

IS YOUR HEART RIGHT WITH GOD?

Text: Acts 8:12-24

INTRO: In several ways the conversion of Simon the sorcerer is one of the most interesting conversions in the N.T. It tells of a man who very quickly lapsed back into sin & occasioned the first record of the need for a law of pardon for the erring Christian.

I. SIMON WAS FORGIVEN FOR HIS PAST SINS.

- A. He did the same thing the other Samaritans did. If they were saved, so was he, vs. 12-13.
- B. He did the same thing the Corinthians did.
And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; & many of the Corinthians hearing believed & were baptized. (Acts 18:8).
- C. He did what Jesus said a person must do to be saved, MK 16:15-16.
- D. Simon continued with Philip for a time, vs. 13.

II. SIMON SINNED AGAIN, NEEDED FORGIVENESS AGAIN.

- A. Was in danger of perishing, vs. 20
- B. His heart was not right with God, vs. 21
- C. Needed to repent of wickedness & pray for forgiveness, 22.
- D. He was in the gall of bitterness & the bond of iniquity, vs 23

III. SIMON FELL BACK INTO SIN BECAUSE OF AN OLD WEAKNESS, vs. 9-11.

- A. There is no miracle in conversion. One becomes a new creature in the sense that old sins are blotted out & a new chance is given, but this does not automatically & instantaneously change the character & personality. This comes gradually by spiritual growth. If you had trouble with lying, drinking, etc., that's where the devil will keep the pressure on you.
- B. This is why God has given a law of pardon for erring Christians, vs. 22.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful & just to forgive us our sins & to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 JN 1:9).

Confess your trespasses to one another & pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16).

IV. THE ACT OF SIN WAS EVIDENCE OF A HEART NOT RIGHT, vs. 21.

A. The religion of the Bible is a religion of the heart.

1. God is looking for those whose hearts are right.

For the eyes of the Lord run to & fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. (2 Chron 16:9).

2. Man often looks at things from a physical standpoint but God looks on the heart.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Look not at his appearance or at the height of his stature because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. (1 Sam 16:7).

3. All sins have their beginnings in the heart.

Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it springs the issues of life. (Prov 4:23).

For as he thinks in his heart so he is (Prov 23:7)

READ MATTHEW 15:18-20

4. Thus, Peter could observe Simon's deeds & have insight into what was in his heart.

V. THERE ARE OFTEN TELL-TALE SIGNS THAT SHOULD ALERT US THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG IN OUR HEARTS.

- A. Some find worship boring. Come as late as they dare, sit with hands folded, lips sealed. "Sing to me, pray for me, make the sermon short & sweet. If you say something I don't like, I may not come back." You couldn't build a church out of 10,000 of that kind of members.
- B. Some have lost all interest & enthusiasm for Bible study. Acts 17:11; John 5:39
- C. Some do not enjoy singing the songs of Jesus & how He saves us by His blood.

For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen & heard. (Acts 4:20, NIV).

And at midnight Paul & Silas were praying & singing hymns to God: & the prisoners were listening to them. (Acts 16:25).

NOTE: Worshipping God in song has nothing to do with how well you sing. It has to do with how much you value Jesus & what He has done for you.

- D. Some do not want to give anything for the cause of Christ. What little they do give, they give grudgingly.

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Cor. 9:7).

I've known church members who spent more on cigarettes than they gave to the Lord. I can't look into their hearts like the Lord can, but I can see enough to know something's not right.

- E. Some get angry at the preacher for preaching the truth & rebuking their sins. Even Simon didn't do that. His

heart was not right, but it was not that far wrong, v. 24.

F. Some have lost interest or never had any, in the conversion of lost souls. Their heart is not right.

G. Some have an unforgiving spirit. After all the untold times God has forgiven them, they can't find it in their hearts to forgive others. Their hearts are not right in the sight of God.

CONCLUSION: These & other errors manifested outwardly are indications of heart problems. God's mercy is extended to those who need forgiveness of sinful deeds & thoughts.

La Porte, TX, November 19, 1978
Liberty Hill, TX, November 22, 1978
Liberty Hill, TX, August 16, 1980 (meeting)
Exton, PA, November 3, 1985
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, April 17, 1994
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, August 15, 1999