

## **MORE ON REPENTANCE: 04/15/2018**

Before I close out here this morning, I want to revisit the doctrine of repentance. I am not going to compromise on the doctrine of repentance being required for salvation. I do not care how much pressure comes from the crowd that says you do not have to repent for salvation. I am going to teach what the Bible has to say about repentance. I am going to close this morning by reading you a response that I prepared after receiving an email from a friend in West Virginia where he forwarded me some comments concerning a sermon preached by Pastor Charles Lawson. Here is my written response to yet another attack on the doctrine of repentance:

I recently listened to a sermon by Pastor Charles Lawson titled “Belief Based On Feelings?” in response to an email I had received. I listened to the whole sermon because of the attack on that sermon by a listener on Sermon Audio. This listener’s attack on the sermon by Brother Lawson proved that once again we have many individuals who misunderstand what Biblical repentance is. I am convinced that most people who rant against repentance have a misunderstanding of what Biblical repentance is making it a work of the human flesh when instead it is both a gift and a work of the Holy Ghost. Repentance is said to be given in Acts 5:31. That makes it a gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 11:18 says that repentance unto to life is granted by God. That makes it a gift. Acts 13:24 and 19:4 refers to the baptism of repentance. That baptism is not water baptism. It is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That makes it a work of God. 2 Timothy 2:25 says “if God will peradventure give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”. Once again that makes repentance a gift of God. I continue to do battle with those who do not understand Biblical repentance and those who are opposed to repentance as a necessity for salvation. There are people who are taught that you have to repent first before you can be born again. While I do not agree with that order of events in salvation, I believe that you must repent to be saved. Theologically speaking, if we believe that repentance is a work of the indwelling Holy Ghost, then faith must come before repentance since it is the work of the Holy Ghost that does not indwell a sinner until they believe. I believe that it is the indwelling Holy Ghost that works that repentance. From a practical standpoint, faith and repentance are ALMOST simultaneous events. From a practical standpoint, in application what difference does it make if faith or repentance comes first? I repeat. What difference does it make? For years, I have said that salvation can be likened unto a coin: on one side is faith and on the other side is repentance. In my early Christian life, repentance was a doctrine in my life, but as I have grown in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it has become an understanding and a lifestyle. Some people define repentance as a simply turning from unbelief to belief. That confounds faith with repentance. They are different. Otherwise, why would God distinguish between them in the same verse (Acts 20:21). God requires both as a condition of salvation. If you have not repented, you are not saved. You will not, and cannot, repent until you have exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This problem of rejecting Biblical repentance is not going to go away as long as heretics are leading their victims to believe that all you have got to do for salvation is pray a faithless sinner’s prayer. If faith in salvation is the gift of God, then what, pray tell, does God require of the lost sinner for salvation? The whole idea that faith is a gift of God in salvation comes from a Calvinistic interpretation of Ephesians 2:8-9. Ephesians 2:8-9 says:

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<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Salvation is the gift of God in response to the outreached hand of faith from the lost sinner. It is salvation that is the gift and not faith. Grammatically speaking, saved, or salvation, is the subject of Ephesians 2:8 with the prepositional phrase “through faith” telling us how we get salvation. By grammatical definition, a prepositional phrase such as “through faith” can never be the subject of a sentence. The words “it” and “gift” in Ephesians 2:8 refers back to the subject of the sentence which is “saved”.

Repentance is the bow that God ties around the gift of salvation. You can get into all the arguments about a sinner must be willing to repent to get saved. I believe that, but the lost sinner’s will is not going to be changed until they put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are those that mock any supposed sorrow associated with repentance. They state that you do not have to be sorry for any sin to get saved. If you believe in a repentanceless salvation in no way associated with sorrow, judge your belief by the following passage of scripture:

2 Corinthians 7:9-10

<sup>9</sup> Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. <sup>10</sup> For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.