

REPENT AND TURN TO GOD

Do you know that the goodness of God is urging you to repentance? God wants you to be saved. He is not willing that you should perish. So He is leading, pleading and urging you to repent of your sins. You should not treat this matter lightly.

Firstly, God shows goodness to you in many ways, and through these dealings of goodness He leads you to repentance. Perhaps God has prospered you in your life. Perhaps He has saved you from certain dangers, like drowning or traffic accidents. Perhaps you were very sick and God has healed you wonderfully. Perhaps you were being tempted to neglect the way to God, so He sent His messengers to tell you how greatly you were in need of salvation. They told you of God's wonderful love by which He sent His only begotten Son the Lord Jesus Christ to die upon the cross, and shed His precious blood to atone for your sins. They told you how the Lord Jesus suffered and bore the punishment, which should have fallen upon you. Now if you repent of your sins and accept Christ Jesus as your own personal Saviour you will be forgiven and accepted by God at once. Your name will be written in the Book of life and your place will be reserved in the Kingdom of God. Through these loving messages and in these loving ways God has been calling you and urging you to repentance.

Some people refuse to see God's goodness and kindness towards them. They say it is all their good luck and good fortune. They assign everything to chance, or to natural causes, or to natural evolution. They harden their hearts and refuse to acknowledge the goodness of God towards them.

Some people raise a great hue and cry against corruption in others, and try to hide the fact that they are corrupt themselves. Dear friend, have you repented or are you finding fault with others without repenting yourself? Are you ignoring the goodness, which God is showing towards you without realizing that God is using these loving ways to lead you to repentance? "Therefore thou art inexcusable. O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things, But we are sure that the judgement of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:1-4).

It is reported that once a man tried to assassinate Abraham Lincoln, resident of the United States, out of personal hatred for him, His attempt was a failure, and he found himself in prison under sentence of death. The date for his execution was fixed, and was drawing near. In the meantime President Abraham Lincoln decided to show him mercy, and signed his pardon, the prison officers took the news to the prisoner. To their great surprise the man replied, "I don't believe it". Then higher officers came and explained to him that the pardon was genuine. He still replied with the same words. Finally the Governor of the prison, the highest officer, went to him personally, and yet the man stubbornly replied, "I don't believe it, I don't believe it", the news was conveyed to the President, and the reply came, "The pardon is cancelled". On the appointed day the man was executed. He had despised the goodness of the President. Will you despise the goodness of God Who is willing to pardon you if you only repent and ask His forgiveness?

Sometimes God sends us bitter experiences to urge us to repent. Yet He would rather have us to repent without them. "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Psalm 32:9). When we neglect to turn to God, bitter experiences like "the bit and the bridle" become necessary.

The children of Israel were so wayward that God had to bring many afflictions upon them to make them to repent. Then God sent the following message to them through the prophet Amos. "And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you,...yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence...your young men have I slain with the sword...yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah...yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord" (Amos 4:6-11).

Perhaps you can remember how often God has sent trials upon you in order to urge you to repent. I have heard many giving testimony how they repented in a time of sorrow or sickness or their affliction. But as for you, your own conscience perhaps tells you that in spite of all these afflictions still you have not humbled yourself and still you have not turned to the Lord in true repentance.

Thirdly, God weeps over you if you still refuse to repent. I know many mothers have wept because of an ungrateful and wayward son or daughter. The prophet Jeremiah tells us of God's sorrow over His unrepentant people. He describes it in a way that we can understand. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer.9: 1). "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Lam.1: 12).

God's sorrow becomes very real to us in the New Testament when we see the Lord Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it" (Luke 19:41). Your heart should melt when you hear His lamentation over Jerusalem, because it shows how the Lord Jesus laments over you also. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt.23: 37).

The curtain has been lifted, and God allows you to see things that others have never seen, that the loving God, your Creator and your Saviour, is weeping over you because you have not yet repented. Once a mother was praying with her son for her son's conversion. The young man opened his eyes and looked at his praying mother's face and he saw tears in her eyes. He could not bear to see the sight and closed his eyes again. After his mother passed away to be with the Lord, one day her prayer was answered. The young man was converted and became a child of God. That young man's heart was touched when he saw his mother weeping. Is your heart so hard that it is not touched even when you see your Saviour weeping over you?

Our loving God is urging you to repentance by His dealings of goodness, by your afflictions, and by allowing you to see Him weeping over you. Will you not repent today and give your heart to Him?