

THE TRUTH AND EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S SALVATION

Lesson Thirteen

HOW TO BE SAVED - FROM SIN (1)

Burden to Impart:

The next two lessons deal with salvation from sin. *The first requirement for salvation from sin is a genuine repentance* (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38). When the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sinful condition (John 16:8-9), and we recognize our real situation before God and repent, we experience the forgiveness of our sins and the covering of our nakedness with Christ, as the "best robe" covered the repentant prodigal in Luke 15.

Memory Verse: "And that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations..." (Luke 24:47).

Facts to Teach:

1. To repent is to "have a change of mind issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose" (Matt. 3:2, note 1 in the Recovery Version of the New Testament). When someone has heard the truth of the Gospel and has been enlightened by God he is able to repent. Once his eyes have been "opened" he is able to "turn from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God" and "receive forgiveness from sins" (Acts 26:18).
2. By nature we are blind (not seeing or understanding things as God sees them) and hardened in heart (not truly concerned about God or God's righteousness). It usually takes some kind of self-disappointment or failure for our proud and hardened hearts to repent and turn back to God. The earlier in life that this happens, the better. The smaller the sin or failure that God is able to use to pierce our conscience, the better. Due to an extremely hardened heart some people must almost reach the point of destruction before they will finally surrender and turn back to God.
3. The classical example of repentance is that of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24. After the younger son foolishly and selfishly squandered his dear father's inheritance, he was eventually reduced to poverty, hunger and shame, coveting even the pig's food which his father fed his pigs. Finally, however, he "came to himself" (v. 17). This was not only because of his circumstances, but because of the Spirit's searching and enlightening. His words, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you," indicated that he had recognized his sin both before God and man (his father), and had made a turn in his heart and mind. That is, he had repented.
4. When the repented prodigal returned to his father he was not reproached or punished. He was graciously forgiven and generously cared for. This shows us that the way to be saved from sin is to repent and return to our loving God and Father who is waiting to receive us back to Himself. As the prodigal's dirty rags and unclean condition was covered up by the "best robe," we also are saved and covered with Christ as our righteousness when we repent and come back to God (1 Cor. 1:30).

[See Gospel Outlines, Subject 91, by W. Lee; also Hymns #1052.]