evident in David's life. That oh Lord, there would be a hatred of that sin. And that there would be fear of turning aside from your way.

Thank you, Lord God. I pray in your holy name, amen. Brother Roberts, are you there now? I'm back again.

Good. His question, in case you didn't hear it, was simply... I was cut off somehow. I'm sorry.

The question was, has America gone too far or is there still hope? Oh, I believe there is immense hope. God is indeed the God of the impossible. We certainly wouldn't see any hope in terms of ourselves.

But in terms of God, oh, tremendous hope. God isn't finished with us yet. I have every reason to believe that God is going to step in and to bring this nation back to its own heart.

Thank you. And if one needs a little biblical ammunition, we have some promises in Scripture which have not been fulfilled. Promises, for instance, like those found in Romans 11, that the day must come when the Jews will be provoked to jealousy by the Gentile church.

No, that hasn't happened yet. No, it hasn't. But think of that.

Isn't that incredible that such holiness is going to grip the Gentile church? But the Jew will say, that's not fair. These blessings were meant for us. Why should they have them? We're going to get in on them.

Praise God. I believe there are many Scriptures that have yet to be fulfilled. And that the very nature of God is that he completes that work which he has begun.

He that hath begun a good work in you. I believe that's true individually. I believe it's true of corporate society.

And we're going to wait for that day of-- Eagerly and press into Jesus. Absolutely. David, thank you.

Thank you, David, for calling. Oh, God bless you. Dean, welcome.

You're on live with Pastor Ray and Jan and Richard Owen Robert. How are you doing? Good. What would you like to share? I have a question.

I was wondering if Pastor Robert can expound on 2 Corinthians 7-1 about the cleansing of ourselves. Yes, truly that the chapter is our repentance. So, he hasn't gotten away from the subject in that first verse.

Brother Roberts, hold just a minute. Dean, Dean. Yes.

Could you turn your radio off? Yeah, just turn it off. Thank you. Okay, Brother Roberts, now.

All right. The issue of repentance is right there starting at the first verse and remains a prominent issue in the whole chapter. We are to cleanse ourselves.

Now, part of repentance is getting away in a quiet place before the Lord and saying, now, Lord, if I'm going to be thorough in my repentance, I'm going to have to have you lead me into those areas in which I have been oblivious to sin, the things that I have done, harm that I've done to others, grievous wickedness against you that I haven't paid any attention to, I haven't kept any record of. So, we have got to compile some kind of a catalog or a list of the sins. I think one of the most excellent things an individual can do is to set aside a whole day and get away in a quiet place and get down before God and say, Lord, I want a thorough cleansing.

And in order to do that, I've got to know everything that's wrong that you want me to deal with today. And just opening completely before the Lord and letting him pinpoint those areas where repentance and cleansing are needed. What I hear you really saying is that so often we want to go to God and ask, forgive me, give me, give me, give me this.

And now you're saying that one of the secrets is just to go quietly and humbly and ask the Lord to speak to you so you can hear him and you can be directed by what he's telling you that he sees in your heart. Yes. And often, even in terms of confession, people are saying to the Lord, if I have sinned, please forgive me.

And I'm saying, eliminate the if. Get alone and find out what the sins are. Let the Lord reveal fully.

So, part of what I recognize, though, is that for many, their lives are so full of television and so full of money making that it's a strange concept to come before God to do business with him. Yes, I'm afraid you're right. But it's not too late for those folks.

That's right. Every one of us is needing to learn new ways in which to draw near to God. Amen.

Dean, did that answer your question? I think his cell phone went out. I think we lost him. That's all right.

He heard the answer on the radio. Thank you. We have another caller.

Welcome, Nathan. Yes, yes. I thoroughly enjoyed these last two days.

They've been immensely blessing to me. I just wanted to make a quick comment and read a scripture and a final comment on sort of what I've been getting out of the program. We have set up our own standards, and we're doing our own will and not the will of the Lord.

And as men depart further and further from God, Satan is permitted to have power over the children of disobedience. He hurls destruction among men. There is calamity by land and sea.

Property and life are destroyed by fire and flood. And these calamities are most awful. They're unexpected.

And these destructions will follow one after the other. But if there will be a hearing of the warnings that God has given, and if the churches will repent and return to their allegiance, then other cities may be spared for

a time. But if men who have been deceived continue in the same way in which they have been walking, disregarding the law of God and presenting falsehoods before the people of them, suffer calamity that their senses may be awakened.

Now, I just wanted to go quickly to the scriptures in Hosea, the fourth chapter. It says, verse one, it says, Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel. Lord, have the controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God in the land.

By swearing and lying and killing and stealing and committed adultery, they break out in blood such as blood. In verse six says, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, because thou has rejected knowledge. I would also reject thee, that thou shall be no priest to me, seeing that thou has forgotten the law of thy God.

I also will forget thy children. And the Lord has a controversy with us, the professed people of these last days. And the churches of the day are following in the steps of the Jews of old, who set aside the commandments of God for their own tradition.

And she's changed the ordinance and broken the everlasting covenant, I'm sorry. But I just wanted to tie it all together and talk about the solution here, because we're talking about the problem. But it's time for us, the whole Christian world, to search the scriptures for themselves.

And for in the pulpits all through our land, the law of God is made void by precepts and examples. He who instituted the Sabbath has never changed it to a common day. He rested on a definite day and blessed and sanctified a definite day.

