Godly sorrow

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0:00] And we may read again at verse 9. 2 Corinthians 7, verses 9 to 11. 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. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.
For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it brought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge.
In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. The reason for Paul's strong tone written to this church in Corinth can be seen from 1 Corinthians chapter 5.
And verse 1 says there, It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.
[1:42] Sin prevailed among certain members of the Corinthian church. Sin spreads quickly, and in using medical parlance it is very contagious.

Sin spreads easily and quickly, takes deep root wherever it spreads, and is a blight on the hearts and lives of men and women.
It is our cancer eating into the spiritual and moral welfare of every society where it is found.
And there is nothing that is going to stop it except the application of the power and grace of God himself.
Sin prevailed among you, and this man, and this man he was directed by the Spirit of God to write to these people. And the Lord directed him in his use of language, in his use of words, in his extent of reprimand to these people.
[3:02] And we see that he confronted them and challenged them with the evil and the serious nature of their continuing sin. And it seems that the person concerned in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 1 wasn't alone in his practicing of that particular sin, but that his influence seems to have spread to many other people, and he had carried certain of the church along with him in his evil practice.

And even ourselves, at the outset, if we consider that we are not guilty of that particular sin that is highlighted by the Apostle here, yet there are many sins in our lives also, that have to be challenged, that have to be uncovered, that must be penetrated by the light and the power of the Gospel, if they are going to be eradicated from our lives as church people.
We have the sin of pride, we have many sins against light, we have the sin of selfishness, self-centeredness, many sins are attributed to us as people in the world.
And remember, no man is an island. No man lives to himself. No man lives in a vacuum. Your lifestyle is going to be seen by everybody with whom you have contact, and you are going to have influence for good or for evil on everybody with whom you have contact in the world.
And is it not better to take stock of that situation before things really develop into an out-of-control situation?
[5:03] Is it not better to listen to the directives of the Word of God regarding sin, regarding hidden sin, regarding sins of omission and commission, and listen to what the Lord says concerning them?

We see that the Word sent by the hand of Titus to these people was blessed to them. They received the ministry of Titus.
They received his very forceful ministry. They were melted under its power through the working of the Holy Spirit, and they were enabled to repent of their sin and turn from it with hatred for it and turn from it unto God himself with full endeavor after new obedience.

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Paul in the Bible had their Galatians 9 of 1.4.
It says in verse 8, though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent. For I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.
[6:31] Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance. There was a particular dimension in their sorrow concerning their sin that gave the apostle reason to rejoice before his maker.

He says that they were sorry to repentance. It is a sorrow that is completely different from the remorse that is often felt by people who commit certain sins.
It wasn't of the same, it was of a different caliber completely to the never again approach to particular sins.
Like many people say concerning the sin of drunkenness and other sins as well. In the cold light of day they say never again concerning that particular sin.
But before that day is out they are headlong into that sin again. That is not the kind of sorrow that these people had that gave the apostle reason to rejoice.
[7:41] It was a sorrow at which, at the root of which was a change of heart. A sorrow which led to their turning away from their sin. A sorrow that led to grief and hatred of their sin and a turning unto God himself.

You see, sorrow itself is not repentance. Many people sorrowed for their sin. We believe Judas had a certain amount of sorrow for his sin when he betrayed the Lord.
Many people experience a certain kind of sorrow. Many people experience remorse, like I said before. Other people condemn themselves even for their malpractices in the world.
Many people loathe themselves for their sin. And many people, as a result of that kind of inward struggle and inward remorse and sorrow, many people have an external reformation of life.
But the gospel demands something more radical than an external change of life. The gospel demands an inward penitence and an inward reformation of life.
[9:04] Repentance is a change of life. Repentance is a change of heart, not a change of outward life. Repentance is a change of view concerning sin.

Repentance is a change of feeling and affection regarding sin. Repentance is a change of purpose regarding our lifestyle.
Repentance results in a change of life as a result of the grace of God being implanted and operating in men's and women's hearts.
Godly sorrow, therefore, is a sorrow agreeable unto God. A sorrow that agrees with God in his attitude to sin.
A sorrow that is according to the will of God. A sorrow that is begotten from a new attitude to sin and ungodliness.
[10:13] Godly sorrow is approved of God. And this is what we all want today, is it not? That we sorrow in this way over our sin. Is there anybody who wants to get this particular day over with?

