

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

Text: Judges 11:35

INTRO: I read recently about a man who was flying from Britain to America. As the plane crossed the Atlantic Ocean, the pilot placed it on automatic pilot, left his cabin, and sat down by the man from Britain. In their conversation, the pilot made the statement, "We've just passed the point of no return. Until we reach that point, if anything goes wrong with the machine, I immediately turn her nose around and head straight back to Britain: once that point has been reached, however, whatever happens, I never go back. I make directly for America."

In every human life, we reach various points of no return.

I. WHEN WE COMMIT OUR FIRST SIN, WE CAN NEVER RETURN TO COMPLETE INNOCENCE.

A. Adam & Eve. Some knowledge we are better off without.

B. The king of Tyre.

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. (Ezek. 28:15).

C. God can forgive our sin & treat us as if we were innocent-- but even God can't cause us to un-sin. The memory of sin & some of its physical consequences may be with us as long as we live. When we became sinners, we have reached a point of no return.

II. EVEN SINS THAT ARE FORGIVEN INVOLVE A POINT OF NO RETURN.

A. David's sin was forgiven, but it had consequences that could not be re-called. READ 2 SAMUEL 11:9-14, 22-23

B. Esau's error had long-term consequences that tears & regrets could never un-do.

Heb 12:17, For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it

diligently with tears.

III. THERE IS A POINT OF NO RETURN WHEN GOD'S PATIENCE & MERCY END, AND HIS RIGHTEOUS WRATH BEGINS.

- A. On a couple of occasions, I have had the opportunity to visit Niagara Falls. At some distance up-stream from the falls is a point in the river called the Point of No Return. Up to that point it is safe to sail, but any boat or swimmer who ventures beyond that point is doomed

- B. In olden times, God sent prophet after prophet to warn Israel, Judah & other nations to turn from their sins. He would threaten them with doom if they failed to repent; He would promise to bless them if they returned to Him. But eventually, in their sin, they reached a point of no return, when doom was determined & blessings were out of the question.

And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"
And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore" (Amos 7:8)

- C. Someday, God's patience with mankind will run out, and the day of the Lord will come. All will have reached a point of no return when that day comes. 2 Peter 3:10

IV. WE CAN HARDEN OUR HEARTS UNTIL IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE TO REPENT--A POINT OF NO RETURN.

For as touching those who once were enlightened & tasted of the heavenly gift, & were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, & tasted the good word of God, & the powers of the age to come, & then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, & put Him to an open shame. (Heb. 6:4-6, ASV).

2 Peter 3:9

V. THERE IS A POINT OF NO RETURN WHEN WE PASS FROM THIS WORLD INTO THE NEXT.

Luke 16:19-31; 2 Sam. 12:23

VI. LET OUR COMMITMENT TO CHRIST BE A POINT OF NO RETURN.

A. Literally translated, Jephthah, in our text, said, "I have opened my mouth & I cannot take it back."

B. Have we made a commitment to Jesus. Have we confessed Him as the Son of God, & as our Lord & Savior? We have opened our mouth, & we must not take it back!

C. Have we obeyed Him in baptism & set our feet on the path of God? We must not retreat. We must not go back.

D. Whatever the world & the devil have to offer, they cannot compare with the blessings promised to those who are faithful in their commitment to Christ.

CONCLUSION: Let us say with Jephthah, "I have given my word to the Lord, and I cannot go back on it."

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Wrightsville, PA, July 12, 1995 (meeting)

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, February 22, 2004