

## It is the Goodness of God that Leads One to Repentance

### Romans 2:4

Sometimes we have the wrong idea of what repentance actually means. It is not our ability to convince our Heavenly Father that we are sincerely sorry for what we have done, nor is it our ability to somehow atone for what we have done wrong.

The actual word “repentance” means to “change your mind.” The Greek word is “meta, noia” and it actually means to “think differently about or reconsider.”

I am reminded of a bible study that I was conducting in Corpus Christy Texas several years ago. It came to prayer time at the end of the study and this dear sister started sharing about how her son had gone astray. He was apparently trapped in some immoral behavior and she of course wanted him to stop.

So during the prayer time, she began to beseech the Lord to somehow stop the behavior of her son, even if it took “breaking his legs” or causing some sort of harsh activity to make him see his foolishness. She went on and on about what she envisioned would be necessary to get her son to repent and come back to the Lord.

After she was through with her prayer, I reminded her of the passage in Romans 2: 4 which fully states “do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the “goodness of God” leads you to repentance.”

If the truth be known, often times we despise His goodness toward others. We also at times despise His riches toward those who we think deserve His punishment. Further we get upset with the Lord when He seems to put up with the behavior of others, way past the point of bringing correction to them.

Yet, the fact remains that when you and I come face to face with His goodness and His majesty, it causes us to fall on our knees and cry out as Isaiah did in chapter 6 verse 5 “woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

In Luke chapter 19, we read the story of the “chief tax collector” (which by way of interpretation means that he was a “great sinner”) by the name of Zacchaeus, who when he heard the Lord Jesus was coming his way, climbed up into a sycamore tree to be able to see him. Why the tree? He was small in stature and could not see over the crowd.

Verse 4 says that “when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him and said to him “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down for today I must stay at your house.”

Now the folks around Jesus at the time complained saying “He (Jesus) has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner”.

Imagine the acceptance that Zacchaeus felt. Here was the Lord of glory requesting to spend time with him.

Notice the response of Zacchaeus in verse 8 – “Look Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have *taken anything from anyone by false accusation*, I restore fourfold.”

The goodness of the Lord Jesus immediately brought this man to change his mind about his behavior. It was not the punishment of God that brought him to this change, but the acceptance of the Lord Jesus.

Time and time again we see the same example in scripture.

Sally and I have just returned from a marvelous vacation where we were able to visit Alaska. We fished for salmon in the rivers and streams. Saw the marvelous glaciers throughout the region and then visited beautiful Seattle, We were privileged to visit the northern part of California with its redwood forest. Again it brought us to the reality of His majesty. As we see this beautiful country, and see ourselves in relation to the size of these trees, it brings us into a proper understanding of how “great is our God.” Trust me when I say –“the earth is full of His glory.” Truly His invisible attributes are clearly seen throughout our blessed nation.

Spend a little time this week enjoying His creations. Get into the great outdoors, smell the flowers, the fields, and listen to the birds. If you are getting ready to go deer hunting, notice the surroundings as you await your prey. Smell the fallen leaves. Take a good look at the changing colors and remember who it is that has created all of this wonder.

When we let “His goodness” overpower our lives, it will change how we think about Him.