And into, as it were, the communion service is proper. I know that that kind of feeling can prevail among people. People don't really want to be, shall I say, boxed in regarding a day of penitence. A day of confession of sin. But let me say to you that confession of sin is at the root. And it is of the essence of any vital Christianity.
It must be. You must have a God-like attitude to your sin. You must hate your sin. And you must hate it in the light of God's holiness and justice.
And in the light of your own responsibility to that holy and just and true God. And we see then that this man rejoiced to know that this godly sorrow was exercised in the hearts of these people.
[11:30] Because he says it worketh repentance unto salvation. You see how precious that man saw the confession of these people.

The penitence of these people. He saw that it was something that was inherent in the salvation that they were partaking of as vital members of Christ's body in the world.
You see, the sorrow on account of sin which arises from a proper view of God. And our relationship with God leads us to that entire and inward change of life.
Which is meant by repentance. Repentance, of course, we must remember again, is not the ground of our salvation. Repentance is not the ground of our salvation, but it is a very, very necessary part of it.

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And you see the way this man has joined each and every one of these aspects of salvation together. In that verse there, verse 9, No, I rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance.
[12:47] For ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrowed worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of. The repentance is not to be repented of.

People who have a true repentance in their lives, they do not repent of the repentance that they exercise. Yea, they seek that they might repent more and more every day.
This is what is true in the life of the Christian that is properly exercised. That is a lively Christian. A Christian that hasn't been blinkered and blinded by the ravages of sin in his life.
People who have true repentance, they don't repent of their repentance. But they seek to have more and more repentance. More and more confession.
And the nearer they are to the Lord, and the more light they have on their situation, the more need they see in their life for repentance.
[13:58] And again, neither do they repent of the salvation that they have.

They don't repent of the repentance, neither do they repent of the joy of salvation that they experience. They want to have more of it. They want to experience more of the salvation that God has purchased for them and is applying to them by his Holy Spirit.
The sorrow of the world worketh death. The sorrow of unregenerate men worketh death. The sorrow of unsanctified hearts worketh death.
Of course it does. It must work death. If it is not by faith that you repent. If it is not as a result of God's grace that you repent. Your sorrow, however extravagant your sorrow may be over your sins. It will only work death in your life. It is wrong to think that the natural tendency of pain and sorrow is to do good in the lives of men.
[15:14] The ultimate good will never materialize in your life unless there is the grace of God operating in your life. Repentance unto life is a saving grace.

A saving grace. Repentance unto life is a saving grace. This gave the apostle reason to rejoice regarding these people. They had the salvation of the Lord.
They had the Holy Spirit in their lives. And they were enabled by the Holy Spirit to repent in this particular way. verse 11 makes it clear to us that there were certain areas of their lives that had a certain revelation shall I say of repentance there were certain aspects of their lives that showed the extent and depth of their repentance and I would like just for a short while to to comment on each of these aspects of the repentance as we see from verse 11 says therefore behold this self-same thing that you sold after a godly sword what carefulness that brought in you yea what clearing of yourselves yea what indignation what fear and so on this was the outcome of their godly sorrow this was the outcome of their real repentance it was a repentance within the bounds of the grace of god and the influence of god's grace in their hearts and lives and this is the outcome of it in their hearts and in their lives how many of us would seek this kind of repentance this kind of sorrow this day well this is what gave the apostle joy as he wrote the infallible word that he says now I rejoice a god-taught man rejoicing at the extent of repentance and the kind of repentance that touched these men's hearts first of all then it says in verse 11 behold this self-same thing that he's hearted after a godly sword what carefulness it wrought in you what carefulness very often people who are swallowed up in sinful practices even Christian people they become very very careless in relation to their Christian life and witness and there is only one thing that will turn them back from that way of carelessness and that is the application of the grace of god enabling them to repent of their sin and you see the carefulness spoken of here has more than carefulness built into the meaning of the word there is also a zealous attitude to Christianity a zealous attitude to their witness in the world a diligent and earnest care regarding their witness and regarding the vitality of their Christian life and that had been abandoned by them people who were headlong into every kind of sin they don't care for zeal they don't care to be earnest and diligent Christians but in a day of his power they are made willing and able once again to be zealous and to be diligent and to be earnest and to be careful regarding their life many of us fall into the category of carelessness regarding your Christian witness regarding your Christian lives well you need to repent friend and you need to sorrow after a godly sort and you need to receive the grace of the most high to enable you to turn round and face things with zeal and diligence and care and reverence

