

Job 11.13-14—The Four Steps of Repentance

Prepare your heart for a thorough repentance

- I. Repentance must start at the root: the heart, out of which flow all the issues of life—and sin, Prov 4.23
 - A. If this is where God begins in regeneration (Ezk 36.25-27) it's where we must begin in repentance.
 - B. When we wander from God into sin, that wandering begins in the heart. So our repentance must begin where our sin began.
- II. The word *prepare* entails a fixing of the heart on an object or resolution, Ps 57.7. Repentance begins by fixing the heart on it; it can't be done half-heartedly, Js 1.7-8
 - A. What does this look like?
 1. Being fully resolved, by God's grace, to go through with it, come hell or high water, no matter the cost to self or life.
 2. To "cut off the whole hand," not just a finger or two, Mt 5.30
 - B. Wholehearted repentance is whole-person repentance. No holds barred. Going for broke.
- III. It's self-deceptive to talk of having repented or of being determined to repent unless this is the nature of it, cf. 2Chr 12.14; Acts 8.21
- IV. Are *you* willing, determined, and fully resolved, to leave *your* sin?

Stretch out your hands to God in prayer for grace

- I. It's God, by His grace and Spirit, who begins the work of repentance in our hearts. So we must simultaneously stretch out the hands to God in prayer for the grace to repent and leave our sin. Turning from our sin, it's toward God that we must now set our feet and faces.
- II. There are 4 things which this action of stretching out the hands to God can signify that'll help us understand the necessity of this step.
 - A. A resignation of ourselves to the will and work of God. Those who give their hearts to God won't stop at giving the hands to God too. In repentance, we hold nothing back for self/sin.
 - B. An earnest striving with God in prayer, Gen 32.26. It's to pray as a humble petitioner, begging for the Lord's alms.
 - C. The lifting up of our souls to God—and not just our petitions, Ps 25.1
 - D. All our hope and expectation is from God alone, and unless He deliver us, we're lost and undone forever, Ps 4.8

- III. There's no repentance without this step of reaching out to God in believing prayer that He would work a full repentance in us.

Put your sin far away from you

- I. The hands must be cleansed as well as the heart.
 - A. Only the Lord can see the heart, Jer 17.10. But that man who's content with his unclean hands carries an unclean heart behind them. True repentance must be seen at the finger tips, Mt 3.8
- II. Implications
 - A. You've got to *put your sin away*, Mt 5.30. If sin dwells with you, it will undo you. You need to killing sin (by repentance) or it'll be killing you (by deception).
 - B. Sin must be put *far away from you*. You must, in repentance, put it as far from you as God does in your pardon, Ps 103.12
 - C. You *can't* draw near to God in prayer *unless* you put your sin far away, Ps 66.18; Isa 59.1-2
- III. You can't repent unless, as far as it depends upon you, you do everything in your power to put your sin far away from you.

Don't let known sin be welcome in your house

- I. As long as we're sinners and as long as our family is made up of sinners, sin will arise. But it must never dwell among us with our permission and liking, Ps 101.7; Gen 35.2-3
 - A. Though we can't keep evil out, we can thrust it out. Though we can't hinder its coming in, we can hinder its staying in.

Encouragements

- I. Christ died and was raised up again to *give you* repentance, Acts 5.31
- II. Christ *commanded* that repentance and forgiveness be preached to you to assure you that His gospel is fundamentally about granting a full pardon to the penitent, Lk 24.47
- III. Christ came to call sinners to repentance, Lk 5.32. That means He came for the sinful, the guilty, the ashamed—*for you*.
- IV. All that Christ underwent on the cross at the hands of divine wrath was so that you might be saved from your sin and by repentance turn from it unto God. Won't you turn!?
- V. Repentance is a forerunner to spiritual blessings, cf. 1Cor 6.10-11