And he requires the human family to observe the definite day. And we have gotten in trouble ever since we have told our people that God's law is no longer binding. And that has opened the floodgates of sin and woe upon this world.

And we are reaping the benefits or the whirlwind as we speak. Nathan, thank you. We're going to let him respond now.

Yes, and really to substantiate what you just said, I mentioned yesterday all this wonderful pamphlet material, sermons preached at solemn assemblies and national fast days. And when they catalog sins, almost invariably the first sin on the list that they drew up, and this would be in the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s, almost always the first sin were violations of the Lord's day. And now people act as if, well, there's no law.

I mean, that's foolishness. That's Old Testament. That's nothing to do with us.

And absolutely, the law of God stands. And the people of God, instead of having cast it aside, have it written on their hearts. And so they keep it with a spirit and a love and delight that they couldn't if it were merely put on them from outside.

Hmm. Let's go to a sharp focus, if we could, for just a moment. Brother Roberts, what kind of activity, preaching, what will bring the grief that is the prominent mark of repentance? Well, the pattern that the Lord seems to have used universally throughout this nation in earlier days was, first and foremost, what we've already discussed, the powerful proclamation of himself, laying out the greatness of God.

And then a profound preaching against sin, tied in with careful doctrinal preaching concerning how sin must deal with the great doctrines of repentance, as we've discussed, of justification by faith, of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. And I believe with all my heart that if we were to have a return to the kind of biblical preaching that used to characterize the evangelicals of America, we would see a wonderful, great awakening. That God would honor that as men and women began to cry out and say, we can't make it.

That's right. The preaching is so man-orientated. People who are already so comfortable that they're dying in their sins come to church and are made even more comfortable.

And the preaching must be discomfoting. It must arouse people out of their lethargy and their ease and cause them to be deeply agitated. Some places where I go to preach, the pastors are immensely worried.

Oh, this can't be right. These people are all agitated and upset. Why, here are some of my best people who think they're Christians, who believe they're Christians for years, are saying, no, I doubt that I was ever saved.

So the pastors want to smooth it all over. They want me to apply the balm of Gilead the rest of the week. And they're not willing to let that agitating work of the Holy Spirit produce a true repentance and a genuine conversion.

We're in such a rush to make confidence that long before the Holy Spirit has said anything to a person, we're pronouncing them as saved. Before we run out of time today, we need to just one more time give this telephone number you can order the new book that has just been published, Repentance, the First Word of the Gospel, or you can order the book on Revival. And let me give you that telephone number and you can call it now.

There will be someone there at 630-752-4122. Let me give you that number one more time. Jot it down, 630-752-4122 to order the books that Brother Roberts has written.

Thank you, Ray. And I'd like to go back, Brother Roberts, to the one question that Ray had just asked about what would bring the grief. And you were talking about the preaching and you spoke about yesterday about the one God.

And often we have the view of God of the Old Testament of the God of judgment and the New Testament is the God of love. Can you review a little bit on those two different views of God and how that impacts what you were just speaking about, man-oriented or God-oriented preaching? Yes, certainly. If one is the least bit fuzzy concerning God, then their preaching will be ineffectual preaching.

The preaching that has been used by the Holy Spirit in past revivals has been marked just as the preaching ministry of Christ was marked, with authority. People listen and they say, where does he get such authority? Well, he gets it from true faithfulness to the Word of God, seeing things exactly as they are and proclaiming them exactly as they are. And when there is a ministry of authority that is under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, then there is this tremendous level of discomfort that is created that drives people to their knees on their faces before God, pleading with him to forgive and to restore.

I believe that every preacher needs to rethink his own preparation and style of preaching. I believe that men spend time in the preparation of their minds and in the formulation of their words, but many of them spend no time in the preparation of their hearts and in seeking the empowerment of the Holy Spirit upon

the ministry of the Word. I believe, and I believe this with all my heart, that a gross mistake is made in supposing that a man is ready to preach when he knows what he is supposed to say.

He's got to go beyond that and gain by the grace of God the power to say it in the Holy Spirit's fashion, with impact, with conviction, and with the alteration of the whole being of the hearer. Now, obviously, if a man is not living by the Word himself, he cannot preach it authoritatively. He can say all the same things that another man says, and it comes across limber.

People only preach with authority when their hearts do not condemn them. In the first epistle to John, there's a statement to this effect. If our hearts do not condemn us, then we know that we have the thing that we ask of him.

So if a man has thoroughly prepared his mind, and he says, Oh Lord, bless what I'm about to do as he goes to preach. But his own conscience says, and why should God bless your preaching? And the Spirit of God reminds him, you've been prayerless all week, or you've entertained lustful thoughts, or you've focused on worldly things. It takes integrity.

It takes integrity. Yes, exactly. Brother, we're out of time, but I want in this last minute, would you just pray for the city of Washington and for those who've been listening? Lord, we do bow our hearts before you in deep concern for our capital city.

Oh, that the Spirit of God might move across that city in a powerful revival. We pray for our president. We pray for those in the various aspects of government.

That they might yield themselves to the Spirit of God. That they might bow in brokenness and conviction. That they might know true repentance and faith.

That our capital city might be cleansed by the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Jesus. The preceding program, Springs of Living Water, has been sponsored by the National Prayer Chapel.

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