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secondly in verse 11 he reveals to us that these people through the grace of god cleared themselves yea he says what clearing of yourselves what is involved here well there is a certain an element of of apologizing an element of confession an element of coming before before the lord most high with the words of penitence and confession on our lips and saying to the lord forgive me i am a sinner lord remember me i am a sinner like the man who went up to the temple to pray he knew his sin he knew to a certain extent the ravages that sin had made in his life and he went up to jehovah and he wouldn't lift his eyes unto heaven but smote his breast and said this yes i apologize for my sin have mercy upon me i am a sinner these these people wanted to clear themselves before the lord jehovah and they knew that there was nothing that was going to clear them before jehovah but the application of the blood of christ in their hearts and lives there was nothing going to give them to walk in the light but the application of his grace and there was nothing going to give them cleanliness of heart and life and witness but the application of god's power in a day of his grace to their hearts and to their lives and they want to come now and confess their sin and clear themselves not self-righteously before god but clear themselves declaring their sinfulness and declaring god's righteousness and justice and truthfulness they didn't want to hide their sin anyone who wants to hide his sin will not he will at no in no way he will in no way profit by it no but these people want wanted to bring their sin into the open they wanted to be cleared of their sin and again the third point in verse 11 says here what indignation yea he says what carefulness what clearing of yourselves what indignation indignation at the offense that was committed or indignation maybe mostly at themselves for the fact that such an offense had been found in their lives an offense such as this kind of sin had been practiced by them they felt angry at themselves they felt offended at themselves for their misconduct before god and this is maybe one of the most convincing aspects of sincere repentance when somebody has a sin in his life and who is he going to blame for it is he going to blame the man who started it all off in the congregation

I hope not is he going to blame the old man as it were in his own life I think not either is he going to blame his fallen nature I think not who is he going to blame he lays the blame at his own heart at his own heart the christian when he is in his place will never lay the blame anywhere else but with himself and this is the meaning of the indignation spoken of here these people laid the blame for square at their own doorstep and they faced god with that responsibility I am a sinner do you find this spirit in yourself that you want to lay the blame for your sin on yourself alone or would you rather put it off onto somebody else onto the other person who influenced you for evil onto the other person maybe who brought you along a a side road away from the main thoroughfare of christian vitality and vibrancy

[24:44] I hope not I hope you confess your own sin and confess it truly and truthfully before the most high and it says again yea what fear what fear this has wrought in you what fear a glorious aspect of their repentance fear what is what is what is at the heart at the root of this fear well proverbs 28 and verse 14 says happy is the man that feareth all way happy is the man that feareth all way but the man that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief you see fear and hardness of heart contrasted the man who fears hasn't got a hard heart according to this context the man who goes on in sin has hardness of heart he is careless about the state of his heart the state of his soul the state of his witness the state of his christianity and he fears he lives not in a slavish fear

I know he lives in a holy fear a fear of the most high a fear full of reverence and adoration for the holiness of the most high are you hard-hearted see that you be not hard-hearted on a day of repentance see that you not be see that you be a fearful christian a christian full of fear and adoration and honoring the lord with your lips and with your lifestyle you see people who are hardened in sin they don't fear with this fear who is like them they feel they go on disregarding every sort of warning light that the gospel may put before them but in a day of penitence in a day of repentance they fear and their heart isn't hardened and isn't hard anymore it is softened by the shout of the most holy god the shout of the grace of the most holy god and he goes on and he says what vehement desire what vehement desire is your desire as it was when you first became a christian has it got the same vehemence as it was in olden days well if it hasn't maybe you need to take stock of your spiritual state what were these people desiring with such vehemence in the day when the lord enabled them to repent what were they desiring i'm sure they were wanting that the evil that had spread in their church in their society would be corrected would be stopped this is a vehement desire in the hearts of all christians when they're in their place that the word of god would be powerful and and conquering amongst them as a people as a church but also these people

