

Winning the Battle Over Our Past: Walking in Freedom and Transformation

- A. The core of salvation is the introduction of newness of life, yet most of us have never experienced “newness of life” because we are still dominated by our past. **Where does the past affect us the most? In our mind and heart.** We can be completely removed from the situation or environment that hurt us or affected us, yet we are still living from that place of woundedness and rejection.
- B. We find one key to overcoming this issue in the introduction of the gospel of Matthew. Both the message of John the Baptist and Jesus were a call to **repent**. This carries the idea of rethinking your life in the light of truth. This means that we must begin to reorient ourselves to our new life with new ways of thinking, new ways of dealing with situations/challenges, new values, new priorities etc.
- C. We must begin to deal with the mindsets and beliefs that have brought us to our current condition. We must address the “lens” of our lives that causes us to live, believe and behave certain ways. In Ephesians 4, Paul commands us to “put off our old way of life” and be made new by dealing with our mindsets. This means that we are to do away with former things and integrate new things into our lives and hearts.
- D. We must understand that our life apart from Christ has conditioned us to think, act and believe in ways that are contrary to Scripture and independent from God. This is not a minor issue and if it remains unresolved will cripple our progress forward. If we do not deal with this issue we will reconstruct the very thing that is destroying our lives. We must forsake the “tools” that have built our past and shaped our lives/ hearts and begin to pick up the “tools” that the Lord has provided for us through His word and Spirit. This is our only hope for change and growth. Outside of this we are simply acting insane– doing the same thing and expecting a different result.
- E. One of the hardest things to watch is people continuing to walk in circles/patterns of destruction in their personal lives. It is not that these people don’t genuinely “love God”, but they are stuck on the carousel of “Christianity” that takes them in emotional circles rather than transformation and growth. They fail to integrate the word of God into their lives therefore they never experience the liberty and change it brings

We cannot neglect the emphasis of repentance in the bible.

A. It was the first message of John the Baptist

- a. The message of John the Baptist was the message of repentance in preparation for the coming One. [Matthew 3:3, Isaiah 40:3]
- b. Every valley exalted, mountain brought low, crooked place made straight, rough place made smooth

B. It was the first message of Jesus

- a. Repent, the kingdom is at hand
- b. Each teaching, parable and act of Jesus was aimed at leading people into repentance

C. It was the first message of the Early Church

- a. What must we do– Repent

D. It was the last message of Jesus

- a. Each church that received correction or rebuke were told to repent. [Rev 2:5, 2:16, 2:21,-22, 3:3, 3:19]
- b. Their success was dependent upon their response to His word and invitation to change.

This is the one area that the Lord is highlighting much in this hour, the extent that we do not agree. **“We are incompatible and I don’t change”**

- **We can no longer live our Christian lives doing things our way and attach God’s name to it and call it authentic Christianity.**
- **We must understand that God’s ways and the ways of the kingdom are countercultural to our way of doing things. [example Sermon on the Mount]**

What is repentance?

- A. Repentance is a change of thinking; that leads to a change of direction. If you try to change direction without changing your thinking your change will be short lived. This is why many in the church have not truly repented.
- B. Repentance does not primarily deal with our actions [sin] but the mindsets, beliefs and attitudes that have produced these actions [fruit in our lifestyle]

- C. One key thing the Lord has emphasized to my heart is this: when many people have fallen or continue in sin, they have asked for and sought out forgiveness instead of going deeper and truly repenting. We need God's forgiveness, however we need to align our hearts with God's truth as well that will cause us to walk differently and not continue to produce bad fruit.
- D. Each of us have been shaped by experiences, hurts, situations that are not truth and we must allow truth to reshape our heart.
- E. **Repentance positions us to be renewed in our heart/mind.** Repentance is the surrender of our heart/mind to the wisdom of God, and the commitment to change the condition of our mind, heart, and beliefs etc. in line with the truth of His word. Most people in the church have yet to surrender their way of life; their thinking, and the r hearts
- Trying to change our behavior and the way we live our lives without changing the way we think will only produce short
- and lives to his leadership.
- F. Once we have decided to surrender our right to be right, we then must position our lives under the word and allow it to shape us rather than us determining what is convenient to our lives.

Renewing the mind

Romans 12:1-2

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. **NIV**

²Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]. **AMP**

Ephesians 4:17–24

¹⁷ With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸ Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. ¹⁹ They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that isn't what you learned about Christ. ²¹ Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ **Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.** ²⁴ **Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.**

What is renewing the mind? How do I begin to renew my mind?

- A. The first point is recognizing an area that does not line up with the truth of God's word and committing to submit our lives to truth.
- B. Secondly, we must find the truth of the situation. Once we recognize falsehood, we must find truth to liberate us from the restriction and bondage of the lie.
- C. Thirdly, as we take our stand upon truth we must resist the enemy as he tries to lure our lives and hearts back into the shadows of living in deception. We are not to be run by emotions or feelings, but by the grace of God to live connected to His truth. As we do this, we will begin to dismantle and pull down strongholds that have blinded our hearts and minds in the past, keeping us from truth. [2 Cor 10:3–6]
- D. Fourthly, I must purpose to take actions points to the truth I have come to know. I cannot simply agree inwardly and live the same outwardly. James says our faith without works [action] is dead. Therefore to begin to see fruit of change, we must find an expression to our new found beliefs. We must walk in the Spirit and not the

flesh [Romans 8] meaning we must walk in trust and obedience rather than feeling and sight.

- E. Purpose to get into the word and prayer. This is one of the key essentials to see lasting change. This is your lifeline and your connection point to the One who has the power to change your life/heart.
- F. Change also comes through the beholding becoming principle. 2 Cor 3:18 tells us as we behold God we are transformed like Him. This means as we gain insight and understanding to what He is like and what His word says, we will see change. Such a key in the process. We are not to focus solely upon our problems, but upon the One who hold the key to our problems and desires to see us whole and free.

James 4 give us insight into this process biblically

1. **Submit to God:** submit your life under the truth and authority of His person and word
2. **Resist the devil:** we resist the temptations, accusations, condemnations of the enemy through our stance on the word of God. We do not buckle to emotions or desires, but we stand in truth strengthened by the Holy Spirit and His grace. The result of our stance is the enemy fleeing from us.
3. **Draw near to God:** we must purpose to remain near to the Lord and not depend on yesterday or last week's service to do something for us today. We draw near through prayer, worship, time in the word, fasting etc.
4. **He will draw near to you:** the result of our purposed stance upon His word and His strength is His nearness. He will keep us in the midst of our trial and breakthrough the impossibility.

Lastly in James 4:8 he says to cleanse our hands, purify our hearts and deal with our double mindedness.

Cleanse hands: outward sin in our life [fruit]

Purify heart: inward cause for outward sin, condition of heart or mindset [root]

Double mindedness: dealing with the areas of our life that do not line up with truth, or the areas of our life where what we say and what we do are different.