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wanted their own improvement not only the improvement of the church at large and the congregation to which they belonged but they also wanted their own improvement only when the lord came with his light and with his power did they realize how poor and beggarly they were how stunted was their growth how little fruit they were bearing yea they were causing more trouble in the in the vineyard of the lord than health or good and then when they got a vision and a view of that they wanted with a vehement desire to be improved to be improved do you not want this do you do you not want the improvement that comes from above do you not want to grow in grace and in the knowledge of your lord and savior do you not want to be a a strong witness in the world of today there are so many strong witnesses for the adversary there are so many strong witnesses for the heretical faiths there are so many untiring people in the other faiths which aren't according to the scripture where is your vehement desire where is your vehemence it may be a mark of your deadness if you lack this vehemence and again
what zeal he says in verse 11 yay what zeal we all knew zeal at the beginning of our christian lives at least most people did they wanted to go out and to preach the gospel to everyone to tell people what they have had found to to tell people the glories of the messiah zeal maybe sometimes lacking a little in knowledge but still zeal but now that you have gained knowledge as you go on in your christian life where is your zeal to accompany your knowledge well this was the portion of these people in the day of god's power they knew something of the zeal that they had once known they wanted god's kingdom to be extended in their own hearts in their own lives and in the hearts of other people they wanted many many more people to come under the influence of the gospel they wanted people to repent they wanted to pray more this may be a mark of of your spiritual vibrancy how often do you use the secret place in relation to the most high the throne of grace i remember once i think i've told this before but i remember once an old person telling me illustrating the this point of of spiritual backsliding that there was a man there and he used to pray day by day in his barn and he had worn a footpath into the grass he had worn away the grass by his the marks of his feet going back and forth every day to the barn to pray to his lord in secret a man full of zeal a man full of vehement desire a man full of care a man full of of um earnestness regarding his spiritual state before god but there came a time when somebody noticed that the grass had started growing on the little path between the house and the barn and that was that was one aspect visible to all who who knew him that his backsliding had begun to grip him powerfully that he wasn't the same as he was before that he wasn't as zealous that he wasn't as careful with the things of the most high that his spiritual state had started to decline is there grass growing on your footpath to the throne of grace is there well face the most high today and confess your sins of omission and it is an awful sin of omission not to frequent the throne of grace the way you ought to and pray that you might have this zeal and knowledge along with it zeal with knowledge zeal for god's cause zeal for his glory and then the final point in verse 11 says here what revenge yea he says what revenge maybe you think it's a strange word in relation to to repentance and penitence what revenge what vengeance what vengeance regarding sin this man had gone over to god's side concerning sin he had
the attitude of the most high concerning sin he wanted justice to be exercised concerning sin in himself and in all those around him he wanted he wanted godly sorrow and the godly sorrow raised in him a sense of justice concerning sin sin ought to be punished and that is the attitude that each and everyone who is led by the most high in relation to sin will have concerning sin sin ought to be punished and they will say amen to the lord when he says that sin has to be punished in themselves what glorious influence what a glorious influence grace has in the lives of men and women when it changes them to being people who cherish sin in their bosom to being people who desire to have revenge and justice exercised concerning that same sin great is his grace great is his grace these then were some of the aspects of these people's repentance do we find any of them in ourselves today do we find a desire that these things would would be experienced by us that we might know what it is to again be zealous in the work of god to be diligent to be earnest to be indignant concerning our own sin laying the blame at our own doorstep and facing the lord on the basis of what he says come unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth do we want this fear do we want this godly fear or do we want hardness of heart surely we want fear surely we want to come and lay ourselves and prostrate ourselves before him in fear godly fear and surely we want the vehement desire surely we want to see improvement in ourselves well where else can we go to to whom else can we go as the disciples said thou hast the words of eternal life to whom else can we go and this is a day that has been set aside like I said already by the church that people might come to a throne of grace that people might come to the word that people might come to the services and

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seek the blessing of the most high upon them as they confess their sins and seek by the grace of god to forsake them may the lord bless anything that was according to his word and his mind let us pray lord we pray that thou wouldst bless us we know that we are sinful and we confess our sin freely before thee now but we know also that thou art the savior of sinners and we rejoice to know that this is true also oh may the savior come amongst us as congregations gather during this communion season and may he may he apply unto us what we need for salvation may the holy spirit take of the things of christ and reveal them unto us may we glory in the provision of the gospel this day and rejoice to know that christ lives and he is able to cleanse us from all sin bless those who are going to preach in the evening services we pray lord that thou wouldst bless them and cleanse us from our sin for jesus sake amen

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